THE CHARLOTTE NEWS

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THOMAS L. ROBINSON.....Publisher
J. E. DOWD.....General Manager
B. S. GRIFFITH.....Executive Editor
C. A. McKNIGHT.....Editor

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TAXPAYERS DESERVE A BETTER BREAK THAN THEY GOT IN PAYOFF TO FIREMEN

I SHALL try to correct errors where shown to be errors, and I shall adopt new views as fast as they shall appear to be true views," wrote Abraham Lincoln to Horace Greeley. In that passage the members of the City Council will find a pointed moral.

Last Tuesday, in a long and tiresome session, the Council approved an additional cash handout of $40,000 a year for the next two years to prop up the ailing Firemen's Retirement Fund. It was quite clear that only one member of the Council had studied the question fully enough to understand all the complicated details. Tired and confused, the Council finally voted five to one in favor of the subsidy.

It was inevitable that other municipal employees would begin protesting such favoritism for one branch of the city's service. Chief of Police Frank Littlejohn was first to sound off in a blistering telegram to the legislative delegation charging "gross discrimination" against policemen and other city employees. Over the week-end, a petition asking equal treatment picked up the signatures of all department heads.

And it was inevitable that the taxpayers would be heard from. Although only $40,000 a year is involved right now, the thing could snowball into hundreds of thousands a year in additional taxes on our already overtaxed people.

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THE pill is harder for the taxpayer to swallow because it is packed with bitter irony. Few, if any, taxpayers in Charlotte enjoy a retirement plan that will permit them to quit work after 25 years, no matter how young, at one-half their average salary for the last three years of employment (the top earning years, incidentally).

Yet that is the degree of luxury the firemen fashioned for themselves back in 1947, with the consent and assistance of the legislative delegation. At no time before last year was an actuary study made to determine a sound basis for the fund. As a result, it has been skidding fast toward bankruptcy.

Is it the responsibility of the taxpayers to shell out their hard earned dollars to remedy the miscalculations of the firemen who conceived this scheme?

Is it up to the taxpayers to pay for a retirement fund for firemen more plush than generally found in private industry?

Is it up to the taxpayers to shell out another $40,000 a year to rescue the City Council from a political hot-spot?

And to kick in additional huge sums to put more than 1,000 other municipal employees on a plane of equal luxury?

The taxpayers of Charlotte have been treated wrong, and they will be rightfully resentful unless the Council reverses its action of last week. In view of all the confusion and disturbance among municipal employees, the legislative delegation should be requested to hold up the extra $40,000 a year appropriation to the firemen's fund for two years, pending an exhaustive study of all city retirement systems to determine (1) their actuarial soundness, (2) the adequacy of their benefits, and (3) the equality of treatment.

And that study should be made by a commission appointed by the Resident Judge, so no group of employees may influence the appointments by pressuring individual members of the City Council.

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THE City Council's responsibilities in the matter are clear.

The Council should protect the taxpayers from unjustified raids on the public treasury.

It should protect the members of the Fire Department, especially the younger men, from a leadership that, up to now, has shown too little concern over the shaky structure of the retirement fund.

And it should protect all city employees against unfair discrimination and unequal treatment.

The embarrassment of correcting last week's error is a small matter in comparison with these broad responsibilities.

THE ISSUE IN PARK BOARD ROW

NOTHING that happened over the week-end, including Sen. Fred McIntyre's explanation of his position, changed the basic issue posed by the Senator's bill to abolish the appointive Park & Recreation Commission and make the posts elective.

The issue, simply stated, is whether men who are elected to the General Assembly to represent us in state matters are automatically endowed with dictatorial authority over purely local matters.

The City Council, elected by the people, has gone on record unanimously as opposing Mr. McIntyre's proposal.

More than half of the present members of the Park & Recreation Commission have spoken out against the bill, saying they doubt that good men will subject themselves to a political campaign to serve on the recreation body without pay and often without gratitude.

Both Charlotte newspapers have taken a strong position against this latest encroachment upon home rule.

We do not know by what process Senator McIntyre becomes the supreme authority in this question. He was on the City Council some years ago, but for one term only. If he has spent much time in the field of public recreation since then, it hasn't come to our attention.

We don't question his motives, but we do question his judgment. He is elected to represent the people of Mecklenburg County, not to overthrow their institutions. The four members of the House of Representatives should use their prerogatives to block this bill.

IKE FACES A SHOWDOWN WITH PARTY

SOONER OR LATER, the Eisenhower Administration must force a showdown on foreign policy with the right wing of the GOP. We hope it is sooner—more specifically, that President Eisenhower chooses to do battle over the appointment of Charles E. (Chip) Bohlen as ambassador to Moscow.

Twice the Administration has marched up the Hill and then marched back down again.

In three separate instances during the Voice of America probe, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles was persuaded to the viewpoint of Senator Joseph McCarthy after first showing some signs of standing his ground against the Senator.

When the President sent to Congress his resolution denouncing Russia for violations of the Yalta and Potsdam pacts, the GOP right wingers once again stepped in. Because they insisted that the resolutions go much further and denounce the Truman and Roosevelt Administrations, a partisan issue developed, and the resolution was pigeonholed. The Administration thus lost a fine opportunity to take a promising new tack in foreign policy.

And now the Old Guard has elected to oppose the Eisenhower-Dulles selection of Bohlen as successor to George F. Kennan in the key Moscow post. Bohlen and Kennan are rated the top experts on Russia in the U. S. diplomatic service. Criticism of Bohlen appointment seems to be based on the fact that he once worked under Dean Acheson which would disqualify virtually all our career diplomats.

President Eisenhower can count on the support of Democratic Senators for Bohlen. He will pick up a number of votes from his own party, more than enough, in all probability, to defeat the right wingers decisively. He must do so at the first opportunity if he is to be free to carry out the mandate given him by the voters last November to establish a new, more vigorous, and more successful foreign policy.

From The Richmond News-Leader

JONAS HOMERS, HIS FIRST TIME AT BAT

A BRAND-NEW Congressman is Charles R. Jonas, and in his very first speech before the House, Representative Jones got his name in the papers. Why? Because the North Carolinian rolled up his sleeves and went briskly to work, oratorically, on plans of the OPS to write and publish a history of its operations. His protest against this proposal, being news, duly has been recorded in the press, giving Mr. Jonas a batting average of 1.000—one speech, one newspaper story.

Mr. Jonas is, we think, on solid ground in opposing the composition of a history of OPS. Administrator Joseph H. Freehill defends that project, saying that the OPS history was ordered by Mr. Truman when he was President and that the orders still stand under President Eisenhower; that the writing of such histories of departing agencies is customary, and that anyway it won't cost much.

It may be customary for an agency being liquidated to write a history, but surely it is not necessary. Even if it were necessary, no agency should be given the job of writing its own history. The fumblings and errors made by OPS suggest that if a history of World War II's OPA ever was written (has anybody seen it?) no one in OPS bothered to read it, and should a successor to OPS come along (and we hope one will not) we doubt that its chiefs will take, or have, the time to read that one either.

"I trust," said Mr. Jonas, concluding his one-minute maiden address, "the new Budget Director, or other appropriate agency of the government, will take the necessary steps to stop this waste of money. . ." We foresee for Mr. Jonas a long and fruitful career in the House.

Something called a "cosmotron" is said to be able to put the pieces together again after an atom has been split, and if we can rent one we'd like to try it out on a $1.67 wind-up tractor.—*Richmond Times-Dispatch.*

There is one perceptible difference between a permanent tax and a temporary tax. The permanent tax does not have to be renewed every time the legislature meets, but a temporary tax always is.—*Oklahoma City Oklahoman.*

This Is The Real Africa — Land Of Death And New Life

BY ROBERT C. RUARK

TALEK, KENYA

IT IS DRY in the Masai at the moment, burnt black in spots by fire, burnt short and brown in others by sun and lengthy drought. The plains are so sere outside the tsetse-fly area that a few Masai herdsmen have brought their cattle into the dreaded fly country, risking partial death to their beasts through flybite rather than certain extinction through starvation.

But down around the lower Mara River, which has dried to a large trickle, there is an avenue of green because of some recent and spotty showers which brought the fresh color to solid square miles of crisped grass.

In my first trip out here, I encountered the reverse. The grass was dank and high everywhere in Tanganyika except at the Grummetti River, where it was short. And the game flocked there.

GATHERING OF THE GAME

On the green rolling plains, rimmed with darker green trees lining the riverbanks and the occasional muddy waterhole; on the gently sloping sides of the big hills where the rhino and the buffalo graze in the clear, light green islands of glade; along the sand river bed and in the forest—nothing but seething game.

There would be a straggling procession of a hundred thousand wildebeeste, the stupid clowns who buck and pitch and dash and cavort for no reason. There would be 60-odd ungainly giraffe in a single herd. There would be thousands on thousands of bright-gold impala, the bucks with the long, back-curving horns, leaping and dashing and cavorting out of the joy of living.

There would be literally hundreds of thousands of the Thomson gazelle and the stateller Grant leaping, bobbing, zigging and zagging on the plains, which by now are dappled with white and blue primrosy sort of flowers. The ostriches run in stately formation.

The game is there, so, now are the carnivore. The lions, in prides up to 20, are belly-stuffed and drowsy. They tumble around beneath the flat-topped, blooming thorn acacias like blowsy old mousers, their chops sticky and red with the dried blood of a recent kill. They have no problem. When hunger comes on them they sidle out to the plain and bust the neck of a wildebeeste or of one of a million fat-haunched zebra. They eat until replete and then more.

You will see the little jackals feeding off one end of the lion's kill, while his lordship, Simba, tolerantly chaws on the other. They have a deal — the same deal the leopard enforces with the Battler eagle, who sits all day in the tree to keep the vultures off the leopard's meat, and to shrilly inform if another leopard tried to infringe the copyright.

All over the plains the hyenas gallop, in that queer, busted-back, sloping shuffle of theirs. They are fat, too, and the vultures are fat, for Simba's leavings make tasty morsels for the scavengers. There is deathly beauty in the whole scene, because Africa's life cycle depends on killing. The cats get it first and then the vultures, and the hyenas and the jackals and the foxes, and the ants polish off the scraps.

But the new miracle occurs at this time of the year: life begins again. The hoofed animals breed at the time of the coming rains, so that the new calves and foals will grow up heartily on the new, succulent grass, and be sturdy and self-reliant by the time the grass waves high and the cats prowl more easily through its protectiveness.

I am something of a sucker for the young, and here are 10,000,000 pets to play with. The tiny Tommies bound and leap stiff-legged in the air, each no bigger than a kitten. A tiny topi staggers away indignantly on wobbly, knob-kneed legs, because he has only been born 10 minutes. A small giraffe wobbles ludicrously — even the baby wildebeeste are cute.

The junior-grade impala leap around in kindergarten classes, sometimes falling flat when they attempt an ambitious hurdle. The old lady warthogs trot along, their antennae tails stiffly in the air, with the small pigs hurrying along behind. The baby elephants clutch their mothers' tails with anxious trunks, and shuffle along confidently, figuring they'll be tuskers in another hundred years.

Here is life all around — all new, all fresh, all lovely. Here is what I look at when I come to Africa. This is the Africa a man learns to love, and a few Man Mau one way or the other, scarcely matter.

Probe Of Wes Roberts Deal May Stir National Reaction

BY MARQUIS CHILDS

WASHINGTON

AN ENTIRELY unprecedented kind of investigation is taking place out in Topeka, Kansas. A committee of the Kansas Legislature is investigating C. Wesley Roberts, the national chairman of the Republican Party, and Washington is following the inquiry with intense interest.

The outcome can have a direct bearing on the congressional elections next year, when the magic name of Eisenhower will not be at the head of the ticket. Many Republicans here feel that the new chairman has already been put under too great a handicap.

The charge against Roberts is that he accepted a fee of $11,000 as "Public Relations Counsel" in the sale of a privately-operated hospital to the state of Kansas, when in fact, the state already owned the buildings. The amount involved was $110,000.

EXPECT CLEARANCE

The best guess of informed observers in Kansas is that the legislative committee will clear Roberts of any wrongdoing in the matter. At the time of the transaction, he held neither a party nor a public office. He was a shrewd operator in Topeka, who knew his way around with the Legislature.

But, this will not heal the deep division in the party in Kansas. Roberts' defenders explain the outcry over the deal as a piece of that partisan warfare. They say the question would never have been raised if it had not been for the inter-party feud.

The hostility goes deep. Alf Landon, GOP presidential nominee put out a statement denouncing the deal and Roberts' part in it as a disgrace to Kansas. Landon opposed the draft of General Eisenhower and there by found himself in opposition to such influential Kansas Republicans as his old associate Senator Frank Carlson.

In the Washington mess with the long series of disclosures, particularly in the Bureau of Internal Revenue, the matter may seem a minor one. But, in righteous Kansas it has loomed very large. State Attorney General Harold R. Fatzer wrote a fifteen-page letter to the legislature explaining his stand and concluding:

"There is nothing politically right which is morally wrong. If wrongs occur in public affairs, they can be corrected by men of courage and integrity. These are qualities which are inherent in the vast majority of Kansas people. These are the qualities that Kansans demand in the administration of their public affairs. If the acts of those who, for selfish interest or gain, morally or legally violate these basic principles, they will not be condoned or justified by the citizens of Kansas."

Most Kansas newspapers have been highly critical of the transaction and of Roberts' part in it.

It is not the rightness or wrongness of the Roberts' fee as such that troubles those Republicans already beginning to worry over next year's elections. They feel that while the chairman's role in the affair that of crusader in shining armor, he should nevertheless as organizer and spokesman for an administration headed by a crusading President have more stature than Roberts has.

The division in Kansas represents, in part at least, the old Eisenhower-Taft split in the party. Whether it is merely a local explosion or whether it exists in other states the test of '54 is likely to reveal.

'What Do You Suppose Is Going On In Russia?'

Joseph & Stewart Alsop

To Whom It May Concern

WASHINGTON

A FEW days ago, after being somewhat critical of the investigative methods of Sen. Joseph R. McCarthy, these reporters received the following letter from Chicago.

Dear Sir:

I like the work that McCarthy does by uncovering Moscow termites . . . but it seems to us (me and my friends) that you just hate any one that tries to get the Moscow agents out into the open. Funny — it is not the working class that the Red Jesuits can hoodwink so easily, but the so-called intellectuals — bah! Yes, we think you do a very good service to Big Joe . . . Yours truly, E. O. Lipsensky.

A great number of similar letters are invariably received whenever a critical reference to Sen. McCarthy appears in this space. About half of these communications, most commonly anonymous, are obviously the work of neurotics and paranoiacs. They reek with anti-Semitism and other ugly symptoms of mental illness in political form. They convey the impression that the sewers of our public life have burst, and the accumulated filth is flowing in the streets. But there are other letters, which deserve more serious consideration, which come from quite honestly puzzled people. These puzzled people write, in effect:

"McCarthy is against communism. You're against McCarthy. Doesn't that mean that you're in favor of communism?"

COMMON ATTITUDE

This attitude has become such a common phenomenon nowadays that it perhaps justifies a personal word.

In the first place, these reporters venture to claim an anti-Communist record that is considerably longer, and more consistent, than the record of Sen. McCarthy himself.

One of them passed the war years in China, as a member of Gen. C. L. Chennault's Flying Tigers, as a trusted adviser of Chiang Kai-shek's government, and as an officer of Gen. Chennault's 14th Air Force. In these different capacities, he was one of the first Americans to warn the government in Washington of the acute postwar danger represented by the Chinese Communists. He consistently fought the military policy in China that was then strengthening the Chinese Communists.

The historic record will show that these efforts produced significant results, decidedly out of proportion to the standing of their maker. The knowledge derived from these same efforts was the foundation, in turn, of the first comprehensive and reasonably accurate discussion of the American failure in China, which was published by these reporters in 1949, one year before Sen. McCarthy started his Red-hunt.

The other member of this partnership had no share in politics until 1946, when the partnership was formed. At that time, there was hardly a single American newspaper man with a national audience, or a single leading American politician, who was warning against the menace of communism in America, or even against the menace of the Soviet Union.

Yet at that time, infiltration had gone so far in the labor movement, for instance, that the Wisconsin CIO was virtually controlled by Communists. These same Wisconsin Communists swung the crucial Milwaukee labor vote against the late Sen. Robert M. LaFollette Jr., and so gave the victory to Sen. McCarthy in the Wisconsin Republican primary of 1946.

ACCEPTED AID

At that time, Sen. McCarthy defiantly commented, "Well, Communists vote, don't they?" But at that time, when Sen. McCarthy was so complacent about Communists that he accepted their political aid, these reporters were the very opposite of complacent.

In those days, when it was not popular to be anti-Communist, these reporters published story after story warning against Communist infiltration of the labor and liberal movements. They named names, without benefit of Congressional Immunity. They exposed the Wallace Progressive party as a Communist front, when all others were still silent. They got themselves called Pasche beasts for their pains, and by a good many of the same people who now think they are pro-Communist because they are anti-McCarthy.

That is the record, which any one can read. Nowadays, the American Communist party is an impotent wreck. Nowadays, moreover, there is a new threat from a very different quarter, to the most cherished institutions of the United States. The sacred rights of American citizens, the sacred liberties for which our forefathers fought, are being trampled underfoot by Sen. McCarthy and others of his kidney.

People are forgetting in this country that every man, whether guilty or innocent, has a right to a fair trial under our Constitution. They are forgetting that men cannot be damned, and their lives cannot be destroyed for no purpose than to make Senatorial headlines. They are forgetting that our Constitution promises to every American the presumption of innocence until guilt is clearly proven. If it is thought a symptom of pro-communism to insist on these great principles, then the nature of communism is very widely misunderstood.

Drew Pearson's Merry-Go-Round

Wilson Orders Armed Force Spending Cut

WASHINGTON

SECRETARY of Defense Charles E. Wilson sent word to a complete, though secret reverse last week. After telling a Senate committee he could make no real cuts in the defense budget, he ordered the Navy to cut by two billions, the Air Force by two billions, and the Army by a quarter billion.

Reason for the reversal was a determined desire on the part of Budget Director Joe Dodge to chop expenses, plus realization that in the armed forces there's the greatest fat.

Here is some news which may help Dodge and Wilson.

A little over a year ago—Feb. 4, 1952—this column reported in detail how the Army, Navy, Air Force overlapped, duplicated, and competed with each other in buying supplies. In such a relatively simple item as carpenter's squares, for instance, a carpenter's square for the Quartermaster Corps cost 65 cents, for the Navy 82, for the Army $1.90, for the Signal Corps $2.10, for the Army Engineers $1.48, for the Air Force $1.60.

Furthermore, even within the Army itself, there is no standardization of carpenter's squares, so that the Army catalog "contained six separate specifications for squares—the Signal Corps', Ordnance's, Transportation's, Engineers', Chemical Warfare's, and Quartermaster Corps'. On top of this, Air Force has to have a seventh number, and the total cost of reprinting Army catalogs to add the Air Force's 7th number is about $1,500,000."

Last year also, a subcommittee spearheaded by Congressmen Carl Vinson of Georgia and Eddie Hebert of Louisiana performed extensive research on armed services duplication, finally passed a law requiring the Army, Navy, Air Force to compile one catalog from which they all would order instead of competing against each other through separate catalogs.

That law was passed on July 1, 1952. Since then, the Defense Department has had 300 people working full time in Washington, plus 3,000 people working part time in the field to compile a joint armed services catalog. Finally, after spending $87,000,000, they have produced the first edition—a catalog on "subsistence" or food —length 40 pages!

In contrast, the complete purchasing catalogs of the Army, Navy, Air Force fill one room. So, at the rate of $87,000,000 for 40 pages, it will take billions to complete the entire catalog.

Confidential Memo

As a result of this dilly-dallying, acting Defense Secretary William Foster in the Truman Administration sent a confidential memo to his Republican successor on the day before Eisenhower took over. This column has obtained a copy of the confidential memo, which reads:

"You will recall that I touched briefly on the subject of the cataloging and standardization program and my concern as to its effectiveness. Attached is a copy of my memo to Mr. Sheridan, Defense Management staff, recommending action I believe to be appropriate . . ."

Foster enclosed not only his recommendation for the use of outside civilian experts to cut Army-Navy duplication, but he also enclosed an amazing memo from Edward J. Sheridan in which the Defense Management Director admitted complete failure by the armed forces to get together on a joint, standardization buying program.

According to the confidential memo, the 40-page catalog for the purchase of food, referred to above, "does not include information on each item needed for supply operations such as . . . size, weight, cubage . . . This means that the subsistence catalog which covers the simplest catalog of items existing in the military supply system cannot be used in supply operations . . ."

In other words, after spending $87,000,000 of the taxpayers' money and eight months time, even the meagre 40 pages of standardized cataloging aren't worth using.

"It would appear," continues the confidential memo, "that if this practice is followed for the remaining 73 groups of items to be cataloged, the intent of the Congress will not be met and that a single cataloging system will not be developed.

"Further the subsistence catalog, first published in November, 1952, is already at the printer for revision and inclusion of 300 additional items"—which the boys forgot.

"One million new items have entered the supply system since the Korean war started," the memo continued, "and represent a tremendous backlog of work.

"The rate of new items coming into the system is greater than the rate of cataloging," confesses Mr. Sheridan. "This means that we have undoubtedly spent needless time, money, and effort in cataloging items which were obsolete . . ."

When Congress passed the law for standardized buying it was estimated that the elimination of competing Army-Navy warehouses, duplicate warehousing personnel, duplicate books, cataloging, etc., would save the taxpayers four billions. Instead it has cost $87,000,000 extra. Four billions is just about the amount Budget Director Dodge has ordered Secretary Wilson to prune. This may be one way to do it.

Quote, Unquote

Florida innkeepers who live off the tourist trade are complaining about a hard season. It seems that the crowds of tourist are barely in excess of the available rooms and nobody, or hardly anybody, has to sleep in his car anymore.—**Greenville (S. C.) Piedmont.**

Baseball Spring training seemed to come a bit early this year. The sports pages were filled with news about it even before the fashion editors had a chance to comment on next Fall's styles.—**Greenwood (Miss.) Commonwealth.**