

THE CHARLOTTE NEWS

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FRIDAY, DECEMBER 19, 1958

Charlotte Can Still Prevent A Tragedy

It is a miracle that Charlotte has been spared.

If fire broke out today in any number of schools, apartment houses and office buildings, the human tragedy could be appalling.

The plain fact is that conditions which made the recent Chicago school blaze so disastrous exist in buildings throughout the Queen City.

Authorities are too polite to call them "fire traps." But dangers exist, as Staff Writer John Kilgo has shown in an eye-opening series of special reports running currently in The News.

Some buildings conform to official regulations but are not really safe. Others are in serious violation of building codes and reasonable standards of safety.

Fire prevention authorities and building inspectors have worked hard to correct deficiencies. But enforcement has been a problem. Stiff penalties are available in some instances but they are not always used when the complete removal of hazards in old buildings would work a "hardship" on owners.

Strict enforcement might put scores

of midtown structures temporarily "off limits." This is particularly true in buildings erected before the state's present building code went into effect.

The worst violations include open stair wells, exit doors that open the wrong way, accumulations of flammable material in potentially dangerous locations.

Obviously, there are too many fire hazards for them all to be removed at once. But Charlotteans must be made aware of the peril. Property owners must cooperate with fire prevention officials. Officials, in turn, must crack down relentlessly on violators who refuse to cooperate. A new and sterner system of penalties will undoubtedly have to be installed—locally or, better yet, statewide.

Certainly, there will be "hardship" cases. But death and injury are hardships, too.

The recent Chicago school fire killed 92 persons.

A department store fire in Colombia 98 persons and a complete removal of a hotel fire in Atlanta several years ago killed 119.

It must not happen here.

Is A Scapegoat Really Necessary?

THE selection of Councilman Herbert H. Baxter as scapegoat for the city's fiscal woes is as premature as it is presumptuous.

There will be ample time to assess the blame if the municipality actually winds up the year with a quarter million dollar deficit, as Mayor James S. Smith darkly predicted the other day.

If there's been a blunder in basing the city's budget on an unrealistic tax valuation figure then the guilt will be widely shared. The last time we looked, Mr. Baxter was the proud possessor of only one vote. He is a charming fellow with a reputation for geniality and chronic optimism, but he has no magical powers and does not practice voodoo. If he has a bad idea he can be shouted down—or, more effectively, voted down. He wasn't.

Thus, there exists a collective burden of responsibility.

But why the search for "villains" at all? The final tabulations have not been made. The end of the fiscal year is still a long way off. There's not even an election until next spring.

Somebody's been seeing too many television westerns—the ones where the leader of the vigilantes invariably shouts: "Why wait to try the varmint? Somebody get a rope! Let's string him up here!"

MOONSHINERS sentenced in Federal District Court in Greensboro this week were told they would not have to report until Jan. 5 to begin serving their prison terms. That's nice. This is the busy season.

Faubusocracy Sounds A First Warning

NO matter which angle you take, the disputed Hays-Alford congressional election contains a tiny kernel of political TNT.

From the angle of Reps. Davis of Tennessee and Jones of Alabama, this week's House Elections Committee hearings provided a line at which the Confederacy's men of mettle must stand up and be counted. Thus Davis and Jones, believing themselves to be standing fast, no doubt, on the segregation line, refused to go along with the committee when it recommended that Dr. Alford not be seated until charges against him are looked into.

Specifically, it is alleged, among other things, that Dr. Alford's partisans dispensed gummed stickers—marked "Alford-X"—practically on the doorstep, perhaps even inside, the polling places themselves. No ballot need to be marked for Alford, the "independent."

He was able to overthrow Hays with stickers, and that in itself, while perhaps not illegal, is scarcely in the best electoral tradition. If, contrary to law, they were handed out inside the 100-yard radius of polling stations, these stickers are illegal.

Yet, hewing to their angle, the two southern committeemen dismissed the majority decision not to recommend seating Dr. Alford as "highly unusual"

—in spite of the established tradition that Congress remains the sole judge of its members' qualifications.

Charges against Dr. Alford and his political cohorts have yet to be proved. Even at a distance, however, the evidence seems particularly damning. Indeed, Reps. Davis and Jones admitted that "further investigation is justified."

When, one might reasonably ask, will these southern hearties and others who happen not to adhere to the active gospel of Faubusocracy espay the TNT? Before it blows up in their faces?

Under Faubusocracy as practiced against Rep. Brooks Hays, any southern politician may be overwhelmed in almost any election by shady practices. If the power and caprice of a governor is to override the choice of regularly-constituted party primaries, if the tools of electoral manipulation are to be used with impunity, which one of them is safe? Perhaps not even Davis and Jones — the two congressmen who have, in fact, given a vote of confidence to Faubusocracy in the case of the Hays-Alford election.

What it all comes down to is that southern politicians have a vested interest in such odd-ball elections.

They had their first warning in Little Rock on Nov. 4.

From The Raleigh News & Observer

CORPSES SHOULD BE QUIET

WILL ROGERS said that all he knew was what he saw in the papers. So it may not be inappropriate for a paper to report what appeared in Will Rogers' column just 30 years ago. No comment seems required. Rogers wrote in 1928 in the midst of the boom, just before the bust which was just before the New Deal. He said:

"It just ain't in the book for us to have the best of everything all the time. A lot of these other nations are mighty poor, and things kinda equal up in the long run. If you more money, the other fellow mebbe has better health; and if another's got something, why, some other will have something else. But we got too big an overbalance of everything and we better kinda start looking ahead and sorta taking stock and seeing where we are headed."

"You know, I think we put too much emphasis and importance and advertising on our so-called high standard of living. I think that 'high' is the only word in that phrase that is really correct. We are aliveing high."

"Our children are delivered to schools in automobiles. But whether that adds to their grade is doubtful. There hasn't been a Thomas Jefferson in this country since we turned our first trust. Rail-

splitting produced an immortal President in Abraham Lincoln; but golf, with 29 thousand courses, hasn't produced even a good A Number-1 congressman. There hasn't been a Patrick Henry showed up since business men quit eating lunch with their families, joined a club and have indignation from amateur putting. Suppose Teddy had took up putting instead of horse-back riding. It's also a question that we can convert these four billion filling stations into in years to come. But it ain't my business to do you folks' worrying for you. I am only tipping you off and you-all are supposed to act on it."

It is certainly not the business of Will Rogers, now 23 years dead, to do our worrying for us. But it is just possible that he speaks quite as pertinently now as in rosy-prospected year of 1928.

A friend says he's almost ashamed to step up to the counter and buy cigarettes. He says it's because he doesn't have a tattoo or a salibon or he can't show up since business men quit eating lunch with their families, joined a club and have indignation from amateur putting. Suppose Teddy had took up putting instead of horse-back riding. It's also a question that we can convert these four billion filling stations into in years to come. But it ain't my business to do you folks' worrying for you. I am only tipping you off and you-all are supposed to act on it."

Smith's Throttled

The Democrat who urged secrecy was Congressman Sid Yates of Illinois. The liberal Democrats were meeting to break the throttled of Congressman Howard Smith of Virginia and the State committee over legislation which Smith

'Welcome To Statisticsville': A Tar Heel Ghost Story

By MALCOLM B. SEAWELL

Editors' Note: This tingling tale by North Carolina's attorney general is condensed from one of his recent speeches.

None of you has ever seen Statisticsville, North Carolina. The chances are that some of you may see the town—that is why I would like to tell you about it. Maybe you won't go there.

All roads and highways lead to Statisticsville, but no one ever starts out for it. One starts out for Charlotte, Wilmington, Greensboro, Winston-Salem, and winds up in Statisticsville.

"Winds up" is the proper expression. When one sees the town, one becomes a permanent resident.

Statisticsville has more doctors, lawyers, dentists, and engineers, teachers per capita than any other municipality in North Carolina. None of them practices his profession any more.

Let's put it this way: Tomorrow morning you get up early to drive to Charlotte. You have an important business matter which needs your attention. The morning is foggy and some rain has fallen. You look at the children who are still asleep. You kiss your wife. She says, "Be careful!" you reply, "I'll be back for supper."

You start out. The tires on your



The Next Stop Wasn't On The Map

car are a little slick but there is still a lot of good rubber on the fabric. The brakes are somewhat slack but a pump or two will bring them up.

You get about a hundred miles up the road and start around a tight curve. Oh, well, you know what happens—the car goes into

wealth. Every time there is a new house in the city, a hundred and twenty thousand dollars is added to the worth of Statisticsville and deducted from the worth of your home community and state. To that figure is added about three hundred dollars for property damage. There seems no end to the income of this city. During the past ten years this city has become the wealthiest city in North Carolina. Our bank balances is now one billion four hundred nine million, two hundred nine thousand, eight hundred eighty dollars (\$1,409,209,850). We levy no taxes.

GREAT WASTE

"But all of the homes, buildings, factories, streets..."

"That's easy. They are representative also. They represent the community which all of the loss of money, talent and life could have created."

"But the factories aren't running. There's no business, no children in the schools, no people in the houses—there isn't anything happening!"

"That's right," says the old man. "It's a great waste, isn't it?"

"Why isn't something done about it?" you ask.

"Why Eleven Thousand and ninety-eight—if I may call you by your name—(and you may call me the Eleven thousand and ninety-seven), just what do you think you can do?"

A STRANGE PLACE

The houses are quite modern. There are factories and office buildings. There are no children playing in the yards. There are no automobiles on the streets. No smoke comes from the chimneys. You see a building which looks like a city hall. You walk in.

At a desk sits an old man. You walk up to the desk. You see him make a mark and hear him say, "Eleven thousand and ninety-eight."

You ask, "May I use the telephone?" He looks at you and says, "I've never heard of such service. I've never heard of this town. It's got a funny name."

"Nothing funny about the name—just the opposite. But I am forgetting my manners. Welcome to Statisticsville."

You ask, "Have you lived here all your life?"

"No," replies the old man. "I've never really lived here. I got here less than eight hours ago. Never been here before. I was on my way to Florida, my wife and I. I retired a couple of months ago, and we bought a home so that we could spend the remainder of our lives in Florida. Fellow drove through a stop sign into my car. I wound up here. When I got here there was a honeymoon couple at the desk. They were married last night. Some of their friends chased them as they started out. The couple came here for their honeymoon."

TELL THE PEOPLE

"We can tell the people!"

"Oh, they are told. Every day the newspapers print the stories. Every day the statistical report is released, but every eight hours some newcomer takes over at this desk."

"Where do you go from here?" you ask.

"We don't go. That is, we don't go together. You have got to take over at this desk for eight hours. Of course, when we have more than a thousand drivers, the eight hours will be cut. A few years from now, one will only have to sit here four or five hours before going."

"What do I do?"

THE BOOK

"Same thing I have done. I knew you were coming to Statisticsville when you left home. There wasn't anything I could do about it. But don't worry—you'll know what to do. The questions, I am told, are always the same. The newcomer wants always to use the telephone. The next newcomer will be eleven thousand and ninety-nine. Just write that down in this book. Eleven thousand and ninety-nine may be a hot rodder who got out of court yesterday with the cops. He may be a good fellow who took 'just 'one for the road,' or someone who got a moment just wasn't paying any attention."

"Well, can you tell me..."

"Sorry, you'll have to take over now. In exactly seven hours and forty minutes a newcomer will walk in. He'll want to use the telephone. Just write down 'Eleven thousand and ninety-nine.' Then tell him that his wife has just notified, and that the wrecker has been sent."

GHOST TOWN

Statisticsville is a growing city. It was not incorporated before 1947. Today it has over eleven thousand souls. One newcomer arrives every eight hours. The newcomers come uninvited. Nobody wants them to come. They just happen along. They give up families, friends and businesses to become permanent residents of a place which is really a ghost town—a place where business is dead.

One of you has ever seen Statisticsville North Carolina. The chances are that some of you may see the town—that is why I would like to tell you about it. Maybe you won't go there.

The Situation In China Looks Interesting—



A Command Performance

Dinner At The White House

By DORIS FLEESON

WASHINGTON

BY WAY of the social season, Washington is getting a foretaste of the relaxed attitude the President and Mrs. Eisenhower are taking toward their final two years in the White House.

Even more than last year when their party calendar was sharply abbreviated, the Eisenhower social obligations have been pared to a bare minimum. Only five dinners are being held, with extra guests invited for the musicals which follow.

No receptions as such are scheduled. Traditionally, receptions are the President's bow toward the great number of people who carry on the day-to-day business of the government and have little other opportunity to see and meet their Chief Executive and the First Lady.

IT'S AN ORDER

The Supreme Court dinner, the first under the new dispensation, took place last week. A White House invitation is a command, and the justices, like the rest of their invited present themselves with their wives well before the appointed hour of 8 o'clock. The usual cortege of uniformed aides from the Army, Navy and Air Force lined them up in the East Room to be received in the East Room by the President. Lesser dignitaries and the many personal friends of the Eisenhowers were invited through up the rear.

Eight o'clock came and went, and the hovering aides who were

are a little slick but there is still a lot of good rubber on the fabric. The brakes are somewhat slack but a pump or two will bring them up.

You get about a hundred miles up the road and start around a tight curve. Oh, well, you know what happens—the car goes into

Never been here before. I was on my way to Florida, my wife and I. I retired a couple of months ago, and we bought a home so that we could spend the remainder of our lives in Florida. Fellow drove through a stop sign into my car. I wound up here. When I got here there was a honeymoon couple at the desk. They were married last night. Some of their friends chased them as they started out. The couple came here for their honeymoon."

"Well, my friend," you say, "I would like to talk to you for a moment, but I'm late for an appointment in Charlotte. If you'll just give me the name of the garage which has my car and tell me how to get to the bus station, I'll be much obliged."

"You appointment in Charlotte has been cancelled. You aren't expected. We have a bus station here. There are no buses and you aren't going anywhere. You see, you have become a Statisticsville—that is what we call residents of Statisticsville."

"You mean..."

"Yes, that's right. Maybe you walked away from your car but your body didn't. It's on the way home. It'll be there by supper time."

THAT'S ITS NAME

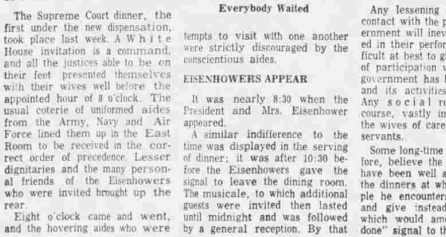
"That can't be true. I'm in a town in North Carolina. I'm a Statisticsville. That's its name."

"Too true," says the old man. "But you must understand that this is a representative town. It represents much. For one thing it represents actual and potential

PERSONAL CONTACT

Any lessening of a President's contact with the people in his government will inevitably be reflected in their performance. It is difficult at best to give them a sense of participation when the federal government has become so large and its activities so impersonal. Any social recognition is, of course, vastly important, too, the wives of career men and civil servants.

Some long-time observers, therefore, believe the President would have been well advised to forget the dinners at which he sees people he encounters in other ways and give instead the reception which would amount to a "well done" signal to the lesser ranks.



MAMIE EISENHOWER Everybody Waited

tempts to visit with one another are strictly discouraged by the conscientious aides.

EISENHOWERS APPEAR

It was nearly 8:30 when the President and Mrs. Eisenhower appeared.

A similar indifference to the time was displayed in the serving of dinner. It was after 10:30 before the Eisenhowers gave the signal to leave the dining room. The musicale, to which additional guests were invited then lasted until midnight and was followed by a general reception. By that

time, however, some of the guests were quietly slipping away.

It was noticeable also that the Eisenhowers had included on their restricted guest list an unusually large proportion of their personal friends and wealthy people who had entertained them at their vacation resorts.

Press coverage of the distasteful side of the White House, never very inclusive in the Eisenhower regime, has shared in the general restriction of its activities. Neither Mrs. Eisenhower nor her staff and press conferences, the press associations and local newspapers are allowed to cover social events, but the many special reporters here must be represented by only one of their number, who is drawn by lot.

Valuable Employees Going Unrewarded

Charlotte

Editors: The News

I HAVE OFTEN heard that a janitor makes more than a teacher in our modern school system, which, if true, is sad to contemplate when considering the future education of our children.

Now I notice in this progressive city that the local Park Board members seem to value more highly the services of a non-accidentally trained manager of the Park than those rendered by college-trained recreation specialists.

What can we expect if we as

city sit by and watch valued employees in recreation work leave us for better-paying positions elsewhere, when they are bypassed in salary raises while favors are bestowed on less qualified personnel?

I think that work in recreational activities with all our citizens is of far greater importance than the more narrow duties of a commercial building. If the members of the Park Board are so generous they the taxpayers' money, let them contract with us to work with them in curbing Smith's obstructionist tactics against liberal legislation. We certainly would support any such "showdown" with Smith, not the contrary.

This view was strongly supported by Reuss (WV), Metcalf (Mont), Vanick

What Was Agreed

It was agreed:

1.—To stroke Sam Rayburn's barren brains and get him to go along with the move to overthrow the throttled of Congressman Smith of Virginia.

2.—To revive the 21-day rule, by which a bill bottled up by Mr. Smith would come out of the Rules Committee after 21 days on the motion of a committee chairman, or by a vote of the majority on an interested committee who favored a certain bill.

3.—To make an alternative, to change the

People's Platform

Accordingly each congressman took a pledge to say nothing. However, this column can report what happened behind closed doors.

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Drew Pearson's 'Naughty Boys' Plot Against Mr. Sam

Doesn't want to reach a full vote of the House of Representatives, Congressman Smith will debate the "Love Life of a Raccoon" or "Diseases of Horses," but he is flatly opposed to letting the so-called "representatives of the people" debate slum clearance, public housing, sewage disposal, or other matters of interest to the people which are opposed by the big utilities or the real estate lobby.

We Love Him Dearly

"We must be certain that what we do here doesn't have the appearance of a result against the speaker," said Congressman Yates. "We're for the speaker. We love him dearly and we'll vote with him. So we must be careful about any

trickery, to change the