



THE CHARLOTTE NEWS

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 8, 1958

Kuralt's Salary Cut Should Be Restored

THE reduction of Welfare Superintendent Wallace Kuralt's salary last October was a case of sound procedure and poor policy.

Kuralt was not entitled under state regulations to receive a \$100 monthly increase provided by the city and county for added responsibility in the planning and supervising of a juvenile diagnostic center here. He was not entitled to a \$50 monthly automobile allowance he was receiving as a salary supplement. Thus the regulations—but only the regulations—were satisfied when his salary was reduced from \$850 to \$700 per month.

For by the heaviness of his responsibilities and the competence with which he discharges them Kuralt is fully entitled to at least the salary he was receiving before the reduction.

The net effect of the necessity of bringing the salary in line with regulations has been to raise the possibility that Kuralt will be forced to offer his considerable abilities in a better-paying market. This, we think, would be a serious blow to the efficiency and effectiveness of the Mecklenburg Department of Public Welfare. Prospects are dim that the superintendent could be replaced with an equally competent, rather even the original salary figure.

The field of social work offers hard and sometimes painful responsibilities. Its rewards are low pay and constant exposure to random suspicion and incessant complaint. Consequently there is a severe shortage of thoroughly trained and responsible social workers at all levels.

Some of the responsibilities of the Mecklenburg superintendent are men-

tioned in an interview with Kuralt appearing elsewhere on today's editorial page. They include expenditure of \$3¼ million of public funds annually, the care of an average of 2,000 children annually, carrying out investigations essential to wise administration of juvenile and domestic courts, and efforts to rehabilitate socially and physically handicapped children. Proper discharge of these responsibilities requires—in addition to efficient administration—a vast experience in human equations and a seasoned knowledge of human problems.

Said the Mecklenburg Board of Public Welfare recently: "The County Welfare Board believes and has believed that few, if any county welfare superintendents bring greater ability, efficiency or energy to the position than does Mr. Kuralt. We consider him unusually fortunate to have such a man in his position."

Having him there, Mecklenburg must make every effort to keep him there. The county has demonstrated its willingness to pay Kuralt an adequate salary in accordance with state regulations. The County Welfare Board has requested that the present unrealistic salary limit be raised.

We hope that Dr. Ellen Winston, state commissioner of public welfare, and other concerned officials will move rapidly to make it possible for Mecklenburg to pay its welfare superintendent what it has found he is worth.

In view of Dr. Winston's own excellent record in North Carolina and her national leadership in the welfare field, Mecklenburg surely can count on her sympathetic consideration.

Only New Ideas Can Save Us Now

LIKE a string of Chinese firecrackers, reports of the deficiencies in America's military posture have produced a minor popping in the public's ears since mid-fall.

The latest detonation, a Rockefeller Brothers Fund report on the security of the United States in an era of grave peril, will echo long through the halls of Congress.

In plain language, the privately sponsored study group believes that unless the United States acts immediately the world balance of power will shift within two years to the Soviet bloc.

Among its conclusions is a recommendation that the structure and philosophy of the Department of Defense be drastically reorganized with "united commands" for operational military forces.

This proposal, and several others contained in the 25,000-word report, is bold and controversial. The Rockefeller recommendations have already pinched a politician who it hurts—in his special interests. But the report is illustrative of the kind of adventurous thinking the nation must have in this age of constant crisis.

The Rockefeller Report, unlike the officially sponsored Gaither Report, has been released in its entirety. But the overall conclusions of the two bodies are believed to be startlingly similar.

Elephants Make Fine Scapegoats, Too

IN THE quest for a suitable scapegoat in the missile mess, Monday morning quarterbacking has been raised to the status of high art.

Craftiest of the craftsmen is perhaps Rep. Leslie C. Arends of Illinois, the House Republican whip and a high-ranking member of the House Armed Services Committee.

Congressman Arends, who can conjure up a scapegoat with his eyes closed, is the author of a 15-page memorandum to all House Republicans blaming the Democratic administration of President Harry S. Truman for the missile lag. Without mentioning Mr. Truman by name, the memorandum cites dates and figures in an effort to prove that lack of top priority attention and years of foot-dragging during his administration was primarily

responsible for any Soviet advantage in the missile field.

We cannot help but wonder if the facts and figures compiled by Congressman Arends go back as far as 1950 when the Pentagon and among the common folk along Tryon Street and other main thoroughfares of America. However revolutionary it may appear to be, however against the grain of America's military tradition, it clearly deserves sympathetic consideration. Interservice rivalry over the past several years has been scandalous. Furthermore, a case can be made for the greater clarity in Congress, the development of new weapons—particularly in the field of missiles—has caused the traditional missions of America's land, sea and air forces to overlap to such an extent that greater unity of command is fast becoming a clear-cut necessity.

These new ideas—significantly, from private sources—are themselves hopeful indications of the strength and vitality of the republic. The first requisite for survival in a changing world is the steady flow of new thoughts, new conceptions and, if you like, new dreams. If America ever inhibits that flow it will be inviting stagnation. And stagnation is the first step toward extinction.

Richard M. Simpson (Pa.) Of scapegoats there is no shortage, Congressman Arends—and some of them have tasks, trunks and twily can sciences.

From The Laurel (Miss.) Leader-Coll

EASY, MISS WILLIAMS

OUR INSTINCT for gallantry sat up and took notice the other day when we saw a picture of Esther Williams, the noted movie swim queen, looking glum. The caption said she was disturbed because woodpeckers had been playing hob with the roof of her home in Hollywood. Miss Williams, it developed, was looking for a humane way to discourage the woodpeckers.

Now, Miss Williams, rest easy. We know a way. It was first tested by a friend of ours some years ago when a woodpecker repeatedly awakened him at dawn with a brisk attack on the old homestead's rooftop. Being a believer in kindness to animals, our friend sought a way to get rid of the bird without doing it.

He observed the woodpecker until he discovered its sleeping quarters in a nearby hollow tree. When the bird had settled down for a peaceful night's sleep, our friend whacked on the hollow tree

with a broomstick. Out flew the bird. After three nights of such treatment, the woodpecker packed up and left those parts, never to return—or, never, at least, to play another tattoo on our friend's rooftop.

So there you are, Miss Williams. Just find out where those woodpeckers live and then give them the broomstick treatment.

Two lotus seeds, found in Manchuria, are sprouting after 1,000 years. So don't give up yet on all that stuff you planted last spring—COLUMBIA (S. C.) STATE.

How ironical that the Air Force chose Snark as the name for its latest missile. A variety of Snark, in Lewis Carroll's lexicon, was the Boojum—the hunters of which "softly and silently vanish away." —CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER.

WE ASKED WALLACE KURALT: What Makes Public Welfare Tick In Mecklenburg?

A CHARLOTTE NEWS INTERVIEW

INTERVIEWERS: What is the sum of the budget of the Welfare Dept.?

Kuralt: About \$3¼ million a year.

INTERVIEWERS: How many full-time persons does the department employ?

Kuralt: 105.

INTERVIEWERS: How many people are assisted during the year?

Kuralt: Last year, there were nearly 12,000 individuals who received assistance from the Dept. of Public Welfare.

INTERVIEWERS: Is this all financial assistance?

Kuralt: All these individuals received financial assistance. **INTERVIEWERS:** What would be your total case load, including financial assistance and non-financial assistance?

Kuralt: Well, these are individuals that I am speaking about rather than cases. Our total case load in the course of a year's time is approximately 8,000.

Who Pays?

INTERVIEWERS: What resources has the Mecklenburg County welfare department? Where does the money come from?

Kuralt: Well, about half the money is tax funds, county tax money, property ad valorem tax. The other half is state and federal money.

INTERVIEWERS: Do you as the superintendent have complete control over the manner in which these funds are distributed?

Kuralt: Well, no.

INTERVIEWERS: Who makes the money?

Kuralt: We administer the program, of course, under the provisions of state law and state regulations. The responsibility for determining eligibility is that of the superintendent of public welfare working with the county welfare board.

The Auditors

INTERVIEWERS: How can you ever be sure that welfare funds are being wisely spent?

Kuralt: Well, our program is audited by a number of sources. We have the federal auditor who comes into the office and reviews a sample of cases. We have the state auditor who comes in, and we have a social auditor who comes in from the State Auditing Commission. The regular audit work—the county commissioners do that.

INTERVIEWERS: Does the social

auditor investigate, so to speak, your policies and procedures?

Kuralt: That's right. The social auditor's primary interest is in the application of established policies and the effectiveness of them.

INTERVIEWERS: As well as how the money is spent?

Kuralt: That's right. The social auditor's primary interest is in the application of established policies and the effectiveness of them.

INTERVIEWERS: How long have you been in welfare work?

Kuralt: Well, a little over 25 years.

INTERVIEWERS: What were your previous capacities before becoming superintendent of the Mecklenburg County welfare?

Kuralt: Well, immediately before I came here, I was social auditor for the old federal social security program working in the southeastern states with headquarters in Atlanta. Prior to that, I was field representative of the state Board of Public Welfare and, at an earlier date, I was casework supervisor and prior to that, caseworker with the old program of WPA, Emergency Relief Administration and other programs.

INTERVIEWERS: You have been in Mecklenburg 12 years?

Kuralt: 12½ years.

The Beginnings

INTERVIEWERS: How long has North Carolina had a public welfare program?

Kuralt: Well, the constitutional mandate set up a state Board of Public Welfare right around 1900, and something like that.

INTERVIEWERS: Since 1919, there have been county departments of public welfare in the larger counties working with the state and since 1937, the beginning of Social Security in this state, there has been a full-time Dept. of Public Welfare in each of the 100 counties.

Dissent By Phone

INTERVIEWERS: In a nutshell, what is your philosophy of public welfare?

Kuralt: Well, public welfare, of course, was established to help those individuals meet their basic

needs, both financial and social basic needs, when they have established that they are unable to do it on their own.

INTERVIEWERS: Some stern moralists, I believe, seem to think that the weaker members of society should simply be allowed to die. What is your answer to that?

Kuralt: I get a good many telephone calls every day from some individuals who don't agree, of course, it doesn't really matter what I think about it anyway, so long as we have laws that say individuals in need shall be helped. And it's my job to administer those laws.

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could possibly be found constitutional.

The Volunteers

INTERVIEWERS: What about voluntary sterilization?

Kuralt: Well, I think that under proper conditions there is room for voluntary sterilization. Actually, as you may know, we have a State Eugenics Institute which provides for voluntary sterilization when the patient is feeble-minded, epileptic, or insane. The program is administered very carefully and brings about good results. I would be in favor, however, under proper controls, of seeing this extended to provide for voluntary sterilization of such instances as the social work and medical professions could agree upon to protect the best interests of society.

INTERVIEWERS: Should sterilization be open to the public?

Kuralt: Well, of course as you know, that is a question that has been debated a great deal by Congress and the state legislature have consistently felt that the weaker members of society should not be allowed to reveal the names of individuals and the amount of aid received.

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