



# THE CHARLOTTE NEWS

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MONDAY, MARCH 24, 1958

## N.C. Court System Needs Major Surgery

THE era of careless rapture about the administration of justice in North Carolina is gone.

It was obliterated, swiftly and deftly, yesterday by Albert Coates' 41-page report on the courts of yesterday, today and tomorrow in Tarheel.

The survey, prepared for Sen. Spencer Bell's Committee on Improving and Expediting the Administration of Justice, exposed all of the disastrous incongruities between the purpose and the performance of a court "system" that is today heavily tainted with bureaucratic blight.

The blight has not crippled the whole mechanism. Actually, the Supreme Court and the Superior Courts are the products of an orderly process to meet the growing demands of a changing society. But the lower courts, charged with the responsibility of dispensing so much of North Carolina's local "justice," represent a medley of confusion.

THE utter chaos in the state's lower court system gives the Coates report its sharpest bite. It is in this area that the most important reforms must be made.

The orderly adjustment which has marked the history of the Supreme and Superior Courts somehow was never permitted to extend to the lower courts of North Carolina. Mr. Coates' historical sketch shows how we have total disorder. The individual courts include Justice of the Peace, Mayor's, Special Act, "General Law," Juvenile and Domestic Relations, Administrative—more than 1,400 in all—established by different people, in different times, for different purposes, at different times and with interlocking, overlapping and conflicting relationships.

The whole unhappy story of the Justice of the Peace is told. Here the lack of uniformity is distinctly obvious. He may be elected by the voters of his township, designated by "omnibus bills" in the General Assembly or appointed by the resident judge of the Superior Court. The General Statutes authorize 3,081 in the state's 1,027 townships plus one "for every one thousand" people living in an unincorporated city or town. This formula authorizes 152 Justices of the Peace in Mecklenburg alone. Add to these the indeterminate numbers which may be named by the General Assembly in every legislative session and by resident judges and the possible total is beyond all reason.

BUT the absurdity is not limited to Justices of the Peace. There are problems in other lower judicial agencies. For instance, up to 1917 the General Assembly established a multiplicity of "special courts," of which 70 are still in operation. As long ago as 1915, the president of the North Carolina Bar Association was calling this illogical miscellany "a crazy quilt court system, a veritable judicial Pandora's box, creating judicial and court chaos."

It is probably news to most Tar Heels that there are 265 courts in North Carolina with jurisdiction over that part of a Justice of the Peace and less than that of a Superior Court.

There are bugs even in the generally tidy Superior Court system. Mr. Coates' study reveals that the legislature has decreased the original jurisdiction of the



Justice Under Stress

Superior Courts in differing degrees in different counties to the point that the judges rarely know the situation they will face in going from one county to another.

But the Coates report is a treasure house of many such nuggets of dismal information. In reviewing the whole history of courts in North Carolina, he illuminates with great care their lack of uniformity and proper controls with the resulting delays and inefficiencies. His study clearly indicates that the logic and experience of nearly 300 years establish the need for a general unified court system in North Carolina. Most important of all, an orderly system of lower courts must be provided within easy reach of the people for the trial of lesser civil and criminal cases.

This is the task of the North Carolina Bar Association committee headed by Mecklenburg's Sen. Bell.

THE specific recommendations of the Bell committee are still to come. But it is certain that they will stem directly from the substance of Mr. Coates' informative survey.

Mr. Coates concludes his report with the wise assertion that the committee realize continuity with the past is not only a convenience but a necessity. He notes that the life of a court system, like the life of the law, has not been so much logic as it has experience and that the courts of tomorrow will grow out of the courts of today. Tar Heels are assured that the Bell committee will not recommend any radical changes in the pattern of the administration of justice in North Carolina simply because it is working in New Jersey or Missouri or the federal courts in this or in any other state or because the American Bar Association recommends it, but because it grows out of the logic and experience of our life and history.

IF there were ever any doubts that courts reform were needed in North Carolina, surely they exist no longer. The Bell committee has done its homework well. The need has been clearly, systematically, even dramatically, established. Tar Heels will want the committee's specific proposals with great eagerness. The time for major surgery is at hand.

## That War Has Been Named Again

THE news that yet another name has been offered for that difficulty between the Confederacy and those people up yonder leaves us only slightly breathless.

It seems that the legislature of South Carolina insisted, rather tediously, on referring to the conflict in a formal resolution as "The American War Between the Confederate States of America, South, and the Federal Union of the United States of America, North."

Such an unwieldy appellation may represent southern scholarship at its best and may even enjoy a brief notoriety at UDC meetings but it will never catch on in the ranks. It is too long for a retail, too esoteric for Confederate drinking songs and too many for successful Memorial Day oratory.

And can't you just picture the chitlin crawling up on the cannon's line at bedtime saying, "Tell us an American War Between the Confederate States of

America, South, and the Federal Union of the United States of America, North, story, grandpa?"

"What's that you say, youngun?" the old cannon would ask, being a mite hard of hearing.

"I said tell us an American War Between the Confederate States of America, South, and the Federal Union of . . . why don't you go jump in the swamp, grandpa!"

And so it would go. Surely no war has ever been garnished with so much nomenclature as the one in question. It has been called the Civil War, the War Between the States, the War For Southern Independence, the Southern Rebellion, the Late Unpleasantness, the Late Hate and goodness knows what else. We have a simple solution which would satisfy all of the requirements of Confederate unity. Yankee misgivings and the jackets of historical novels. Why not be precise? Why not just call it the War?

stopped she found out it was a Negro bus.

"Pat Taylor, 9, said it went by his house and he accepted a ride rather than wait for Mrs. Baskin to have the tire changed."—The Associated Press.

"I will not stoop to naming names," Congressman Sludgepump thunders.

"But since these are very highly placed names I can name them without even bending over."—SPEAKER SAM BASKIN, JACKSONVILLE TIMES-UNION.

Note from Newcastle: Residents of a Kentucky coal mining community are suffering from a shortage of natural gas.

—BALTIMORE NEWS & OBSERVER.

# Just How Disastrous Is America's 'Great Recession'?

By JOSEPH ALSEP

FOR the first time since the end of the second World War, the American consumer has quite sharply cut his purchases of goods and services.

Incredible as it may seem, the dollar volume of American consumer buying continuously increased, with only minor fluctuations in the rate, for a period of almost exactly 12 years. Even the previous mild recessions did not really halt the voracious advance. They merely leveled out the upward curve for awhile.

This is the remarkable background against which to judge yet unpublished government figures that are creating some of a stir among the Eisenhower administration's economic policy makers. In brief, the rate of American consumer expenditure reached an all time high of \$28.3 billion per annum during the third quarter of last year.

### CONSUMER SPENDING

In the last quarter of 1957, however, the rate of consumer spending showed the first unprecedented positive downturn of \$1.2 billion. It is further estimated that the drop has continued and even accelerated in the first quarter of 1958. The consumer spending rate has probably gone down by another \$2 billion during these three months.

With the annual rate of spending now running at about \$28 billion, the outlays for American consumers' comfort, amusement and pleasure are still far more than double the total income of the Soviet Union, the next most productive nation in the world. Furthermore, American purchases of soft goods have not decreased. The whole drop in the spending rate is accounted for by contracting purchases of such con-

sumers' durable goods as automobiles. But the figures are still causing long faces among the policy makers, because this is classed as a durable goods depression, and because of the further drop in durable goods spending in the first quarter of the present year.

### PART OF A BALE

Then consumer purchasing figures are only one part of a bale of decidedly depressing statistics on the recession-depression that are now being studied at the highest administration level in the White House itself.

Other items in the bale concern what are called the "real spendable earnings" of employed factory workers. In addition to the sharply rising industrial unemployment, there has been a sharp reduction in working hours of the men and women who still have jobs. According to a Labor Department estimate, average time in the job in the nation's factories has now gone down from 41 hours a week (which meant one hour of overtime pay in many factories) to 38 hours a week.

### GAINS WIPED OUT

The resulting cut in weekly pay has cancelled out the whole continuous rise in factory workers' "real spendable earnings" that took place in the last three years. After adjustments for changes in the postwar price index and for taxes, the estimated rate of "real spendable earnings" passed \$65 a week in 1957. But it has now dropped by nearly 8 per cent, to less than \$60 a week—which was the rate at the end of 1954. Also in the same statistical bale are figures confirming the forecasts that have already appeared, that President Eisen-

hower is due to be badly disappointed in hopes for a substantially better March employment picture.

The Census Bureau based its estimate of 5.2 million unemployed in February on a study of the week ending Feb. 15. In that week, 25,000 persons were added to the rolls of those receiving unemployment insurance payments, and the total on the rolls for the week was 3,131,000—the rest the Census Bureau estimate being accounted for by people waiting jobs but having no insurance.

Since this key week in February, new applications for unemployment insurance have risen sharply and then dropped again: while the total number of applications of unemployment insurance has gone up less steeply and dropped less importantly. For the week ending March 15, new applications for insurance are already known to have numbered 410,500, and the total on the rolls is guessed to be about 3,220,000, pending final figures coming in. According to Labor Department authorities, this will

give a March unemployment total no different from the February total or perhaps a bit higher.

In other words, the facts that the President decided he wanted to wait and see when he put off the decision on a tax cut, are now all on the presidential desk and only too bleakly visible. Nothing is lacking but the Census Bureau's belated confirmation of the March unemployment total. The question remains why the wait-and-see mood still prevails in the administration high command.

## 'Gee, I Wonder Why More Birds Don't Show Up?'



## Hilton's Brainstorm

### Airport Inns

By ROBERT C. RUARK

Nobody ever accused Conrad Hilton of stupidity, and in his newest venture, the gent has really nailed one on the nose. The hotel magnate has just announced plans to build a flock of inns close aboard the airports in the major cities—300-room units with modern facilities for eating and amusement.

He may get some business from his big hotels, but with the superjet age upon us shortly, he's going to make a flock in fresh friends. He's already made one out of me for merely having the idea. I'll do down in a kenneled if it will eliminate those long, dreary hauls from airport to city to hotel, when all I need is a night's sleep and a connection in the morning.

### SHRINKING AMERICA

This idea of expediting ground traffic applies particularly now that we teeter on the edge of universal jet transport. Vice President Walter H. Johnson Jr. of TWA was saying recently that in 10 months' time the advent of jet service would "shrink the travel size of America 40 per cent." He mentioned that the flying time of 7 1/2 hours from Los Angeles to New York will be cut to 3 1/2 hours.

European flights are already chopped down to a long day's haul, and when the trans-oceanic swiftness really get moving, your time changes will get you there almost before you leave. You have to pay for this privilege of time on the return trip, but time itself is only so many hours, no matter what the clock says, and it's all fast. And will be faster.

### POINT OF NAUSEA

"Jet planes," Johnson said "will double the amount of passenger seat mileage. But will tourists continue to fly in turbine aircraft? If upon arrival they receive service which borders on the obsolescent, are

lodge in piston-gated hotels and motels and find resorts commercialized to the point of nausea?"

What the man is saying, of course, is that a fellow who can afford to fly at all might rather continue on from Detroit to Bermuda than waste a lot of time fighting his way into New York to spend the night and then fighting his way back to the airport to go through the whole mess of customs and baggage inspection once again before he takes off for Bermuda, where he was headed in the first place.

### TERRIFIC CLOBBERING

Especially on flights from the East Coast of America to Europe, a more or less two-day sojourn has been accepted for the man or woman who comes from the West. This has comprised big tourist business for New York's hotels, restaurants and night clubs. It's about to fade—already urged along by the fact that you can fly over the Pole from the West Coast in very smart time. The commercial jets will have you from Los Angeles to Rome about as fast as they can lug you from San Francisco to Miami.

The ordinary transient hotel has taken a terrific clobbering from the motel in recent years, in the motorist trade. This is known as convenience business, as opposed to semi-permanent stopover or vacation accommodations. It deals with the one-night stands.

### NO THANKS

You couldn't force me into city traffic and into an old-fashioned motel, with elevators and bell captains and parking problems and tipping all over it. I can drive my car to some pleasant motel on the outskirts, enjoy its swimming pool, play nobody, and not have to ring down for ice because there's an ice machine on the veranda.

The airline travelers are going to demand the same thing, existing in out slaughterhouses. Now we have a chance to eliminate them.

Royal Oak, Mich. Editors The News:

THE House of Representatives recently voted overwhelmingly in favor of a humane slaughter bill which requires that animals be rendered insensible before killed for meat.

For almost 30 years people have protested the barbaric cruelties

## America The Beautiful?

# The Battle Of The Billboards

By MARQUIS CHILDS

WHETHER the \$100 million highway system is to give roadside advertisers a captive audience for their billboards is a question the Senate must soon decide, with conservationists all over America watching that votes as few Senate votes will be scrutinized this session.

While it may seem trivial in comparison to such issues as the control of outer space and a cure for the recession, this happens to be something that every voter understands. When he and his family go on a tour of scenic America a highway paid for by his tax dollars and find themselves looking at billboards so sorely placed on the roadside as to be a curse that the eye cannot escape them, he will want to hold someone accountable.

### DEMOCRATS BLUSH

This could prove a distinct embarrassment to the Democrats. Although the initiator of the anti-billboard measure is a Democrat, Sen. Richard Neuberger of Oregon, most of the opposition has also come from the Democratic side. Sen. Thomas K. Kuch of Illinois, whose state puts a big premium on tourists, reversed his earlier position and joined Neuberger in sponsoring the bill offering federal standards limiting billboards.

By a narrow seven to six in the close vote of the Senate Public Works Committee, the billboard provision was included in the bill expediting highway spending this year. Four Republicans, Sen. Kuch, Francis Case, Chapman Reverend and Norris Cantu, and three Democrats, Sens. Albert Gore, Frank Church and Neuberger, voted for the billboard amendment. Of the six voting against it, four were Democrats, Sens. Charles McNamara and Robert McNamara, and two were Republicans, Sens. Kuch and Kuch.

Sens. Edward Martin and Roman L. Hruska were in opposition.

Kerr, one of the two or three wealthiest men in the Senate, who speaks eloquently for the oil and gas interests of his native Oklahoma, is the leader of the opposition. A formidable adversary, Kerr in debate rarely bothers to argue his side of the case. Instead, he jumps on his opponents with the weapons of scorn and ridicule.

What may seem like an easy nut is being offered by some senators. The anti-billboard provision, it is argued, is a fine line but it should not be hooked onto a highway measure where it does not belong.

But the sponsors are hopeful that the appeal is strong enough to carry the day. An estimated \$5.2 billion is needed for acquiring land for federal highways. Of this, some \$300 million can be spent by those states that conform to federal standards on roadside signs for buying up land with the specific purpose of keeping off billboards. But if they cannot live up to these standards, they will be paid an additional half of one percent of the federal share of the interstate network.

### SHARP DISAPPOINTMENT

Thus, if state legislatures succumb to the billboard lobby, the roadside conservationists and garden club members can demand to know why they are rejecting this money.

Nevertheless, Kerr is not to be underestimated. He recently suffered a sharp disappointment. When Sen. Harry F. Byrd announced his intention of retiring, Kerr saw himself in the chairmanship of the powerful Senate Finance Committee. But Byrd changed his mind and will seek another term. Accustomed to getting what he wanted, Kerr will go down the line for the rest of the billboards to spread their wings across the land. And as between a road and a billboard, the sign pinging somebody's super-duper gasoline, the latter may win out.

In the heated committee session, he referred bitterly to the "ass-critters" pretensions of the garden club ladies and those who seemed to speak for them. The companies are one of the two or three largest roadside advertisers. And since they get their medium—the highway—a virtual free of charge, it is perhaps the cheapest form of advertising.

A definite Democratic leader of the roadside business association which exists is made up of owners of roadside billboards, the powerful lobby, and it is one of the most potent in Washington.

4—Advance financing for new home construction.

5—The fluctuation of the stock market.

They believe these give the business barometer better than unemployment figures.

### Not Hopeful

So far, the barometer is not hopeful. Employment usually rises in March with spring construction, but unemployment figures are still high. There is a continued rise in claims for unemployment insurance and a continued drop in income. This indicates that more people are losing their jobs and those who are keeping their jobs are getting fewer pay cuts or less overtime.

## Life In America: Separate But Equal

A WHITE school teacher who was fired after she permitted a white child to ride home in a Negro school bus has appealed to the Georgia State Board of Education.

The board tentatively set April 24 as date for a hearing on the appeal of Mrs. A. B. Baskin of Lanier County.

"She inadvertently kept her class at Lakeland School in session overtime and all school buses had departed when she dismissed it."

After arranging rides with teachers for most of the pupils, Mrs. Baskin offered to drive the remaining three home. But she had a car. At that time a school bus went by and when it

## Drew Pearson's Merry-Go-Round

WASHINGTON

REASON for conflicting statements out of the White House on the business recession last week was a serious slip inside the Cabinet, plus the fact that bad news has penetrated through the White House guard with full force to the public, and he is alarmed.

### Tax Trouble Broken

Just one week ago Ike's Secretary of the Treasury Bob Anderson had gone to his fellow Cabinet member, Speaker Sam Rayburn, and palched up a true regarding taxes. Rather than have Democrats and Republicans out there each other, he was using tax cuts they agreed to say no more. Do no more regarding tax cuts without prior notification. Four days later

this truce was broken by the President himself.

Senate Republican leader Bill Knowland, leaving the White House after a long conference with the President, announced that it would be at least two months before the administration makes a decision on cutting taxes.

### Fat In The Fire

This threw the tax-cutting fat right into the fire. It also stirred the private warning from Detroit automobile manufacturers that talk of taxes only held back the buying of automobiles. The

public, they warned, is not going to rush to buy cars as long as they can hope for a \$200 reduction of excise taxes per car.

War Against Recession

Meanwhile, the White House resembles Ike's SHAEF offices during the Battle of the Bulge. Economic reports are scanned around the clock by the President and the 10th Division Gen. Tony McNulty's 10th Airborne Division during that crucial battle in the Ardennes forest around Christmas.

What the President's economic advisers are watching are:

1—New construction contracts.

2—New business orders.

3—Insurance companies' investment plans.

## White House Shows Signs Of Panic