THE CHARLOTTE NEWS

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Chief Charles' Report Said Too Little

The long-awaited report of Fire Chief Donald S. Charles on the Charlotte Chemical Laboratories explosion was as remarkable for what it did not contain as for what it did.

The tragic sequence of events on Thursday, July 9, at the abandoned building was recorded in elaborate detail. Yet no attempt was made to fix responsibility for the conditions leading to the explosion.

The omission unfortunately will make it more difficult to determine what ought to be done to prevent similar occurrences.

It is not a question of establishing guilt. It is a question of pinpointing human error and taking steps to see that the error is not repeated elsewhere with similarly disastrous results.

It must not be forgotten that 13 men were injured in the July 9 explosion because proper precautions were not taken with dangerous chemicals. It could have been worse. It also could have been avoided.

Last week Chief Charles promised "a lot of recommendations" on the subject. Yesterday's report contained some—principally that companies who store hazardous chemicals should make written reports to the Fire Prevention Bureau. Granting the helpfulness of this procedure, it would seem that a more comprehensive system of inspection, supervision and education would also be necessary. For instance, it might be considered prudent to inspect abandoned buildings regularly for fire hazards whether or not they are reported to contain chemicals. If the buildings are locked for security reasons the owner ought to be asked to produce a key and admit the inspectors anyway.

This will be bothersome business, of course. But we believe the critically injured firemen will agree that it is worth the bother.

Dr. Graham Deserves A Quiet Welcome

"Why can't Dr. Frank come back home now?" the Goldsboro News-Argus asks in a poignant editorial.

The News-Argus refers, of course, to Dr. Frank Graham, who has served as a United Nations mediator in New York since his defeat for the U. S. Senate nine summers ago.

"North Carolina needs him as its public conscience," says the Goldsboro paper. "A new generation of young leaders should feel the zeal of his noble mind and flaming soul before he is gathered with his fathers."

In the passion with which the question is asked — why can't Dr. Frank come home now? — there is at least a clue to why the answer must be ambiguous. It is always hard for North Carolinians to be coolly dispassionate about "Dr. Frank." From the day he began teaching history at Chapel Hill, through his memorable days as a great university president and in the U. S. Senate, and even now, Dr. Graham has enjoyed a mystic access to the heart of North Carolina — if not always to its mind.

We think we understand this affair of the heart between North Carolina and Dr. Graham, and would not want to make light of it. There does exist a feeling, nine years later, that North Carolina somehow betrayed Dr. Graham when it rejected him in that wild and woolly Senate campaign of 1950. The bitter taste of it lingers.

It is therefore understandable why many, like the Goldsboro writer, feel that only some grand act of propitiation would atone. No one would suggest that Dr. Graham be invited back to North Carolina perfunctorily. Such is for lesser men.

But surely a spirit of emotional atonement is not the spirit with which Dr. Graham should be asked to come back home. It is part of his great measure to forgive. Our guess is that Dr. Graham would not wish North Carolina to beckon him back in a spirit of studied humility.

But it is North Carolina's move; the state can always use his conscience and wisdom. Dr. Graham should be asked back with quiet dignity — perhaps to teach history, as he began three decades ago to do, at Chapel Hill. But let it be done without raising ghosts, without unfurling dusty banners, without a great fanfare that seems somehow inappropriate now. Most of all, the invitation should be tendered so that Dr. Graham would feel free to refuse it gracefully. He may have his reasons.

A 'New Guard' For Charlotte's New Era

The "youth movement" at Mecklenburg's United Community Services is as welcome as money in the bank.

In April, UCS picked Edwin L. Jones Jr. to head its important capital funds drive. Yesterday, Thomas M. Belk was named chairman of the 1959 United Appeal scheduled for the fall.

Both are young Charlotteans with bright, new ideas about the community's future. Undoubtedly, they both will figure prominently in that future.

Mr. Belk, at 34, has already proved himself to be a successful money-raiser. During the first three months of 1959 he led a capital funds drive for Myers Park Presbyterian Church. The goal: $914,000. Amount collected: $1,120,000. It represented, to say the least, a successful "apprenticeship for fund-raising's "major league."

The important thing is that United Community Services is not restricting itself to the community's familiar "old guard" in picking its campaign leaders. For years, a group of about 50 prominent business and professional men have formed a reservoir for community projects. They have served willingly and well. But, frankly, they have been overworked. The community needs desperately to expand its leadership corps, to attract new and promising young recruits who have the time and ability to serve.

Messrs. Belk and Jones fill the bill beautifully. We congratulate them and UCS. They are involved in an essential civic chore. With pluck and stamina, they will administer it in accordance with the community's best tradition.

Look At Us Now

News that the Plaza Branch of First Union National Bank will soon have to open its own branch is being forwarded to those Greensboro editors who keep calling Charlotte a country town. The country never had it so good . . . or complicated . . . or something.

The Onion Situation: Something Smells

We are alarmed to learn that some Canadian agricultural experts are on the brink of hatching an odorless onion. Their spokesman, a Mr. Bram Dees, says he hopes the "social onion," as he calls it, will captivate the Canadian and American public next year. "We have already got it tamed to the point where you don't cry when you peel it," says he, "and the smell is on the way out, too."

This is plainly the beginning of the end. Next, they will be having the hens laying shell-less eggs, the cows producing dry martinis instead of milk, and the farmers growing buttered toast instead of wheat.

We don't care if the "social onion" comes complete with a heady, built-in mixture of iron, niacin, thiamine and riboflavin, it can never take the place of its rich, flavorful ancestor that has done so much for French and Italian cooking. An odorless onion might as well be a soybean for all the character it would have. The very idea. Scallions to you Mr. Dees.

From The New York Herald Tribune

RAIN IN THE CITY

George Jean Nathan once wrote that the sunny day is "God's gift to the plain people," while the rainy day is His gift to the elite. The latter don't like fair weather, he said, because it coaxes them into the fresh air and away from their pensive pursuits. "But when the world is full of wet and fog and the monotony of rain, then the artist, the connoisseur of quiet, the philosophers and all their brothers are happy. For it is on such days, while the yokelry is melancholy because it cannot be eating dill pickles and cheese sandwiches on the roadsides, or riding in Fords through the Jersey swamps, or chasing little gutta percha balls across the grass with a repertoire of clubs, that men of soul and sadness revel in the happiness that only God's elect can comprehend."

Well, we like the esthetic life of the great indoors as much as anybody. There are times when the drone of rain in the world beyond the window makes the world within unusually bright, a place where books and conversation can be savored, for then nature exerts no rival call. But enough is enough. This is a month of vacation, of beach and mountain and road, and we are no longer philosophical enough to philosophize about the rain. After four or five wet days, we yearn to eat dill pickles at a roadside stand, to drive through even the Jersey swamps, to excavate the sodden turf with a golf iron. If this be yokelry, we're more than ready to make the most of it.

A woman was telling her psychiatrist about a strange dream she'd had. "It seems I was walking down the street," she recounted, "with nothing on but a hat."

"And were you embarrassed?" the psychiatrist asked.

"Oh, yes," replied the woman, "It was last year's hat."—Lamar (Mo.) Democrat.

People's Platform — Here Is What's Wrong With Local Dog Pounds

Charlotte

Editors, The News:

I wish to comment on the article written in The Charlotte News of July 6, concerning conditions of the local dog pounds.

First, let me say the people who operate the pounds do the best they can with the facilities at hand. They are handicapped on one hand by certain provisions in both city and county ordinances which require them to hold all dogs classified as strays for a period of seven days before they can be offered to the public for sale. By that time, things being as they are, many dogs have either contracted a virus infection similar to distemper, if not the disease itself, or other infectious conditions. Young dogs and puppies are especially susceptible to disease. Puppies are more or less condemned to death if taken to either pound if classified as strays. A donated puppy may have a chance if not confined more than 24 hours.

I have attempted to save seven puppies but lost all but two of them with distemper after considerable care and expense. I can name many such instances which have come to my attention.

The construction and location of the city pound is in itself a disgrace. It is now sagging and cracking in almost every joint. It is impossible to hose out the stalls without leaving water standing in puddles. I have seen dogs lying in puddles of icy water on a cold morning because there was no other place for them to lie. Because of no other place for them to stay, small puppies are forced to huddle on a cold cement floor; bad enough in mild weather but a death trap in winter. Cages should be provided for small dogs and puppies to protect them if they must be impounded.



Does He Deserve Something Better?

Benches have been provided for dogs to lie on but are not large enough for more than one or two dogs. Puppies can't always get up on them. The public prefers to reclaim puppies so more care and protection should be given them.

The public must take its share of the blame for conditions as they exist, so far as control of pets is concerned.

All too often dogs are allowed to run at large without tags and proper identification. The wardens are compelled to impound such dogs. Sometimes an owner searches for his dog; more often he doesn't. Unspayed females allowed to run at large contribute to the situation. Sometimes the unfortunate animal is turned out to fend for herself when it becomes evident she is about to produce a litter of puppies. Many of these puppies end up at the pound or else become unwanted strays. Sick dogs taken to the pound for disposal contribute to the spread of disease as well as to the misery of the animal. The least an owner could do for them is to pay a veterinary a small fee to have their pet put to sleep in a humane manner.

Until such a time as the city and county ordinances are revised and the time for impounding stray dogs is drastically reduced and some method devised whereby young dogs are given some protection against distemper, this unhappy condition will continue to exist. Since the public must pay the cost of rabies vaccine, license and board for all dogs released by the pounds, certainly they or it should be willing to pay the added cost of distemper inoculation rather than pay for treating a sick dog and perhaps lose it.

This happens quite often. More homes would be found for dogs if this risk were minimized.

Individual members of the humane society have attempted to get sick or injured dogs released to them for treatment only to be refused, because of the requirements of the ordinances. The animals, if they survive, are in critical condition by the time they can be released. Potential pets are often reclaimed by members of the society at their own expense and homes found for them. Quite often they are not re-imbursed.

I have tried to be as brief as possible but there is so much more that could be said and needs to be said. I hope the public as well as the city and county officials will help to improve these unsatisfactory conditions.

MRS. G. S. RAWLINS

Lenin, Stalin Make Hitler A Gentleman

Salisbury

Editors, The News:

The disadvantages of dictatorship have been proven conclusively by the rulers of Russia. These dictators think of nothing except trying to get some other country under their rule. They plunder and exploit all peoples who come under them. They succeed so well in their plundering and exploiting that they kill the creative spirit in the people. This makes it impossible for them to plunder the people a second time.

There has never been another nation on earth like Soviet Russia. Hitler was a gentleman by the side of Lenin, Stalin, and the present rulers. I'll bet the Devil has had a hard time since Stalin and Lenin have been with him. They may succeed in dethroning him for they can tell lies that he never dreamed up or thought about.

—J. W. JEWELL

There Is Method In Nikita Khruschev's 'Madness'

By JOSEPH ALSOP

WASHINGTON

Missile power was the topic of the most interesting suppressed passage in the ugly interview Nikita S. Khrushchev accorded to Averell Harriman.



HARRIMAN

The passage was interesting, first of all, because Khrushchev so much wanted to talk about missiles that he introduced the topic himself. He began with the same sort of brutal boast about his medium range missiles that he made to the West German Socialist editors — "Eight will be enough to destroy Western Germany, six will wipe out France," and so on.

The passage was interesting, too, because Khrushchev did not precisely claim that he already had enough long range missiles to destroy the United States. He boasted, rather, of his long lead in ICBM development. He added, somewhat enigmatically, "If I spend another 30 billion rubles, I can have enough intercontinental missiles for every major city in America."

LOSE LENINGRAD?

But his passage was interesting, above all, because of Khrushchev's reply to Harriman, when the latter remarked that the Soviet Union would also suffer in an exchange of nuclear weapons. Khrushchev conceded that Russia might not altogether escape the West's retaliation, but he implied that he feared no damage going anywhere near the hideous limits that the Soviet strategists are known to regard as acceptable.

"We might lose Leningrad," he said, significantly naming the one great city in Russia that is hardest to defend against air attack. "But Leningrad is not Russia, whereas Paris is France, and London is England."

NOTABLE CONTRAST

The contrast between Khrushchev's ways of talking about medium range and long range missile power was notable.

It seems to offer partial confirmation of the American analysts' estimate of the present state of the Soviet missile program. But this is largely counter-balanced, in the opinion of the best authorities here, by Khrushchev's apparent confidence, or overconfidence in the capacity of his air defense system to parry an American nuclear strike.

Only an H-bomb war can show whether Khrushchev is right, or the American air staff is right, about the effectiveness of the Soviet air defense. In any case, as the Strategic Air Commander, Gen. Thomas Power, has wisely said, what Khrushchev thinks we can do to him matters even more than what we really can do to him. For if he thinks he can win the world for the loss of only one city, he is likely to take risks that will bring on the kind of test one must pray will never be made.

ARROGANT CONVICTION

No doubt that is putting Khrushchev's estimate in an extreme way; but the American analysts are now agreed that Khrushchev is rightly or wrongly downgrading the Western nuclear deterrent in a thoroughly disturbing way. If the deterrent does not decisively deter, the result must be an arrogant conviction of Soviet military superiority. A conviction of military superiority is the necessary basis, in turn for the peculiar tactics Khrushchev is now using.

The tactics are only too clearly defined. Both the Harriman interview and Khrushchev's more recent Polish speeches were marked by an apparently lunatic alternation of missile-rattling and loud protestations that the Soviet Union would "Never, never, never launch any war."

HITLER'S GIMMICK

The lunacy is only apparent. This is a familiar combination, of boasts of strength to inspire fear and protestations of peacefulness to promote wishful thinking. It was just the combination that worked so well for Adolf Hitler, until the very last round.

Former Gov. Harriman greatly diluted his published accounts of his Khrushchev interview, and he deplored Washington's description of this interview as "Hitler-like," for the same reason. He feared impairment of his own ability to negotiate with the Kremlin in the future — which is an entirely legitimate reason.

It is also true that Khrushchev does not resemble Hitler, in the sense of positively wanting war. But Khrushchev's tactics most certainly resemble Hitler's tactics, with the intimidation largely directed, at last for the present, at the Western Allies overseas. Equally certain, the conviction of military superiority already referred to is the true basis of these tactics.

Yet in these circumstances, nothing whatever is being done to alter Khrushchev's judgment of the military balance. Neville Chamberlain at least launched his famous fake rearmament program. And history and his countrymen do not remember Neville Chamberlain with any kindliness.

'Oh, Not You Again!'



Drew Pearson's Merry-Go-Round — Admiral Tours At Taxpayers' Expense

WASHINGTON

Rear Adm. James Hirshfield, the Coast Guard's second in command, packed his family into a government Skymaster last month and took off for a European vacation at the taxpayers' expense.

The trip was listed officially as an "inspection tour," but he assembled the most curious "inspection party" in Coast Guard annals. Included were his wife, his daughter, Mary, his son James Jr., and his brother's family, Mr. and Mrs. Casey Hirshfield and their daughter Denise. The son also brought along his college classmate, William Delaney.

Poodle Stayed Home

Apparently the only member of the admiral's household left behind was his French poodle which was entrusted to an enlisted man's care.

Besides the Hirshfield clan, space was found in the plane for Rear Adm. Edward Thiele, his wife and daughter. He is the Coast Guard's engineering chief.

The vacationing families also brought along Lt. Cmdr. Robert Rea to handle baggage, and Cmdr. Robert Waldron to fly the plane.

Whirlwind Tour

Their whirlwind tour took them to England, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Italy, France and Spain.

After inquiries at the Coast Guard were ignored, this column reported the unique trip to Adm. Hirshfield's boss, Secretary of the Treasury Robert Anderson, who promptly ordered an inspection of the admiral's "inspection party."

Globetrotting Senator

Vivacious Sen. Allen Ellender of Louisiana is probably the most traveled solon in the Senate. Every year he takes a trip to various parts of the world on the theory that as a member of the Appropriations Committee he should check on expenditures by American embassies and information agencies.

In other directions also Allen Ellender is a versatile man. He is an expert on sugar, an excellent cook, and a collector of antiques.

Great Cup-Collector

Visiting in La Paz, Bolivia, sometime ago, he admired the collection of Incaic cups belonging to Mrs. Edward Sparks, wife of the American ambassador.

"You know, I'm a great collector of cups. I don't have any pre-Colombian cups at all," observed the senator from Louisiana, referring to the fact that Mrs. Sparks' cups predated Christopher Columbus.

"Oh, how interesting, senator," replied Mrs. Sparks quite firmly.

This ended the conversation until a year later, when Sen. Ellender again visited Ambassador Sparks, this time in Caracas, Venezuela.

"Oh, I see you still have those beautiful Incaic cups," he remarked to Mrs. Sparks.

"Yes, we still have them," replied Mrs. Sparks. "And I intend to keep them."

Capital Chaff

Rep. Howard Smith of Virginia was joshing a fellow Democrat, Rep. Mendel Rivers of South Carolina about a recent Merry-Go-Round expose of Rivers' effort to influence a defense contract. "Mendel, you've been around here a long time, but you've finally made the grade. You've been written up in Drew Pearson's column." . . . Averell Harriman was an excellent governor of New York but he has a lot to learn about becoming a newspaperman. He made the mistake of cabling his interview with Khrushchev to the State Department before releasing it to his newspaper syndicate. The State Department then leaked it to the press.