

# THE CHARLOTTE NEWS

1888—Sixty-Fifth Anniversary Year—1953

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THURSDAY, MARCH 19, 1953

## A DISPLAY OF COURAGE AND GOOD SENSE

THE numerous "whereas" clauses in the resolution on the Retirement Fund adopted by the City Council yesterday added up to these major points:

1. The fund is not now actuarially sound.
2. Even with an extra contribution of \$60,000 by the City in the next two years, it would not be sound on the basis of benefits now in the law.
3. Such an extra subsidy would discriminate against police officers and general municipal employees.
4. An overall study of all four retirement systems covering city employees is needed to determine their financial solvency, the adequacy of benefits, and the equality of treatment.

These were valid reasons for the Council to reverse last week's decision to kick in \$40,000 a year more in tax money to the shaky fund.

Even so, if required a good deal of political courage for Councilmen Boyd, Baxter, Albee and Dellinger to join Councilman Van Alstyne in opposition to the firemen's request. All they have been under some pressure from friends on both sides, and they have tried

to do the right thing from the first, just as the Council had done, who, on yesterday stood by his last week's vote.

This has been a trying experience for everyone concerned, and the Council merits the thanks of the taxpayers for thinking the matter through and coming up with the right answer.

Now the question goes back to the legislative delegation. Having asked originally for the Council's opinion, it now has a request that the Council remain the same for the next two years, and that retirements be frozen except for one man who will reach 65 in that period. At the end of two years, if no better plan has been worked out, the scale of benefits would automatically revert to the present law.

We hope that the legislative delegation will stand firmly behind the Council's recommendation. It is the only way we know, and indeed it is the course of action we have advocated for several months, to put all municipal employees on a reasonably equal basis and simultaneously protect the quiet and honest interest of the taxpayer, who is called upon to foot a major part of the bill.

## MODERN ELECTION SYSTEM IN SIGHT

SHORTLY after the near-collapse of the election machinery here last Nov. 4, the Mecklenburg board of elections began a diagnosis of the system to pinpoint its ailments. They knew that long lines formed at ballots, that thousands of voters wasted up to an hour trying to vote, and that hundreds of others simply turned away in disgust and didn't vote. They wanted to know why.

It didn't take long to spot the main source of trouble—the slow, tedious search for names in the ancient registration books. This was the No. 1 bottleneck to the speedy flow of voter traffic.

So the board began studying systems in other cities, and yesterday unveiled to members of the Board of Commissioners and City Council a new registration system that should combine with other changes to give Charlotte and Mecklenburg County fast and efficient voting machinery.

Each voter will be registered in a loose-

leaf, alphabetical binder. In small precincts, one binder will probably be enough. In larger precincts, binders will be divided among several binders so that more than one voting line can be set up. The new system, tested against the old at yesterday's demonstration, cleared voters more than twice as fast.

Officials of the election board estimated that it will cost \$30,000, including labor and all materials, to change over the 90,000 names now on the books to the new system. Members of the two governing boards indicated they would go along with that amount.

We approve the change quite enthusiastically. By itself, it will be a great improvement. But other changes are in the offing: a central registration office, open on a year-round basis; a smaller number of precincts; bigger voting places, with better entry and exit facilities.

These changes are long overdue in this urbanized metropolitan community.

## THE OTHER SIDE OF THE PICTURE

IN HIS ADDRESS to the North Carolina Citizens' Association last night, Comptroller-General Lindsay Warren blasted away at the inefficiency, waste and bungling in the executive branch of the Federal Government.

It was expected to do that. As "watchdog" for Congress, it is his job to look out for illegal or unwise expenditures in the executive branch. In presenting his list of horrible examples, he was in full fair and a wise man. Unlike those critics of the Federal Government who see only its worst side, the Comptroller-General kept his talk in perspective.

"I want to say emphatically that I think the vast majority of government people are not only competent, capable, and conscientious, but compare most favorably with those in private business whom it has been my lot to know."

That was the first point.

"It would be foolish to contend that there has not been corruption in government, but

hear in mind, it takes two to make a bribe—the briber and the bribed. Study deals in government are instigated from outside."

That was the second point.

"Now that there are so many new men in government, it is well to remind them that the same forces that sought favors from their predecessors will not be camping on their doorsteps."

That was the clincher.

Now that the New Deal-Fair Deal has been booted out, now that some degree of objectivity and rationality has been regained by the public, it is entirely appropriate to remind the American people that a majority of their public servants are able and honest, that most bribery and shady dealing is instigated from the outside, and that there will also be honest and convincing men seeking favors from government. Democratic Administrations and Republican. Democratic Administrations and Republican.

We make our manners to Mr. Warren for reminding his audience of these fundamentals.

## FORERUNNER OF A NEW POLICY

THERE was just one issue before the Supreme Court in the dispute over a hydroelectric development at Roanoke Rapids, N. C. That issue was whether the Federal Government had ever withdrawn the authority of the Federal Power Commission to license the private construction of a hydroelectric project at the site.

The struggle between public and private power was not directly involved, insofar as the high court was concerned. The personality and political ideology of ex-Interior Secretary Oscar Chapman was a factor. The preferences of the elected representatives from North and South Carolina were not at stake.

The six-man majority of the Supreme Court struck the issue in favor of the economic views expressed by the three-man minority, and held that the FPC's authority

to license the Virginia Electric & Power Co. to build the Roanoke River dam had never been revoked by Congress. Hence, the license to build the dam was valid, and the FPC may proceed with construction.

But though the public vs. private power controversy was not directly applicable, the Supreme Court's ruling will have a strong bearing on future Federal policy. President Eisenhower and his Interior Secretary, Douglas McKay, have emphasized repeatedly that private enterprise should be permitted to develop such projects when it is willing to do so.

With the Roanoke Rapids decision as a guide, it is but a step to greater cooperation between the Federal Government, the states, and private enterprise in the development of basins that have not yet been brought under control.

From The Washington Times-Herald

## THE BODY THAT STAYED BURIED

ALTHOUGH the Presidential campaign of last summer and Fall, the nation was that only one of Eisenhower never exactly where the body was buried. That is to say, he knew which of the expenditures for defense and foreign aid were essential and which were not. He was therefore far better prepared than Mr. Taft or Mr. Stevenson to make speedy and sharp reductions in expenditures and thus give the country a prompt tax reduction.

This was a plausible argument, and no one is to be blamed for Mr. Taft for the nomination and Mr. Stevenson in the election. Gen. Eisenhower's experience in Europe during the war and in command of the NATO army after the war, and his tour of duty here as chief of staff gave him an intimate acquaintance with defense establishment that the others did not seem to possess. Everybody knew that there were billions of dollars to be eliminated and everybody was eager to get on with the pruning by un-

like the others. Gen. Eisenhower was supposed to know just where to prune without cutting the life of Eisenhower.

As noted, this was a plausible argument. It seems, however, to have been a wholly fallacious one, for the body still has not been found and Mr. Eisenhower and his lieutenants in the administration are now telling the courts how unlikely it is that they ever will find it and what hard work it will be to dig it up if ever they do come across the grave.

The moral is to believe very little that you hear in political campaigns.

A South Dakota Congressman has come up with the idea to develop our river basins in a program urging that the national debt be paid off. Let's see—1888 is just 45 years away. See you at the celebration, if you're planning on living that long.—Johnson City (Tenn.) Press-Recorder.

## 'Of Course, It Wasn't One Of My Bigger Performances'



## Life Not So Bad, After All

### Congressmen Get Many 'Extras'

By CONGRESSIONAL QUARTERLY

It's generally agreed that there's nothing lavish about the \$15,000 a year paid to Congressmen, considering the numerous personal, political and official expenses they must meet.

But while the job of a national legislator is far from glamorous, it has brought spot in the form of special privileges, ranging from free shaves for Senators to a retirement plan for members of both chambers.

Both Senators and Representatives receive an annual salary of \$12,500, plus \$2,500 for expenses, with the first \$3,000 of Washington living expenses tax deductible.

They are provided fully equipped offices in Washington, and are entitled to office space in their home states.

Each Senator gets an annual allowance for employing office help allotted according to his state's population. Here is the payroll ceiling in terms of 1947 "basic" salary (the actual ceiling is considerably higher because of automatic pay increases enacted by Congress):

Under three million population, \$39,540; from three to five million, \$41,760; from five to 10 mil-

lion, \$47,640; over 10 million, \$49,860.

The pay ceiling for employees of a Senator's office, in terms of "basic" 1947 pay, and the actual maximums effective now, are:

Administrative assistant, \$8,400; "basic," \$11,646; actual, secretary, \$7,320; "basic," \$10,471.4; actual; other clerical staff, \$5,280; "basic," \$8,511.09; actual.

Other Senatorial privileges include free shaves and haircuts at the Senate barber shop, use of a small gymnasium with swimming pool and steam cabinet, and free rides on a subway between the Capitol and the Senate Office Building.

To employ office help, each House Member is allowed up to \$12,500 a year in terms of "basic" employee salary. Automatic pay increases voted since the basic rates were established can bring the actual allowance to almost twice that amount.

Both Senators and House Members may "frank" official mail postage-free and are allowed a quota of free long-distance telephone calls and telegrams. They also receive allotments for air mail and special delivery postage, stationery, and a round trip to Washington once a year.

Other privileges include a voluntary retirement plan and use of hospital facilities on a routine basis, and Library of Congress research service.

## Folk Language In Tar Heel

By BILL SHARPE

OUR folk language is so treacherous that no one, even the "experts," can possibly know all about it. When John Brazier started that lively discussion about "layers to catch meddles," the phrase was completely new to people of my acquaintance. I had never heard it and I doubted seriously that it was a North Carolina expression. Yet scores of readers not only knew it, but knew a great deal of its history and use.

These blind spots in information—which should make us appreciate anything—sometimes "go ahead," I'm listening." It is a sort of catch-all interjection which the listener uses to keep the talk moving, to express agree-

ment, despair, or perhaps a polite noncommittal response. It is interpreted as the listener chooses.

In Mitchell County, for instance, it is, quite possible to hear this:

"I think I'll go to the Roan today."

"Ay, la!"

"I bet it's snowing on the Roan today."

"Ay, la! Meaning 'you said it, brother.' Or 'maybe so,' that your opinion, not mine."

"That's right, climb up there."

"I'm 'ay, la' that it is, Or I'm not saying myself, it's for such as you. Or I'm surprised to hear you say that."

In Montgomery, I heard a tactful housewife handle a gossip neighbor thus:

"They claim they paid cash for that washer, I know better. 'Ay, la.' The gossip might consider this agreement, but actually it meant: 'I'm not going to say anything about that; I don't know.'"

"They took their tobacco money and went out and bought a new car with it."

"Ay, la! (Perhaps they did, but it is none of my business. Furthermore, you can't go away and say I talked about them. All I'm saying is 'ay, la.'")

"Isn't it a shame how some people won't pay their debts?"

"Ay, la." (Yes, it is a shame, but I'm not saying this about my neighbor. On top of that, these "ay, la's" of mine ought to be used to change the subject. Which she did.)

Some Citizens try to conceal their ignorance. Others scheme and sweat to appear on TV quiz shows.—Cincinnati Enquirer.

Excavators in California found the remains of a prehistoric man with his arms outstretched but failed to find his fish he was describing.—Shelby Star.

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## Many Income Tax Inequities Call For Study By Congress

By MARQUIS CHILDS

WASHINGTON  
NOW THAT the avulping kick of March 15 is once more behind us, Congress might do it the old time to study some of the glaring inequities in the income tax law. It is easy to fall into the trap of the-board cut of 10 or 15 per cent. It is much harder to get down to collecting the inequities and to do so on so many different groups.

An across-the-board cut means a little relief to the small taxpayer. To make the law more equitable, a substantial sum. When a tax cut is in order, the House Ways & Means committee would be well to relieve some of the worst hardships.

There is, first of all, the fact that the personal exemption of \$600 is ridiculously low in relation to present price levels. For middle and bracket families trying to educate children it doesn't come close to covering the costs.

In 1948 the exemption was raised from \$500 to \$600. The national income was at that time around \$200 billion. The latest estimates put it at around \$278 billion. Consideration should be given to the possibility that the fact of an increase in a tax deduction is through another increase in the personal exemption. Large families would be especially benefited.

LOSS OF REVENUE  
The House committee figure that an increase in the exemption to \$700 would cost the Federal Government that is roughly equivalent to what a 10 per cent across-the-board cut would mean. Increase of the exemption to \$1,000, which would be fairly realistic in terms of today's prices, would mean a drop in taxes of \$8 billion.

Obviously, the state of the budget is the foreseeable future will not permit any cut on that scale. But, if Congress is really interested in the small taxpayer, the question is the way to do it and not through a percentage cut.

Another inequity that needs correcting is the refusal to permit women who go out of the home to work call deduct the cost, or part of the cost, of their clothes. Many widowed mothers are com-

peled to work to provide adequately for their children. They hire a maid, and they have to do so even if they can deduct no part of the servant's salary as a business expense.

This puts a real hardship on many families. Correcting it, with some special provision, because of the privilege, would cost the Treasury comparatively little.

One of the great injustices has been the way that the application of the capital-gains tax to the sale of a home owned as a family home and representing in the majority of instances most of the savings of a lifetime. Capital-gains tax is, of course, a tax that customarily applies to the transactions of professional brokers, real-estate operators and men of means. The charge is, frequently, been made that for those in the upper bracket it is possible—in the case of successful lawyers—to shift income to the much lower capital-gains tax.

INDEQUITY ELIMINATED  
The hardship on middle-income families was most glaring in recent years of inflated values when families were forced to sell a business or some public service from one city to another. The family home was sold and a capital-gains tax was levied on the increase in the purchase price. Then it was necessary to buy another home, paying a full income tax on the purchase. This is an amendment put forward by Senator Wayne Morse (Ind., Ore.), in the House, which would subject to taxation if the amount received is invested within a year in another family-owned home.

That is a step in the right direction. But a family-owned home should not be subject to capital-gains tax under the present circumstances. On retirement and the necessary adoption of a "simpler" way of life, the family home is to sell the family home without tax penalty of any kind.

Some steps have been taken to ease the way for pensioners over 65. The exemption is now \$1,200. Old-age pensions from Social Security are tax free. All other social expenses are deductible in full.

## First Cable About Hannagan Went To Old Chum, Joe Copps

By ROBERT C. RUARK

NAIROBI, Kenya. Friends here last month, I don't know what he had made of it at the time, but I hope somebody did. The reporter mentioned Joe Copps, the Hannagan story never got told correctly.

It was a long time ago, in 1942, a white-haired, bright-faced, blue-eyed man who had been Steve's friend for many years. He was in Miami, with never a contract between them.

Joe and Steve formed a fabulous team that could make you believe that oranges were pure gold, but never told you that oranges were anything but oranges. They said Miami was the center of a basis of semi-naked women surrounded by John, but their news breaks were always wrong and their judgment was sound as a good city editor's. Press agents they called for, but not unpaid assistants to journalists they were.

Steve flew out from Cairo with me, and he was going to join us for a few days of safari in the Southern Marsh. He loved the love, I think. He loved anything new, because his curiosity was insatiable.

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