

SATURDAY, MARCH 16, 1946

## The Case For Price Control

**PRESIDENT TRUMAN'S** announcement of his new wage-price formula, and Chester Bowles' subsequent effort to interpret it, have brought a new storm of criticism down upon the OPA. Elements of the left—we presume that the AP of L is at least not of the right—have joined with the big familiar voice in decrying price control. We ourselves, as an advocate of OPA, have been struck a glancing blow or two by our readers. Why, we are asked, does *Time* not occasionally present the arguments against price control?

Well, in all honesty, we thought we had. We have admitted in other large type in these columns that price controls are (1) annoying, (2) badly-administered, (3) un-American, and (4) an obstacle in the path of full production, which is the only final answer to inflation. But always, as we pursue the logic laid down by the opponents of OPA, we run head-on into what strikes us as a fundamental economic fallacy.

Full production or no, the housing shortage can't be cured in less than three years. The shortages of automobiles, electrical appliances, other desirable goods, will continue for at least ten years. The clothing shortage is good for at least another year. If controls come off and all these commodities are offered at what amounts to public auction, is there any reason to believe that other, relatively plentiful items, such as foodstuffs, would not follow the upward trend?

Businessmen are in business to make money; this is not evil, but it is inevitable. In Hickory, which has no rent control, rentals have gone sky-high despite all the moral pressure churches, the Chamber of Commerce, the local newspaper and the civic clubs could bring to bear on landlords. As Hickory landlords make more money than other businessmen? We don't think so—it's just asking too much of any man

to expect him to voluntarily give up the chance to make a killing. Such a request, indeed, flies in the face of our traditions just as certainly as does the involuntary control of the Government.

Current scarcities have largely removed competition (do you want a Buick or just an automobile?) and the OPA provides an artificial and imperfect check on rising prices to replace the normal limitations of competitive trade. Of course these controls should come off at the first possible moment, but we fail to see how anybody can set an arbitrary date for their removal—this afternoon at 3 o'clock as the NAM demands. June 30 as some of our Congressmen insist, next January 1 as Chester Bowles once indicated, or March 15, 1946, as William Green proposes.

Not even the most optimistic critics of OPA have attempted to argue that removal of controls while supply and demand are still out of kilter will not produce a sharp rise in all prices; their case rests on the assumption that the period of chaos would be of short duration. We submit that the great majority of wage earners, with annual incomes of less than \$5,000, are barely breaking even now—they cannot stand a 30, 40, 50 or whatever per cent increase in the cost of living for any length of time.

OPA has always struck us as the lesser of two evils. Under a determined President, who recognized the present situation for the state of emergency it is, it might have been scrapped in short order. A series of Missouri compromises has now postponed the day when we can return to the system of free competition that is fundamental to our economy, but that tragic fact still does not alter the basic facts in the case for OPA. We don't like price controls any better than the NAM does, but we like the alternative of uncontrolled inflation a whole lot less.

## The Elemental Matter Of Health

**THE** North Carolina Good Health Association, founded this week in Thomasville, sets out with the most elemental objective of initiating "a program providing more doctors and adequate health care for the people of North Carolina." It's a mighty job, of course, but then the brand new Association was a mighty organization the day it was born—more than 1,500 signatures appeared on its charter and among them were most of North Carolina's household words.

The need for such a health program has been established beyond debate. The statistics are endless, but only one painfully familiar set of figures is necessary to prove the point—North Carolina led the nation in draft rejections for physical disability; more than 50 per cent of the young Tar Heels called could not meet the low health standards of the armed services.

The citizens who gathered at Thomasville were representative North Carolinians. There were doctors and nurses, politicians and educators, businessmen and farmers. There were religious, political and economic persuasion. And when its members go forth to argue their case they will be armed with an unanswerable question—what good will it do to build a glorious future for North Carolinians who won't live to see it?

Dr. Frank Graham of the University

keynoted the session when he remarked upon the contrast between North Carolina's leadership in providing her citizens with education and roads and her failure in the elemental field of keeping them alive.

The mission of the Association, as specified in its charter, is to organize public support for state assistance for the indigent sick, state assistance for local hospitals and rural health centers, expansion of the University's two-year medical school, establishment of a medical education loan fund, a special study on the medical education of Negroes, and the promotion of "Blue Cross" group insurance plans. All of this, of course, will cost money, and the Association recognizes that it will have a long uphill fight on its hands.

Still it is difficult to see how the Association can fail. It was founded in indignation and shame at past failures, and it is embarking upon its task with a healthy sort of anger. It already has the support of powerful organizations of every conceivable religious, political and economic persuasion. And when its members go forth to argue their case they will be armed with an unanswerable question—what good will it do to build a glorious future for North Carolinians who won't live to see it?

## Civil Liberties In The Army?

**WE** note that many citizens are still periodically shocked by the discovery that the Army of the United States is not a democratic institution. The recent wholesale eviction of GI editors of service publications in both the European and Asiatic Theaters has led to considerable public discussion based on the odd assumption that a soldier is equipped with civil liberties.

As far as we are concerned the situation was adequately summed up General J. C. H. Lee, the practicing martinet who recently defended his actions in the accompanying letter column in the Mediterranean edition of *The Stars & Stripes*. He was free, he informed correspondents, to do any damned thing he pleased with the newspaper published under his command. As an afterthought he added that he wouldn't be bothered much longer with the editorial considerations, anyway, for we would soon "replace our democratic army with a volunteer army."

Perhaps the citizens' army of the war years did seem "democratic" to J. C. H. Lee, who wouldn't recognize a civil liberty if he met it in the middle of the Arabian Way. There was a sort of a faint-hearted pretense of maintaining liberal journalistic standards in the service publications during the war years, but the consideration that the war was war, not an abstract regard for truth. Actually, our soldiers lost all control over their own destiny the day they signed up, and minor considerations like freedom of speech hardly seemed worth working up a sweat.

The terms democratic and military are contradictory. Not long ago a demobilized Texas National Guard Division voted overwhelmingly that it never should have been ordered to cross the Rapido River. If the guardsmen had had the right of ballot at the time they were ordered to cross the Rapido River, they would have voted to have decided against it in sound democratic fashion. Other divisions, under similar circumstances, would have reached a similar decision on the banks of the Moselle, the Saar, the Po and the Rhine. So, we suspect, would the Red Army on the bank of the Dnieper.

Those who feel over our army's caste system, totalitarianism, and general failure to educate its members in the ways of democracy, are, it seems to us, placing the cart before the horse. The way to get rid of an undemocratic institution, like the army, which always has been, is to remove the necessity for maintaining it. Simple, isn't it?

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## Another Voice

## They Came To Tarheelia

**JAMES GRAY** in his book, "The Illinois," points to three of the strongest voices "heard in the early years of America's poetic renaissance": Edgar Lee Masters, Carl Sandburg and Vachel Lindsay.

These men whom Gray described as "the inheritors of a tradition of freedom," sought out the people, learned the pattern and color of their thought, heard them speak and caught the intonation of their voices. That they did this in the land of America, not in the stifled rhetoric

of the English precisionists, nor in the mawkish sentimentalism of sub-sister Victorian poets.

Mr. Gray thought it significant that these three men came out of Illinois. Perhaps Tar Heels would be justified in finding significance in the fact that of the three (Vachel Lindsay is dead), two, Carl Sandburg and Edgar Lee Masters, are now living in North Carolina, Sandburg near Hendersonville, Masters in the Seelye Hotel, Charlotte.—*The Twin City Sentinel*.



## People's Platform

## But What Of The People?

**WHAT** will happen to the people who will drink \$3,000,000 of liquor from ABC stores in Mecklenburg to give an estimated annual profit of \$1,000,000, if the wet voters succeed in a future election?

These drinkers will own fewer homes and save less money for old-age. Many of their children will be undernourished and ill-clad while they sit in costly school-houses bought by the booze drinker by their fathers. Taxes for the well-to-do people will be reduced, but welfare expenses will increase for the families impoverished by drink. Some of the liquor buyers will fall prison cells, sentenced, perhaps, from a magnificent courthouse which they helped to build by their liquor purchases. Others will enter mental institutions, or occupy beds in charity wards in hospitals.

Long lines of these people will stand in highly respectable sections of Queen Charlotte, waiting entrance into the ABC stores, presided over by respectable sober men who will sell to them pure liquor at reasonable prices, making it possible to buy other and respectable things. While liquor dealers and public signs on the walls "To drink for refreshment and not intoxication." Others, through convenient hours, inebriable habits, or fearing the exposure of secret drinking habits, will patronize their favorite bootleggers protected by the gallon greater threat to the public morales than the present and not swell the statistics on arrests for public drunkenness, thereby giving ABC stores a better picture, with lure of gain.

This horrendous picture is like a modern version of Sodom and Gomorrah! Will Mecklenburg put money-making, through legal liquor sales, above morals and public welfare and sell her birthright for a mess of pottage? If ABC officers can enforce liquor laws, other enforcement officers should be able to do likewise, and not have respectable men in ABC stores take the place of bootleggers. ABC stores seem to be no longer for liquor control, but for money-making and encouraging other counties to follow their practice, with lure of gain.

"ABC" seems to mean, "A Bootlegger's Control" and "All Bootleggers' Cash!"

—**INEZ FLOW.**

(NOTE: It is a horrendous picture, indeed, but not quite as bad as the present spectacle of Mecklenburgers dividing an estimated \$3,000,000 annually between South Carolina's private liquor dealers and Charlotte's thriving bootleggers. Miss Flow has never stated our aim—ABC Stores presided over by respectable sober men who will sell to them pure liquor at reasonable prices, with the profits from the trade going for public purposes. If that is a greater threat to the public morales than the present bootleg racket, then we are guilty of the effort to reduce this pure metropolis to the level of Sodom and Gomorrah.—*Eds. The News*.)

## Verse And Verse

**THINK I TOLD YOU** I had nothing to do with the way folks in Charlotte get their liquor, but thank your sweet ass—up.

It is all right, but you are not as green as you try to appear—cabage looking.

But your wisecrack didn't even have a chuckle, much less any moral. But maybe you have something there—suppose you do away with your water.

CHERRAW, S. C.

—**INEZ FLOW.**

**MONROE**

system and keep your tanks filled with wine. Surest way I know to get rid of bootleggers.

The hardest job I ever saw a body try was while washing for the Devil and not getting themselves smeared. The most I ever knew of anyone getting was 30 pieces of silver, and he got ashamed and hanged himself.

Maybe a "little wine" is good for the stomach. But you sure are a pain for the other fellow to stomach when you get too much wine. We all know fight from wrong—more than we care to admit sometimes.

—**MRS. LULA RIVERS**

**PEMBROKE**

I WANT TO COMMEND Mrs. Rivers on her letter of the 11th. Just want to say you got your reference of the scripture a little mixed up as 1st Timothy 5 chapter does not contain 23 verses, only 21. Perhaps you had reference to 1st Timothy 5:23. Note as you read that Paul admonished Timothy to use a "little wine" for his stomach's sake. Paul was concerned about Timothy's health. We have many that do not use it as Paul directed, but to excess.

It is a turn in your Bible to Proverbs 20-1; also Proverbs Chapter 23-20-32.

Enjoy reading the Charlotte News very much. It is a race with Dad, the children and myself to see who reads the News first in the afternoon.

—**MRS. W. F. GODWIN**

## Quote, Unquote

**LABOR** cannot and will not forfeit its right to protest. It cannot and will not surrender the right to strike. The right to strike is part of the free enterprise system—William Green, president, American Federation of Labor.

## Drew Pearson's • General Ike Discounts Soviet War Talk

**"WE** saw what happened to the finest armies the world has ever seen. If we tried to conquer Russia there's no doubt we'd be able to establish ourselves on the soil—but once we did we'd be faced with years of slogging through Siberia.

From Persia To Iran

**TIME** is a changer of many things. And time has wrought great changes in the status of one diplomatic mission in Washington—the legation of Iran.

It was just 10 years ago that the Minister of Persia—as he was then called—was arrested in Elkhart, Md., and led away handcuffed by the Maryland police. Minister Djalil Khan Djalil had been speeding. But standing on opposite sides of the road were the Maryland police and the Djalil's white whip, who resisted arrest even more valiantly.

Secretary of State Hull apologized for the arrest, but the Shah of Persia, indignant, withdrew his Minister from Washington. He even went to the extreme length of ordering his Minister not to attend any function at the White House prior to his departure. The President of the United States, he decreed, did not have the proper respect for Persian sovereignty.

Not Much Missed

The State Department was not too unhappy about Minister Djalil's departure, for he had been a general pain in the neck, having been able to establish ourselves on the soil—but once we did we'd be faced with years of slogging through Siberia.

**IN A CABINET** meeting recently, Senator Kenneth McKellar of Tennessee, who holds so many important offices in the Senate, let off a blast against OPA. He said: "I have heard these snipers who went around poking into everybody's business."

The Senator's tirade stirred a discussion that lasted for more than 45 minutes. Through it all, Economic Stabilizer Chester Bowles sat silent.

This little tirade served, as almost nothing else could have done, to point to the chairman of the man in the White House.

McKellar is one of the three or four most powerful members of the President's party in Congress. He presides over the Senate and he dominates two of the Senate's most important committees.

McKellar is the perfect example of the working of seniority in Congress. At 77, he sums up the defects not merely of his party but of the process of democracy in this country. Nearly 30 years ago, he got on the seniority escalator in the Senate.

Through the years, re-elected by the votes of one of the most hard-bitten political machines in America, he has ridden to the top.

In the excellent report of the joint Senate and House committee on reorganization of Congress, nothing is said about the evils of the seniority system. Under the directions given the committee, no recommendations could be made on any subject relating to Congressional procedure.

But, indirectly, the report does say that the seniority system recommends a pension system for Senators and Representatives.

## Samuel Grafton

## A Disturbing Story

**THE** most disturbing story printed in the American press is the one about the Army and Navy Board of Scientific Research. The paper dealt with what happened at the reading of the paper by two Oak Ridge scientists before the Atlantic City meeting of the American Association of Scientists for Experimental Biology.

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If such system had been in force during even the latter years of McKellar's long service, he today could be a victim of his own scheme. That is, he and others who hung on long after advancing OPA had rendered them unfit for public office.

**RETIREMENT TRADITION**

It is a long and necessary tradition that keeps men in Congress beyond the term of their usefulness. But McKellarism was adopted, a tradition of retirement would soon grow up.

The McKellarism is only one phase of the thorough overhaul recommended by the reorganization committee of the Senate. The La Follette of Wisconsin and Representative Monroney of Oklahoma were joint chairmen. If Congress will combine these recommendations in a bill and pass that bill, it will be a long step toward bringing our Government up to the times.

The obstacle, of course, is tradition and patronage. The Senate's 33 committees would be reduced to 18. McKellarism lives on petty patronage and tradition.

The La Follette-Monroney report was referred to the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration. On it also are three Senators who would be abolished if the recommendations of the report were carried out. McKellarism lives on petty patronage and tradition.

If we are to get the full advantage of this excellent report, we must have a complete study have gone, then both Senate and House should allow the men who drew up the bill to do the necessary legislation. They have cut through the jungle of McKellarism and tradition. They are equipped to do the job.

To turn the final stage of McKellarism into a complete study would be to give a perfect illustration of the roundabout, backward approach that characterizes so much Congressional procedure today.

right to object to any move made by the civilians, and to carry it out. The objection, of course, is not to the plan, but to the man who has to carry it out. McKellarism lives on petty patronage and tradition.

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