



THE CHARLOTTE NEWS

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Is The Economy A Political Plaything?

LAST week's massive dose of bombast from the party publicists concerning the 1958 recession raised a disturbing moral question.

Is the economy indeed the plaything of politics, something to bet money and votes on and win for dear old Alma Mater?

More and more, the politics of 1958 resemble the politics of 1930. Republican tub-thumpers, almost to a man, deny that anything dreadful is in the economic air. Democratic partisans, except for a few dour conservatives, such as Sen. Byrd of Virginia, are talking doom and gloom and demanding "drastic action."

The calculations of the political strategists appear to be coldly mercenary. There is, for instance, the matter of timing. Will their party gain more if there is an early recovery or if it reaches full tide just before the fall elections? Would pump-priming in a few selected areas be economically more effective or would a tax cut be more profitable politically?

If there is some curiosity in the minds of the electorate why Republican congressional leaders have no stomach for anti-recession legislation they might give careful ear to an explanation of one close observer of the ways of Washington:

"To back such measures would be, in effect, to admit that errors of policy in the past have created a situation requiring drastic action, and this the Republicans are naturally reluctant to do." Instead, we have the present Republican President of the United States suggesting that Americans might "go buy a refrigerator" as a demonstration of fearlessness and the former Republican President of the United States bringing out one of his 1951 speeches calling for courage and confidence.

Meanwhile in Democratic and Republican headquarters, the mimeograph machines are grinding out humbug by the carload.

It may be news to Americans who have not grown up politically that a recession is not a football game. It is serious business that painfully affects the caloric intake of a great many citizens.

So, if it's just the same to the politicians, we can do without the cheerleaders, band music and halftime card stunts.

We can do without false panaceas, vintage 1931, too, and the professional do-nothingness of each party's dinosaur wing. We had better dispose of the notion that we can cure the nation's economic ills cheaply without enormous national effort while we're at it.

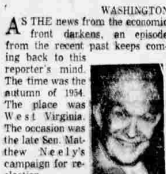
The nation is in a recession. It is not decorated with the clatter of drums, as some Democrats claim, or is a self-congratulating trifle, as most Republicans seem to feel. It is still a mild recession. But it is getting slightly less mild every day. It is likely to get even gamier if no action is taken to correct it.

Private enterprise, including the purchase of innumerable refrigerators, is as important as ever. It is, however, no substitute for government action and impetus. Certain general alternatives are already available—increased government spending on civilian facilities such as schools, roads and hospitals and/or a tax cut to provide purchasing power for individuals.

It is, of course, not "as simple as that," as the President might say again in some future news conference. It is a terribly complex problem. It is worthy of sober, serious thought, free of bathos or bunk. The time to start thinking is approximately now.

Economic Slump Threatens To Dim Eisenhower's Halo

By STEWART ALSOP

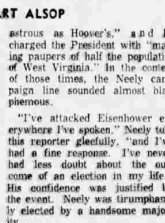


WASHINGTON
A front darkness, an episode from the recent past keeps coming back to this reporter's mind. The time was the autumn of 1954. The place was West Virginia. The occasion was the late Sen. Matthew Neely's campaign for reelection.

The kind of Eisenhower campaign old Matt Neely was waging came as a kind of traumatic shock. Elsewhere, the Democrats were treating President Eisenhower with kid gloves, or actually trying to grab the President's coat—taxis away from the Republicans.

DIRECT ATTACK

Not so Matt Neely. Neely regularly referred to the President as "Eisenhower." He accused the President of "talking monstrous hypocrisy and nonsense." In speech after speech, he called the Eisenhower policies "as dis-



astrous as Hoover's," and he charged the President with "making paupers of half the population of West Virginia." In the context of those times, the Neely campaign line sounded almost blasphemous.

"I've attacked Eisenhower everywhere I've spoken," Neely told this reporter gleefully. "And I've had a fine response. I've never had less doubt about the outcome of an election in my life." His confidence was justified by one event. Neely was triumphantly elected by a handsome majority.

The reason for Neely's triumph was visible to the naked eye everywhere in West Virginia. For West Virginia is a one-industry state. The industry is coal. And coal was in the worst slump since the Depression days. There were then actually fewer coal miners employed in West Virginia than in the worst days of the evil flourish.

POPULARITY AT STAKE

This episode is worth recalling for obvious reason: Suppose the current recession deepens and hardens. What then will be the effect on the President's personal popularity, his prestige and capacity for leadership? Will he become discredited, powerless, and the subject of bitter personal attack, like President Herbert Hoover in the early thirties?

The answer depends in part, of course, on the Democrats. Among responsible Democratic leaders, like Majority Leader Lyndon Johnson, there is no disposition whatever to repeat the tactics used against Hoover in the thirties. "I've read the Constitution," is a favorite Johnson remark. The implication is that Johnson is fully aware that there is no substitute under the American constitutional system for the power and authority of the presidency.

ANGRY SQUIRMING

But not all Democrats think like Johnson. Many Democrats have squirmed angrily for five long years under the temptation to follow old Neely's example, and have held back only as the better part of valor. And the President seems in a mood to give them precisely the opportunities they are looking for, as his politically imprudent act in flying his wife to

a charm school in Arizona suggests.

Indeed, the President's mood is a key factor in the equation. Through the paper curtain which surrounds him, an impression of what Time magazine calls a "baffling don't care attitude" has seeped out. Take, for example, the President's incredible statement that Sherman Adams' intervention with the CAB, which has been in the headlines for days, was "a thing I have not heard of."

The remark seems to mean either that the President does not read the papers, or that he cares not a rap what is in them.

GROWING TESTINESS

Combined with the "don't care attitude" is a growing testiness. The President has always had a quick temper, but he now answers very easily. For example, Eric Johnston, organizer of the recent bipartisan demonstration for foreign aid, proposed to the President that he should speak from the same dinner table as ex-President Truman. The President treated Johnston much as the emperors of other days used to treat the bearers of unwelcome news. He almost took his head off, telling

Johnston furiously that he would never break bread with such a man as Truman.

This sort of thing always gets out, and it is not calculated to persuade the Democrats to treat the President kindly. As for the Republicans, precious few of them are planning to campaign as "Eisenhower Republicans" this year, and if the President gets into trouble, they are not likely to rush enthusiastically to his defense.

WOLF-PACK LEADER

One should not exaggerate. The President is still the most popular political figure in the country. Yet a President is rather like the leader of a wolf pack—any sign of weakness, and he invites a ferocious attack from a presidential mood of indifference combined with testiness could make bad trouble for the President in a period of economic decline. It would be bad trouble for the country too, for it is hard to imagine a more damaging than a ruler. Neely-like election fight followed by two years of presidential frustration. But if the nation as a whole begins economically to resemble West Virginia in 1954, that may be in the cards.

Charlotte's Scarecrow: Pardon Our Sigh

IN AN earlier era—say, about 1929—we might have summoned up at least two hips and a burrow over the prospect of a new passenger station for Charlotte.

In 1958, however, all we can manage is a sigh of historical relief.

It's just that we have had to suffer too many hoo-has from municipal neighbors with modern facilities. Pointing with pride would have been appropriate had "tentative" plans been announced three decades ago. Then we could have editorialized that the Queen City of the South was in step with the times. At this late date we can only wonder testily why it took so long.

If the old station should not, have vanished with hoop skirts and beaver hats it certainly should have made a discreet exit with hip flasks and flappers. Its lingering presence did add a certain quaintness to the midtown atmosphere. But there has been no market for quaintness here since the first Wachovia Bank & Trust Co. building went up.

There is nothing wrong with antiquity per se in transportation—if it is comfortable antiquity. Charlotte's railroad station is not only uncomfortable but lacks standard equipment. In addition it is indescribably ugly and gives incoming passengers a perfectly atrocious first view of a modern metropolis the Chamber of Commerce likes to identify as "the spearhead of the New South."

Let the "tentative" plans gain substantial form quickly. Let the tracks be raised and the mile-long be unbuilt. And when the move is actually made to a modern new passenger station let it be on tiptoes. After it's in operation we can just pretend that we've been enjoying progress all along.

Charlotte, The News:

IT IS with a full heart that I thank you, and through you, the rest of the City of Charlotte for a high-spirited and generous spirit of general sympathy which followed the fire in my establishment last month.

An unfired fuse in a temperature of 8-degrees destroyed my books and my possessions, but has enriched me beyond the wildest dreams of my youth. The professional newspaperman across the state and the Christian clergymen throughout the South have extended a hand of fellowship such as rarely comes to a man in an entire lifetime. But most of all, the "strangers" from Charlotte, North Carolina, Second Ward, and Dilworth who called me to say that they held a prayer meeting at the Charlotte Police Department have restored my subscription lists, of all things!

GOLDEN

Such an outpouring of good will and good wishes imposes upon me a tremendous responsibility to justify, to some degree, this line of communication and this fellowship. A Republican congressman offered to send a letter to all my subscribers; a Democratic senator placed it into the Record, and a note from Mr. Norman Thomas, the Socialist leader and my friend, "I am gratified at the people of Charlotte, my grandparents are buried there; the city has good blood in its veins." To which I say Amen, and thanks from the bottom of my heart.

HARRY GOLDEN

The Carolina Israelite

When Is An Alibi Not An Alibi, Hal?

Charlotte

Editors, The News:

AFTER THE University of Virginia basketball team defeated the Duke University team

Big Business Leads Us To Doom Again

Clifton, S. C.

Editors, The News:

RUSSIA is teaching us (it seems that we don't learn by experience) that our national economy must be planned and not left to haphazard rise or miss chance. A news analyst asked the question if there was any parallel between the present recession and the '29 crash. I can say that it is the same thing. From 1929 to 1933, Big Business had it lock, stock and barrel. Since Eisenhower has been President Big Business has had another field day. It has begun to look as if what was good for General Motors is not good for any of us.

TELLER SUTTLE

Things Aren't Good At The Post Office

Charlotte

Editors, The News:

WHEN the present postmaster was installed in Charlotte, we had hoped to see some changes and improvements. We have seen changes—unfavorable ones. The three-cent stamp window was closed with a card displayed referring us, the public, to the parcel post window, and a concerted line to get a three-cent stamp. The writer was advised by one who is employed in the Post Office that "we could look for a noticeable improvement." The public disagrees.

Drew Pearson's Merry-Go-Round

WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT Eisenhower's stanch defense of Ezra Taft Benson results first from the fact that Benson is a sincere gentleman with whom nobody can differ personally, second from the fact that he is brother Milton in Benson's strong champion. He always relies on Milton, who served under Secretary of Agriculture Henry Wallace, for his farm advice.

However, in the latest report of the House Appropriations Committee on agriculture are some interesting figures which neither he, nor Milton, nor most farmers of the nation know much about. They tell a significant story of what's wrong with Ezra Taft Benson's administration of American agriculture.

20,000 Bureaucrats

The figures are official and come from the Agriculture Department itself. They show that between the time Benson took over the department and today he has added almost 20,000 extra bureaucrats and one billion dollars of expense. This billion does not include the cost of crop supports or the soil bank. It only covers

Why Ezra Taft Benson Is A Failure

the actual barebones operation of the Agriculture Department.

Here is a breakdown of the figures: In 1952, the Agriculture Department budget under outgoing Secretary Charles Brannan was \$796,000,000. Under Benson, the 1953 budget for operating the department is \$1,728,000,000.

The overall agricultural budget as Brannan went out of office, including Benson's cost of stock surpluses, crop price supports, and everything else was \$550,000,000.

Whopping Increase

The overall budget under Benson today is \$7,400,000,000. This is an increase of 750 per cent.

The big question is how did the overall budget jump from less than one billion to more than seven billion in five short years, when Benson simultaneously reduced price supports from 90 per cent of parity to below 75 per cent of parity?

The answer goes to the root of why

Mr. Benson, with all his sincerity, has been a failure as secretary of agriculture. Though it cannot be spelled out in a few words, here is part of the answer.

1. BUREAUCRATS VS. VOLUNTEERS—Benson immediately fired the farmers' committees which were enforcing the farm acreage program, and substituted paid bureaucrats. The volunteer farm committees had been paid \$37 a year, chiefly for travel to attend meetings. The bureaucrats are each paid about \$5,000 a year.

This not only increased Benson's budget, but it tended to put policemen in charge of farm acreage restrictions. Volunteer farm committees did an excellent job of restricting acreage. They knew exactly what each neighbor was doing and let no one get away with anything.

Psychology Changes

But when paid bureaucrats took over, the psychology of the program abated. It was like the Russian peasant who is always out to beat the Soviet inspector on the collective farms. There was less compliance, less cooperation.

2. MIDDLEMAN'S PROFIT—Benson

has operated the Agriculture Department with an eye to helping the middleman, not the farmer. His whole background in Washington before he became secretary of agriculture was with the processor, the equipment manufacturer, not the farmer.

Pork Supports

To illustrate: In 1956-57 when Benson moved into the hog market to support the price of pork, he omitted from his hog-purchasing contract a clause which requires packers to buy hogs at parity prices. He signed contracts with the packers to buy up pork, with a guarantee to take it off their hands. But he did not require them to pay the farmer a guaranteed price.

Thus, they could step into the hog market and buy below parity, and sell to Benson at a guaranteed price—which was exactly what they did. Result was that the price of hogs went below parity, the farmers didn't benefit, the packers did, and the taxpayers paid out \$86,000,000 supposedly to support the price of pork while the price of pork simultaneously was going down and down.

time for. Yet the general continues to call for more money to move the mail. . . . If we cannot get this corrected or adjusted, then we should replace our congressman.

S. C. VAUGHN

'Ah, Ha! A Foul, Foreign Dragon'



Bacon, Bacon, Who's Got The Bacon?

Things were not bad enough already in the Eisenhower administration, Washington newsmen have discovered that it is harboring a poet in the Pentagon. He is Edward A. Bacon, deputy assistant secretary of the Army for civil-military affairs.

Mr. Bacon, it seems, has just had a few of his poems published under the title LIGHT VERSE AND WORSE. One, which the New York TIMES says should be mounted in embroidery behind every Defense Department man's desk, goes:

Every time I go to sleep
I marvel that I go to sleep.
Things are such, that I should
weep.
But, instead, I go to sleep.

That philosophy is all right for the Pentagon, we suppose. But for the Department of Commerce, which has a recession to contend with, we recommend the words of another very fellow named Bacon—Francis Bacon (1561-1626). This Mr. Bacon wrote:

Prosperity is not without many fears and distastes; and adversity is not without comforts and hopes.

From The Rocky Mount Evening Telegram

REALISM RAMPANT

ARE some modern writers going too far in their near-obsession with the most sickening and sordid aspects of life? One critic, writing of a brace of new plays by Tennessee Williams, expresses the opinion that this Tennessee Williams has gone too far and that he is wasting fine talents on hog-pen subjects.

Wide reaction to the new novel by James Jones, SOME CAME RUNNING, has been similar. One reviewer of the 1,266 page book was headed, BY SEX OBSESSED, a parody on the title of one of last year's hit novels, James Gould Cozzens' BY LOVE POSSESSED.

TIME Magazine entitled its review, LIKE IS A FOUR-LETTER WORD. Comparing Jones to one of the characters in a Tennessee Williams play, the magazine said: "James Jones is the Stanley Kowalski of U. S. letters. Bulked into the sweaty T shirt of latter-day realism, he stirs raw sex, raw talk, raw emotions, and raw ideas in a crude vat of the rawest home-brewed English."

Does this mean that some critics are beginning to think the pendulum of American letters has swung too far? The movement to realism was undoubtedly an overdue reaction to some of the niceness which had taken over much of Victorian literature, both in America and England. Certainly it has produced

some of the best of 20th century literature.

But of late it has gone off the deep end in many cases. Even those who screamed "More, More," have begun to have their doubts. But the furor which these workers arouse helps sales and the box office. This only invites more of the same.

Realism, virility, and a clear-minded willingness to look even the unpleasant in the face are qualities that should always be a part of literature. But some of the most ardent friends of realism are beginning to question whether a continual latrine-wallow preoccupation with the most distasteful aspects of life is as necessary as some of the most gifted writers of the day seem to assume.

At Ohio State they tell this story about a football game with Iowa: With just a few seconds remaining in the first half, Vic Janowicz, prize Buckeye back, was carrying the ball through the Iowa line. Two men hit him, but Vic kept his feet and plowed on. Then two defensive backs rushed up, but still Vic advanced, dragging the four men along with him. Finally, as the safety man snatched him head on, the gun went off signaling the end of the first half. My goodness, a coach screamed in the stands: "They had to shoot him to stop him!"—MEMPHIS PRESS-SCIMITAR.