

THE CHARLOTTE NEWS

THOMAS L. ROBINSON
 T. E. DOWD
 B. S. GRIFFITH
 C. A. MCKNIGHT

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THE COMMUNITY IS IN GOOD SHAPE...

AT THIS STAGE, it is impossible to draw any final conclusions from the county-wide tax valuation now nearing completion. The figures that have been announced are tentative. There are still some personal and inventory listings to be tallied. And not until June will the County Tax Listing office get a new figure on the value of utility properties in the City and County.

Nonetheless, the picture is beginning to take form. Large increases in value have been registered in every tax division, increases that bear witness to the healthy and vigorous state of the community's economic life.

For example, real property in the city jumped from \$207,550.222 to \$302,482,683, an increase of \$95,432,463 or 46 per cent. Real property in the county climbed from \$22,538,485 to \$78,775,170, an increase of \$56,236,685 or 25 per cent. The overall total for both city and county showed a gain from \$230,088,707 to \$381,757,853, an increase of \$151,669,146 or 66 per cent.

A part of the increase results from the realistic assessment of real estate values, based on 1948 prices. Previously much of the real property, especially outside the city limits, had been assessed at ridiculously low levels. But a part also is the listing for the first time of improvements to land—additions and enlargements to existing structures as well as new buildings—that had previously escaped the tax lists' eyes.

Especially was this true in the county, which has no building permit law to tip the assessors when construction is undertaken.

The old figures for real property given above have been adjusted to show real values, instead of the two-thirds value previously used. The new figures, therefore, are directly comparable to the new figures.

Unfortunately, the equivalent comparison cannot be made for the broad personal prop-

erty category, which includes personal possessions, automobiles, fixtures, inventories, and the like. The new figures for personal property represent actual 1948 value. The old figures vary. Automobiles were listed at actual value. Home possessions were listed at the figure given by the taxpayer. But inventories, fixtures and the like were assessed at a lower figure, in some cases two-thirds, and in others, three-fourths.

Even so, the new totals (City \$302,482,683 vs. \$179,009,655; County \$55,855,905 vs. \$20,800,970) represent a substantial gain. Even if the old figures are increased roughly by 20 to 25 per cent to allow for the lower assessment then, the increase is still striking, and indicates that much personal property had been hidden away from the tax lists.

In the final analysis, however, the dollar value of property in the city and county doesn't matter so much as the equalization factor, and indicates that much personal property, the Cole-Layer-Trumble assessors have wiped out the gross inequities that penalized some property owners and benefited others. That means that everyone will pay no more.

The total value of all property and the percentage assessment of that value finally put on the books are relatively meaningless. Valuations and tax rates work like a seesaw. A high valuation and a low rate, or a low valuation and a high rate, will produce the same tax levy. Once assessments are equalized, and once all property is on the books, the tax levy is the thing that counts.

Tax news has compiled records of tax levies by both the City and County Governments during the past decade. A subsequent editorial will give taxpayers a definite scale that will guide them through the confusion of this tax valuation period.

... BUT THERE ARE BIG HURDLES AHEAD

THIS, in substance, is what Dr. N. L. Engelhardt, nationally famous educational consultant, told City and County officials this week:

The recent growth of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County is a delayed recognition of the advantages of living here and doing business here. What we have seen is only a beginning, and it will continue with cumulative results. The community's potential is being satisfied. We are no longer forced to be conservative in planning our future. The pace of the community's growth is bound to speed up, and we must start thinking in terms of a metropolitan area. A great trend has begun, marked by decentralization from the larger cities and a movement away from older, more static regions. Charlotte has reached the stage where large industrial corporations fear lack of representation here. It is a strategic point of the whole region, and commercial life of the whole region.

Dr. Engelhardt was not just day dreaming. He has kept his finger on the pulse of the community for many years, in an effort to solve its school planning problem and prescribe for it correctly. But what he had to say about schools can be said about many other public services.

Mecklenburg and Charlotte have already

spent more than \$5 million on schools since the end of World War II, but much of that fund has been gobbled up by inflation. A minimum of \$15 million will be needed to meet the needs that are already evident, and still more may be necessary before the decade is out.

And along with schools, of course, will come streets, water lines, sewers, transportation, police and fire protection, health services, sanitation and the many other services of municipal and county government.

But the heart of the Engelhardt message was his remark that the City of Charlotte and the County of Mecklenburg could no longer afford to go their separate ways. Careful, realistic planning is needed at all levels, and co-operation among the City and County governing bodies, the school boards, planning boards and state and federal agencies. The Urban Redevelopment Commission and Housing Authority, is essential if pitfalls are to be avoided.

The joint session marked a new high in City-County co-operation. It was the beginning, we hope, of broad planning for the whole metropolitan area that will chart the future along an orderly and logical course, and enable us to foresee and surmount the big hurdles ahead.

ARMED SERVICE EXTRAVAGANCE

GRANTED that it is impossible to buy for the armed services as carefully as a housewife would buy groceries for her family, there is still plenty of room for improvement.

A Congressional subcommittee now studying military purchasing has uncovered some glaring examples of waste and inefficiency. The military services have built up a \$200-million surplus of some items. About \$10 billion worth of "unserviceable and unallocated items" are clogging military supply lines. For 23 years, Congress has tried, without success, to get the various branches of the service to discard a single buying catalog with uniform specifications.

Drew Pearson has added some flagrant examples in the past few days. The Marines pay \$18.80 for the same combat boot the Army buys for \$24.85. The Navy has enough

anchors to last for 50 years. The Army, Navy, and Marines insist on their separate and rival coffee-roasting plants. It takes five and a half pages of specifications to buy ping pong balls. Electric cretars.

Surely there is a better way to shore up our defenses without throwing money around so carelessly. Some extravagance may be excused on the grounds of urgency but it is a waste of money. The government should be doing logically and efficiently if there were a will to do it.

The Congress is becoming increasingly aware of the military agencies' expenditures. With military expenditures expected to hit \$52 billion this year, and a huge deficit in sight, Congress has a mandate to force a thorough revision of the Pentagon's purchasing practices. Anything less will be a gross neglect of duty.

A HARVEST OF DEATH

STATISTICS are usually dull things, but when they stand for crushed bodies and broken bones they take on interest—and meaning.

Here's a batch.
 December, 1951—1,044 highway accidents in North Carolina, an increase of 29 per cent over December, 1950. Total accidents for 1951—77,605; total for 1950—72,351; increase—7.2 per cent.
 Deaths from highway accidents: December, 1951—119; December, 1950—116; increase—2.6 per cent. Total deaths for 1951—1,070; for 1950—1,028; increase—5 per cent.
 Persons injured in accidents: December, 1951—14,717; December, 1950—14,727; increase—0.07 per cent. Total injured persons for 1951—1,512,372; for 1950—1,522,372; increase—27 per cent.

Now look how those accidents happened. Of the 6,975 drivers involved in the December accidents, 244 were driving while intoxicated; 1,062 did not have right of way; 876 were speeding; 637 were traveling on the wrong side of the road, not in passing; 823 were following too closely; and 262 failed to signal or gave the improper signal.

In other words, 77 per cent of the drivers involved in accidents were guilty of at least one violation of the highway laws.

The obvious conclusion to be drawn from those figures is that the law is not being enforced. It is not being enforced either when they stand in drive, or they are plain careless. And it appears that the only way to make them learn to drive carefully is to adopt more rigid laws and enforce them more sternly. The 1951 General Assembly couldn't build the plan of the Governor's special commission on highway safety to tighten up the rules of the road. This grim toll of death and injuries is the harvest of that disaster.

Why is it we always think of the best report or wisecrack of all after we're through talking and gone home?—Rudolfo (N. M.) News.

It's a sure sign of middle age when a wife tells her husband to pull in his stomach and he already has—Nicholas County (Ky.) Star.

Taft Shows Amazing Energy In His Drive For Nomination

By MARQUIS CHILDS

BEFORE the Republicans meet in Chicago on July 7, the record is likely to show that no man ever traveled so many thousands of miles, spoke so many hands, spoke personally to so many people, campaigned so hard in every way for the Presidential nomination of a party as Senator Robert A. Taft is now in process of doing. It is a marathon exertion in its increasing demands, grueling in the drain of sheer physical energy. Yet the determined candidate from Ohio seems to be enjoying an ease and even rather enjoying the whole business.

This, his second visit to Wisconsin, was necessarily a brief one en route to the Pacific Northwest. He will come back twice—once again for a few days, and then for two intensive weeks from March 17 until Wisconsin's Presidential primary on April 1. Taft is undertaking to stump Wisconsin in the way in which he covered Ohio in 1924. That year he won the election to the Senate by a majority of over 631,000. And he believes that this success was due to the small measure to the fact that he visited each of Ohio's 88 counties at least twice and that he toured the average three days in each Congressional district.

Getting off an early morning train from Washington, Taft was driven to the Chicago airport. In the interval before the plane departed, he sat in the crowded, waiting room, writing in longhand on a pad of yellow scratch paper other words in the speech he delivered that night. On his face was the concentrated look of a man who might be laboring in the quiet of his study.

At Stevens Point, where he had a small plane, a small crowd gathered to greet him. He went immediately into the airport waiting room, where he gave a radio interview, followed by a brief extemporaneous talk in which he says many of the things he has said

before in the brisk, almost blunt fashion that he rarely, if ever, varies.

Then the caravan of autos set out with the candidate in the lead car winding through the snow-covered countryside, pausing in towns for breakfasting. The scheduled visits to four paper mills, this was a feature of the Ohio campaign, where Taft got his labor supporters at the work bench by walking through hundreds of plants.

In Ohio, there are hostilities here from trade union officials who were foreclosed this opportunity. They insist it is an invasion of the privacy of working men and women, and in at least one plant reporters and photographers were forbidden to accompany the candidate.

This, in Taft's view, is all glib to his mill. If the union bosses use arbitrary methods to prevent him from campaigning, says Taft, that will make sympathy for him not only among non-union voters but with the rank and file in the unions.

He thinks that this is the way to win the nomination and the Presidency, and he is going right on to it no matter how many lieutenants and reporters drop out. He will hold here in the later afternoon is a press conference, a meeting with farm leaders, a dinner with political workers and, finally, the big meeting and speech in the Field House which is the climax of the day.

"I don't get as tired as I used to," Taft says, in all innocence. "In the 1920 campaign my knees used to get tired. But I had my tonsils out and I'm feeling much better."

This is a one-man political machine made of something durable beyond any alloy yet perfected. It is as old-fashioned as the fly dinner and yet, in its organization, it gives the modern techniques, as modern as radar. If this is the way to win the Presidency, then Taft will win it.

Congress Traditionally Cool To Presidential Primary Law

By JAMES MARLOW

WASHINGTON
 MOST people don't take an active part in politics because they are too busy making a living other ways, or lack interest. But since we have a two-party system, and apparently want it, someone has to run for office.

There has always been a politically active minority willing to do the running. They range from the obscure precinct worker to the fat-necked boss. Their reasons vary: Some are earnest, considering the national reputation; some want power; and some have a lust for loot.

Up to the end of Washington's second term there had been no big political parties. And when a successor to him had to be chosen, it was done through arrangements between national and state leaders. The people had no say. For years afterwards presidential candidates were chosen by party caucuses. Congress even though the parties had taken shape.

This method began to hit the skids in 1824 when Congress turned around Jackson. Four years later, in 1828, the system was changed for two terms. But he was so scorched by the 1824 deal that he urged Congress to "right annual elections." This led to direct primaries to let the people pick the party nominees. Congress, in course of time, and still has, has been chosen by delegates from the states at the national nominating conventions. Theoretically that is, for more than one of the delegates has been chosen by the voters for the bosses. And, theoretically, the delegates represent the thinking of the people. In fact, in most cases, the people own them have no control over them.

So, when Robert LaFollette, twice defeated for governor of Wisconsin by bosses state conventions, got the Senate to adopt a primary law. By the time of World War I, 15 states had adopted such laws.

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Drew Pearson's Merry-Go-Round

THE House Commerce Committee now investigating Harry McDonald might dig into a more important matter by investigating its own chairman—Congressman Robert C. Crosser, Ohio Democrat, who has been grinding a political axe against McDonald, a Republican, since the latter's resignation. McDonald's confirmation has been held up as new boss of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation.

Inside story is that Congressman Crosser tried to bring pressure on the Securities and Exchange Commission under McDonald on behalf of financier Cyrus Eaton, who has been in trouble with the SEC. Eaton and Congressman Crosser came from Cleveland.

The SEC is investigating Eaton for promoting a lawsuit against auto manufacturer Henry Kaiser as a trumped-up excuse to block out of a multimillion-dollar damages, and the National Association of Securities Dealers has suspended Eaton for two years for unethical conduct.

Despite this, Crosser has repeatedly telephoned SEC commissioners in an attempt to influence them in Eaton's favor. McDonald has passed. When finally he came out of hiding, he was given a job by the Air Force instead of being tried for war crimes. Today he is working on a second job for the Air Force School of Aviation Medicine, Randolph Field, Texas.

Here are the charges that would have been brought against either if he had been caught by the war crimes investigators.

The Nazis developed a sinister means of executing trouble-makers without trial by injecting lethal phenol into

What's The Big-Brother Routine Today, Chief?



People's Platform

Letters should be brief. The writers name and address must be given, but may be withheld from publication in the discretion of the Editor. The News reserves the right to condense.

The Great Republican Error

HUNTERSVILLE

IN HIS letter in the Platform of Feb. 8, Nola McCum made a categorical statement to the effect that the Republicans would not tolerate depression. There seems to be quite a number of people who think that the Republicans have no effect on the economy. They are wrong. The Republicans have a long history of being the party of the people who think that the economy is the most important matter to some extent with people who reason with their minds instead of their emotions. I would like to point out some facts and place them in their proper setting.

First, let us examine our economic system with regard to its history from the time of the founding of the Republic to the first world war. The nation was one of internal expansion. The Midwest and the Far West were being settled and the country was importing both capital and people. Raw materials of farm, forest and mine were both plentiful and cheap. Our factories were rarely able to produce either the machines for production or the consumer goods as fast as the country could use them. The country was growing and while growing it produced a tremendous amount of capital. This country was the focus point of all investment in the world. We were a borrowing nation. The banking center of the world was London. In order to pay for the things we were importing and had already imported we sold and exported great volumes of raw materials.

During the first world war the productive capacity of Europe's industrial plant collapsed. Her normal food, forest and mineral supplies close at hand dried up under war conditions. Europe turned more and more to America for supplies. The cotton secured at home. During this time American industry expanded with great rapidity. European governments shipped us ever two thirds of the entire monetary gold supply of the world in payment for war supplies, food and other materials.

When they had all but exhausted their supply of money they began to negotiate loans in the United States. Both government and private loans were floated in this country. With the proceeds of these loans, they purchased additional goods in this country. The goods went to Europe. The money stayed here. Thus the financial center of the world shifted from London to New York. Thus the United States ceased to be a borrowing nation and became a lending nation.

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U.S. had accumulated so large a portion of it that the rest of the world was drained dry. They simply did not have it and could not pay with money we would accept. The second method, services, such as marine insurance and shipping, could account for only a small fraction of the debt. Therefore, in order for us to collect on the loans advanced to Europe and other parts of the world, it was absolutely necessary for the United States to take payment in the form of commodities.

We were in a tight spot. The rest of the world was too. Our productive ability, geared to produce for the world, was above our normal internal consumption demand. We needed foreign markets, the foreign nations needed our goods for reconstruction, so further credits were extended and that in turn more deeply entrenched our position as a lending nation.

Then the Republican party came into political power. Neither the Congress nor the Administration understood the meaning of the change in our position from borrower to lender. Immediately they began to act like borrowers again. Up and went the so-called protective tariffs. They were not protective. They were prohibitive. American importers could not bring in foreign produced goods over the tariff wall and sell them on the American consumer market. Unless Europe could sell her goods here, having no money, she could not pay her debts. Not being able to pay, she could not get more credits, and thus being reduced to the position of having no money and no credits, she could neither buy from us nor sell to us.

We said to Europe and our other debtors, you got the goods, now we want our money. They replied, we have no money, we will gladly ship you goods. No, we said, we want cash. They replied, we have no cash. We said, we will gladly ship you goods. No, we said, we want cash. They replied, we have no cash. We said, we will gladly ship you goods. No, we said, we want cash. They replied, we have no cash.

Second World War was hastened. Rev. McNeill Potat, Raleigh minister, speaking before the General Assembly of the Methodist Church, urged that the Press and the Church remember history. Would that we all could and would do so, for human events follow in great cycles in time.

LACY RANSON

No Shrieks

(Sam Ragan, News & Observer)

Elizabeth Bergner, who started in "The Two Mrs. Arravos," was commented on the reaction of women in the audience. "Every night Geoffrey Carroll, bent on murder, made an entrance through the back door, and five prisoners were dragged in and women were alone and had no husbands or other men to comfort their fears, there were no shrieks."

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