EDITORIAL PAGE

THE CHARLOTTE NEWS

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That's Better

Now, if Representative Harvey Morris will overlook our brashness in mentioning the matter again, the Mecklenburg County judgeship bill is in proper shape. He originally looked, saw that the County Recorder had to run for his post while both City and County Solicitors—and the City Recorder—were appointed, and determined that things should be equalized. He aimed to go the long way around, making all four of them stand for election, but has now changed his mind.

Things are right now, because his bill proposes that the County Recorder, too, be appointed to his position. It not only makes for uniformity. It was the simple way to achieve the objective; and has even deeper significance: it takes this office out of open-field politics and leaves the judgeship to the County Commissioners.

We don't want to belabor the point, but this is just the way this detail should have been attended from the first. It took only a second look to perceive the better alteration.

Patchwork

This week another South Carolina marriage came apart within a few hours. A bride discovered, almost immediately after the convenient procurement of a license and the rapid fire ceremony by a justice, that her new husband was already married—and so she took steps to dissolve the union. It was only one case, but one of hundreds of like nature. It's been so terribly easy in South Carolina to be joined together in wedlock—and that has had a deadly effect upon the more enlightened statutes of North Carolina.

The Palmetto legislature has now completed the business of patching its marriage laws. It lacks only ratification and the Governor's signature of passing a law calling for a day's waiting period between license and marriage, and that should serve to slow down the hasty business done in innumerable South Carolina Gretna Greens.

At present South Carolina requires nothing but the issuance of a license and a ceremony. There is no waiting period, no medical examination.

North Carolina sets up no waiting period, but demands a medical examination (including a blood test). Within 30 days, applicants must apply for license—which is thenceforth valid. It is much simpler for couples bent on matrimony in a great hurry to ride down to South Carolina, dispensing with Tar Heel finickiness.

In the interest of safeguarding marriage vows in both states, we hope that the South Carolina legislature will not be content with pushing the present bill through, but will continue to give its attention to the problem of marriage-in-haste.

$7 Per Second

The appeal of Mecklenburg's Red Cross campaign has a greater urgency this year, and not only because of greatly increased need. Since the drive of a year ago the nation has thrown the full strength of its armed forces into battle, and the Red Cross immediately came close home to American families.

They had no need to wait to see the special news reels of Red Cross men and women in action. Everywhere, on the films sent back from battle, they could see the insignia of mercy. They could read about the whizzing Red Cross trucks and jeeps just behind the front lines. They were turning in ever-greater numbers to the Red Cross, in an attempt to get in touch with prisoners of war, and in the agony of search for the missing.

So when the campaign opened here Mecklenburgers didn't really have to stop and digest the meaning of the new slogan. They were struck with the huge cost of this undertaking—seven dollars a second. And they realized how small is our share, for Mecklenburg's $224,000 quota will underwrite the Red Cross for less than nine hours.

Even in the midst of many appeals for help, the Red Cross will thus receive a quick and sure answer, throughout the country. Here is one of the great costs of war all citizens will be willing to bear gladly; it needs little salesmanship. It finds the public aware of its service and its needs. Let Mecklenburg be one of the first counties in the land to contribute its share.

Who's Talking?

The Senate Small Business Committee, taking testimony from two industrial executives, heard them say that some Government agencies were discriminating against small businesses, and giving unfair advantages to giant corporations to extend and broaden monopolies.

Specifically, the gentlemen were the president and vice-president of Reynolds Metal Co., a firm which has become important during the war. They were complaining that past policies of Washington agencies (and they didn't specify which ones) were deadly to the growth of private enterprise in this country.

We don't expect that testimony to get much attention, and it certainly won't stir up any such hullabaloo as was created by the inquisition of Henry Wallace. But it's a sight more important, to our minds. Here are two manufacturers engaged in heavy industry, who say just about what Mr. Wallace has been saying for years. They protest that policies similar to those followed by Jesse Jones' RFC and War Plants Corporation are unfair and discriminatory. They were charging—and able to cite instances—that these policies, rather than promoting "free private enterprise" of which Mr. Jones' supporters speak so glibly, were actually killing it.

Mr. Reynolds testified, for example, that his company was forced to pay 3.14 mills per kilowatt for power from TVA—whereas the Aluminum Company of America paid only 2.74. He wanted to know why, and he wanted the trend stopped, somewhere. And then he spoke out for an "economy of abundance", meaning the opportunity for all to do business and produce, free of restraints in favor of the great corporations—and in every business field. These things are going to make sense to thousands of U. S. men of business, and they're going to strike home as they never could had they been spoken by Henry Wallace. But it's the same tune, right down the line.

Compliment

There was a time when chambers of commerce were a butt of many jokes. Thinking back on it, we guess it must have been about when spark-snorting Henry Mencken and his *American Mercury* were lampooning American *mores* and stuffiness, having a deal of fun at it and doing, perhaps, some good in the bargain.

And there was a time, too, though we should hate to have to name it exactly, when the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce was just about tolerated as something merely customary on the town's scene, like blue-serge suits on the men for Sundays. A town had to have a chamber of commerce, and support it, however begrudgingly and inadequately. It was the chamber man's duty to go abroad boasting about the town in terms so fulsome that nobody came anywhere near believing it, least of all those who were meant to be impressed.

The Charlotte Chamber of Commerce has changed. Without implying that it hasn't always earned its keep and made a place for itself, we should like to say that in the last eight or ten years it has become a highly useful organization, and useful not only in relating the advantages of the city to outsiders, but equally or more so in betterments projected strictly among ourselves.

Two developments, as we see it, have taken place. For one, Clarence Kuester, who has always been an exceedingly valuable citizen, finally was backed up by an interested board of directors. The Chamber thereupon began to function as something more than a one-man bullyhoo. And out of this interest came the formulation and pursuance of new policies, prominent among them the policy that the exploitation of the city lay not only in growing bigger but in getting better.

You don't hear any fun poked at the Chamber of Commerce, these days.

The Merry-Go-Round

By Drew Pearson

WASHINGTON

ON THE eve of John L. Lewis' coal negotiations, hard fuels administrator Harold Ickes rolled up his sleeves and did some tough talking about coal shortages to an off-the-record session of the WWB Production Board.

He warned the closed-door session of production bigwigs that although coal was scarce this year, it was going to be worse next year. He predicted a deficit in bituminous coal alone of 50,000,000 tons.

Ickes praised the operation of both the mines and the miners, saying that the average age of the miners today is around 45, whereas their ages used to be under thirty. He said that 20,000 men had been drafted from the coal mines last year and about 30,000 would be drafted this year. Once these men were gone, Ickes said, they cannot be successfully replaced. Without saying so directly, Ickes implied strong criticism of the U. S. Army for drafting these men.

"In England," he said, "They even drafted men and sent them to the coal mines. We do just the reverse."

Ickes also indicated that he would take over the coal mines at the drop of a hat if negotiations between John L. Lewis and the coal operators fail this month. He said the industry could not afford to lose a single day's production.

"Both sides know what they want," Ickes told Army-Navy moguls also attending the meeting. "If they can get together at all, they can do it in the first few days of their talks."

Ickes also dropped some pointed hints to his colleagues that if John L. Lewis and the mine owners did get together it was sure to raise the cost of living and might break the Little Steel Formula. He urged, therefore, that the Government make up its mind how much increased cost it would permit, if any, and let the coal industry know right away.

Strange Bedfellows

The fight over Aubrey Williams as Rural Electrification Administrator has lined up one of the queerest conglomerations of friends and enemies the Senate has seen in years. Solons who seldom agree on anything are uniting either for or against Aubrey Williams.

Some of them are influenced because they don't think Williams believes in God. Some are the backstage tools of the big utility lobby, now invoking religion to defeat Williams—though actually he is one of the most God-fearing men in Washington.

Spearhead of the opposition to Williams is one of the Senate's unique and seldom-heard-from members, Bushfield of South Dakota. Bushfield has two major claims to fame. First, he is the author of last year's appropriation bill to compensate an Indian squaw, "Winnie-Left-Her-Behind." Second he has had more millionaires, living far distant from South Dakota, contribute to his campaign than anyone in the Senate.

Thus the doughty Bushfield was elected. Now he has been leading the campaign against Williams partly by reading editorials and speeches from old Dies Committee reports, trying to show that Williams is a dangerous radical.

At one time, however, Bushfield's questions seemed so silly that even Republican members of the Senate Agricultural Committee couldn't take it. Republican Senator Tobey of New Hampshire, becoming bored, sent a clerk out for a volume. When the clerk returned, Tobey read into the Record a none-too-hostile definition of Communism which shocked some Senators present.

"And that," said Tobey, "was written by that great radical—Grover Cleveland."

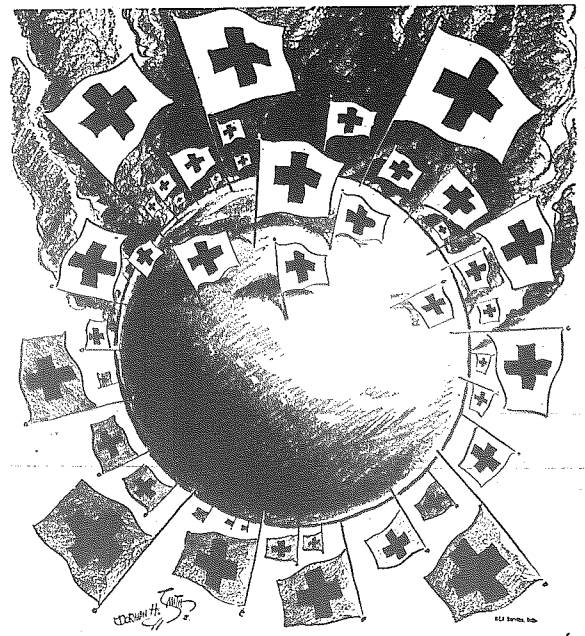
A few minutes minutes later Bushfield, still laboriously thumbing through the Dies files, quoted a Denver, Colo., editorial calling Williams a Communist.

At this, Senator Scott Lucas of Illinois stared at a Chicago Tribune correspondent present and bellowed: "That's nothing. In my last campaign in Illinois, one of the largest papers in the state ran an editorial headed 'Comrade Lucas' but it didn't seem to bother the voters any."

SIDE GLANCES By Galbraith

"You're both wrong! The last big snow didn't fall the year before the saloon burned or the year Doc Brown got sick—all three happened the same winter!"

Only Your Dollars Can Keep Them Flying



Trifling With National Service

By Samuel Grafton

NEW YORK

WESTERN UNION has just recovered 19,000 miles of leased wires and 700 "drops" (telegraph stations) which had been used previously to carry information about horse racing. The glad news is that these circuits are now available for essential war purposes. We stumbled upon this communications windfall only after we had banned horse racing, which we did around the first of the year. Only after the dust on the tracks lay still, only after the stands were empty, did someone remember about the 19,000 miles of leased wires, and decide, with a bright and happy smile, to turn them over to the war.

Why weren't those leased wires taken away years ago? That would have been the proper way to proceed against horse racing; to dry it up, by successive steps, each directly tied to with the war. First, we should have taken the leased wires. Second, we should have taken all telephones from bookies, etc. Third, with the help of a national service act, we should have fine-combed the racing industry itself for manpower, so that if we really needed jockies to work in the cramped moses of bombers, we should have told them so and sent them there.

If, finally, through this sensible sequence of actions, racing would have had to stop, then we should have let it stop. If, by some miracle of ingenuity, it could have continued in spite of these deprivations, we should have let it continue. Our every action would have had meaning in relation to the war.

But we have no national service act, and so we use the buckshot method. We fire a broadside against horse racing, bring it to a halt, and then pick up whatever knick-knacks we can. Looky, here are some fine, leased wires. And there are some jockies; maybe they'll go to work in bomber plants. But maybe they won't.

We do it all wholesale, industry-wide; instead of retail, man-by-man. We get dozens of 60-year-old grooms fired in the hope that some 20-year-old jockies will show up at Consolidated-Vultee; and it is like trying to catch rain water in a thimble.

The same objections can be urged against the 12 o'clock curfew on bars, night-clubs, bowling alleys, etc. We are using that shotgun again. It is not Judge Byrnes' fault; he has to work with what he has, and Congress won't give him a national service act to work with. The Judge has no recourse, except to fire a load of buckshot at an entire industry. If there are able-bodied workmen in these joints, they should have been directed into war factories long ago, regardless of draft status. If electricity had to be saved, it should have been ordered to be saved, city by city, depending on local conditions. If, as a result of these orders, entertainment would have had to stop at midnight, or even altogether, we should have let it stop; but all our official orders would have been war orders, and the industry would then have been a clear casualty of the war.

An Airline Busy At War

By Marquis Childs

NAPLES

YOU fly from France to Italy by an airline that carries more passengers and freight than any commercial airline in America. It's the Mediterranean Air Transport Service, the name of which is shortened, as everything is in this alphabetical war, to its initials—MATS.

While MATS links up with the U. S. Air Transport Command that girdles the entire globe, it functions independently in this theater of the war, setting its own schedules and fixing its own priorities in carrying out the multitudinous transport tasks essential to this most complex of all wars.

It was MATS that first initiated the "blood run," flying whole blood packed in ice into the Anzio beachhead when our casualties there were heaviest. What's more, MATS pilots flew the blood run; unescorted by fighters, into the heart of the battle.

One MATS job has been to spray areas of land to prevent malaria in Africa, Sicily and parts of Italy. This has been one of its most dangerous tasks, since the planes must fly at a low level and in areas just captured, with the hazard of getting over enemy lines. Another former MATS job was to evacuate the wounded from field hospitals, but this is now done by the Troop Carrier Command.

Emergency jobs are always coming up for this line that is just one block in the extraordinary world structure organized by the Army Air Forces. In the Sicilian campaign, it was discovered at the last moment that life preservers had been left out of LSTs that were to carry a force onto a beachhead. MATS flies war dogs, which get airsick and fight when they are frightened and sick. It flies VIP, which is air transparence for very important persons, meaning Congressmen or roving diplomats. It flew supplies into Russian bases for shuttle-bombing operations.

One of the organizers of MATS and now director of operations, is Colonel Paul D. Sheeline of Boston. Colonel Sheeline believes the American public should be told more of the horrors and brutalities which our boys go through. If the public is protected from the brutal reality of the war, they will never understand the attitude of the men who come back, he believes. I am sure there's truth in that but I have a sad feeling that no amount of telling can ever bridge the gap between experience and lack of it.

As I came along the Italian coastline, we flew over Anzio. There was the rubble of the city and, all around, the earth was pitted with shell craters and foxholes, looking like the landscape of the moon. Yet the countryside seemed peaceful. It was astonishing to think that, a short time ago, fierce and prolonged battles had raged down there. Peasant fields were tilled with precise neatness.

They had the look of the pieces of a puzzle fitted together. At one edge was another field, with precise rows of white markers. That was an American cemetery for the dead out of Anzio. Neat row upon row, so carefully done.

That is the way war is. Someone always comes along and picks up the pieces, and then people

Statesmen At Work

(Serious, facetious and comic excerpts from the Congressional Record).

DURING Senate debate which led to the confirmation of Col. Elliott Roosevelt as a brigadier general, Senator Bushfield of South Dakota was holding forth, and wound up like this:

A man wearing the uniform of the Army of the United States owes a duty to himself and to his uniform so to conduct himself that he will not be subject to the criticism. The facts are undisputed, as found by a subcommittee of the Military Affairs Committee, that somebody, whoever he may have been, requested an A priority to ship a bulldog on a plane flying from somewhere in the East to California.

Mr. TOBEY (N. H.) In order that the Record may be kept accurate, let me say that it was a mastiff and not a bulldog.

Mr. BUSHFIELD. I am not enough of a dog fancier to understand the difference, but I thank the Senator for correcting me. The dog weighed 110 pounds, did it not?

Mr. TOBEY. I understand it weighed 130 pounds.

Mr. BUSHFIELD. Very well; 130 pounds.

The plane, I understand, according to the record, the news record at least, arrived at Memphis, Tenn., in the course of its trip, and three servicemen, one of whom, I understand, was a member of the Marine Corps, requested a priority to get on that plane and come on to Washington. The request was refused. The three servicemen put off the dog and took the plane.

Mr. STEWART (Tenn.) According to the report from the War Department, the servicemen were not "bumped" from the plane on account of the dog; that had nothing to do with it.

Mr. BUSHFIELD. They were "bumped" from the plane because of the added weight of the dog and its cage, were they not?

Mr. STEWART. No; but because the plane had to take on a cargo which had a B priority, which is superior to the priority the servicemen had.

Mr. BUSHFIELD. But the dog was not put off the plane, was it?

Mr. STEWART. No; because the dog had an A priority. (Laughter.)

Mr. BUSHFIELD. But the three servicemen were put off, were they not? Will the Senator answer my question? The three servicemen were put off the plane were they not?

Mr. STEWART. Yes; they were put off, but I want to call the Senator's attention to the report of the War Department, the report of Gen. George, filed with the subcommittee. The report stated that these men did not lose passage because of the dog at all.

Mr. BUSHFIELD. The dog also had a priority superior to that of a United States Senator.

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People's Platform

Editors, THE NEWS:

Tuesday morning I received a letter from an aged woman who is at the State Hospital at Morganton. Her son is with General Patton, and has been injured.

I tried to see her last Sunday afternoon, but could not because Sunday visiting is not allowed—and I have not seen her in five years.

I called Dr. Brown, the acting Superintendent, by telephone, and asked to have this stupid rule changed this week. He said he did not know just how it could be changed—but that he would discuss it with Dr. Saunders, who fortunately is now recuperating.

I hope you'll publish this letter and send a copy to Tom Jimison, so that those of us who cannot go during the week may visit our friends at the Hospital on Sunday, and do it soon.

—TAYLOR BLEDSOE

Asheville, N. C.

Plaint From A Soldier

Editors, The News:

Recent events, or experiences, which have been tagging me since my arrival here prompt me to write you. I am a soldier stationed at Morris Field, having been transferred here last April. My home is in West Virginia. I am 40 years old and was drafted three years ago in Detroit, where I had been employed in a defense plant.

More and more I am becoming vexed—in fact, sirs, pretty damned sore at the natives of this city and state simply because of the way servicemen have been treated, and I am afraid that serious developments will be the result if some one here doesn't interest himself in the subject of soldiers. Especially those returning veterans who have gone through hell trying to make it safe for those of us left here at home.

For eleven months I've watched public treatment of soldiers, and have seen enough to write a book. Here are some of the faults:

No one will pick up a soldier, with few exceptions. Why? Put on a uniform and stand outside near Morris Field and try to get a ride into town.

Why do we have to pay so much for everything here?

Why aren't the shows more lenient with service people, like other cities in other states?

Why do the taxi drivers carry knives, blackjacks and guns?

Why is rent to soldiers so high?

Why isn't there a free service canteen here in Charlotte?

—A SOLDIER.

Charlotte.

(We have departed from an old, old policy in printing this anonymous letter from a Morris Field soldier because of his pointed reference to conditions in Charlotte to which he objects. If he will identify himself we will be glad to have further communication from him—and from other soldiers or civilians who feel the urge to express themselves on this matter. This departure does not invalidate our policy of publishing no unsigned letters, and stands as a lone exception.—Editors, The News).

Youngest Fighters

SENATOR Taft (R.) of Ohio brought up in the Senate the case of an 18-year old Ohio soldier of his acquaintance killed in action in France seven months after induction. The lad had only 17 weeks of training before being sent abroad as a replacement. Several other Senators report that similar cases have been brought to their attention. Taft wants the War Department to make known its policy on sending into combat youths with less than a year's training.

The so-called Teen-Age Draft Act of Nov. 13, 1942, barely escaped carrying a provision that inducted youths of 18 and 19 must receive at least a year's training before being sent into battle. When the bill was before the House, Rep. Hamilton Fish (R.) of New York tried to get a vote on a provision to that effect; his amendment was ruled out of order. But in the Senate such an amendment, proposed by Senator O'Daniel (D.) of Texas, was adopted.

The Senate vote in favor of the restriction was 39 to 31. Counting pairs and announcements, the alignment was 51 to 24. The Democratic Senators lined up 30 to 26 in favor of the amendment, the Republicans 19 to 8 in favor of it. The two Independents also supported the amendment. Senator Taft was among those who voted in the affirmative. The amendment was opposed by the Administration.

In conference between the two houses the O'Daniel amendment was stricken from the bill. War Department spokesmen had referred to the conferees the previous assurance of Secretary of War Stimson that the younger inductees would not be sent into combat without adequate training.

Nevertheless a motion on the floor of the House was made by Representative Rankin, Democrat, of Mississippi to recommit the bill to the conference committee with instructions to the House conferees to accept the O'Daniel Amendment, so amended as to forbid the use of eighteen-year-old and nineteen-year-old draftees in "foreign combat service until they have been given adequate training." The Rankin motion was lost by a standing vote of 40 to 189, and the Mississippian could not muster the support of one-fifth of the members present necessary for his further motion for a record vote.

Even after the landing in Normandy the Army held to its policy of not sending soldiers overseas under the age of nineteen. But on Dec. 7 last Undersecretary of War Patterson announced a change of policy. He explained that whereas in January, 1944, only 29 1/2 per cent of the draftees were under nineteen, by October, 1944, the number of draftees under nineteen had risen to 40 per cent of the total. In view of the increased need for replacements, soldiers under nineteen were being sent abroad, but only those who were "sufficiently" trained.

The Undersecretary explained further that a minimum of eight months elapsed between induction and a soldier's actual assignment to the battle front as a replacement. This did not mean that he had necessarily received eight months' actual training. The standard base training period is seventeen weeks.

In the Civil War almost one-half of the Union soldiers were under nineteen, the average age in the Union armies being 19 1/2 years. In the Confederate forces the average age was 18 1/2 years.

At the outbreak of war in 1939 the British Government agreed not to send conscripts abroad under the age of twenty. In December, 1941, the age limit for service abroad was reduced to nineteen, and this limit did not apply to volunteers in the Army, nor to the Navy, nor to the Royal Air Force. The present limit for service of British draftees abroad is 18 1/2 years of age.—Editorial Research Reports.

Quote, Unquote

WE will make no effort to restore German industry and no food will be brought into the country until their own supplies sink below the level at which a race can exist.

—Lt. Gen. Joseph L. Canby, 7th Army G-5 officer.

We took 500 prisoners, including a 12-year-old riflerman who was shivering in his civilian pants and shirt, and we took a 58-year-old man so dumb he didn't even know what battalion he belonged to.

—S/Sgt. John F. Lasky of Pittsburgh, Pa., who's got plenty of Germans to worry about.

The Luzon battle is fought for very high stakes. If Japan is to survive and play a leading role in world affairs, she must snatch victory in this war.

—Tokyo broadcast.

Most of the mothers who stray into cocktail bars for just one drink, but return home several days later, don't start out to abandon their children. One drink leads to another, and then usually to a man, and finally to the Municipal Court.

—Dr. David B. Rotman, Chicago psychiatrist.