

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 1946

There'll Always Be A Protest

It would be our guess that the great majority of Charlotte's citizens ardently desire a new system of express boulevards to relieve the city's terrible traffic jam. It would also be our guess that no citizen wants an express boulevard in front of his own residence.

There are the attitudes that underlie the arguments against the Monroe Road-South Boulevard project now being presented to the Highway Commission, City Council, and anybody else who will listen. The protestants, of course, are persons who are about the contemplation of right-of-way. Some of their arguments have a time, disinterested ring—school-children will be impeded by having to cross a busy thoroughfare, certain schemers among State and City officials have used advance knowledge to enable them to purchase industrial property at low prices, and in value, it's a shame to destroy dwellings in the middle of a housing shortage. But most of this is window dressing. Mainly the protestants don't want to have their front yards clipped and a new flood of traffic channeled into their quiet neighborhoods. And we don't blame them. We wouldn't either.

Nevertheless, it must be recognized that a new cross-town boulevard as imperative. The somewhat plaintive argument that a system of perimeter thoroughfares around the city could be built instead is largely irrelevant. All the traffic surveys show that Charlotte isn't bothered by through traffic; the great majority of vehicles coming into this distribution center stop somewhere in

the business district. Thus the new boulevard, to serve any really useful purpose, must swing into the downtown section at some point, and Morehead-South Boulevard seems as logical as any.

We would not say that the exact route now being surveyed is the best possible solution to the problem. There may be valid objections to it, and every State and City official concerned has a clear obligation to examine them with an open mind. But the general plan strikes us as sound; a look at the map indicates that most alternative routes would result in far greater dislocation, and an even louder outcry from the dislocated.

J. B. Marshall, the Planning Board's engineering consultant, has brought up the important point that prolonged squabbling may well result in withdrawal of the Federal funds now tentatively allocated for the project. If the Boulevard is finally approved the Bureau of Public Roads will put up something like \$1,500,000 against a few thousand for the City. "But," warns Mr. Marshall, "the Federal Government isn't going to give away money where it isn't wanted. The funds will be used to build thoroughfares in Greensboro or some other city."

The protestants certainly deserve a sympathetic hearing. But sympathy for this small group should not be allowed to distract City officials from their greater obligation to the community as a whole. Charlotte must have cross-town boulevards, and have them soon, or she will be strangled by her own clogged traffic.

There's Already A Scandal In Housing

SKYROCKETING prices for key home-building materials in the black market have stymied private builders in their effort to meet the pressing demand for housing in the metropolitan area. Thus the cautious *New York Times* begins a disheartening summary of the housing situation in its own back yard. And, while the building materials market in New York is bigger and perhaps even blacker than Charlotte's, we suspect the *Times'* figures are equally wild hereabouts.

Here are a few samples of New York black market prices: Oak flooring at \$350 a thousand feet as compared with \$65-870 for better grades on the prewar market. Rough framing lumber at \$140 a thousand feet. Nails at \$15 a keg against \$3 to \$3.75 before the war. Soft pine at \$9 a five-section as against \$2.50 on the black market last Spring.

If these prices were being paid only by certain sinister characters seeking to evade the Federal system of priorities it would, perhaps, make little difference. But, according to *The Times*, the black market has a corner on certain types of necessary materials. And that means that bidders would say, in the making. The scandal, we would say, is already here. Nothing could possibly be more scandalous than the failure of the greatest, the richest, the strongest, the most Godly nation on the face of the earth to make even an intelligent start toward meeting the basic needs of its citizens.

The Fantastic Oleomargarine Laws

WHOM time to time somebody takes a look at the oleomargarine business, discovers the fantastic mass of restrictive laws that have always justified it, and comes up screaming about injustice. The staunch, conservative *Saturday Evening Post* is the latest.

One result of the war during which you could get very little butter and were forced to make do with margarine, was a revolution against the selfish and non-sensical laws and regulations by means of which the dairy lobby in at least twenty states has managed to curtail the distribution of oleo. In some states grocers are not permitted to sell cold yellow and the housewife or her husband is forced to mix a small capsule of coloring matter into the white mass. Let there be any sap, the Federal Government imposes a 10-cents-a-pound tax on the interstate distribution of colored margarine. A long list of states imposes special taxes. Hence fees and other squeezes for the privilege of selling margarine.

The Post, of course, is right, even though some twenty years later in becoming excited over the matter. But what has always puzzled us is why anybody without exception in the Southern States, which produce little butter but do produce all the cottonseed oil that goes into oleo, have adopted laws similar to those lobbied through in places like Wisconsin by the dairy interests.

We're delighted to see *The Post* reopen the subject, but it seems to us that any sane person, after a little thought, would begin among Southerners, the champion suckers among the millions of Americans who are victims of the astounding fraud.

Yet we have never heard a faint word of protest from cotton farmers or even from cottonseed oil processors even though these laws must have served to restrict their market over the years. It would seem that enlightened self-interest, or even just plain self-interest, would have guaranteed a deaf legislative ear to the dairy lobbyists, but somehow it hasn't.

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ing prices or simply legalize them. If some builders, and their clients, are willing now to go to the great inconvenience of paying exorbitant prices for the black market, would they balk at paying exorbitant sums in the open? Wouldn't the effect be to establish a sort of perpetual auction in the materials market as competitive bidders sought scarce items?

As a matter of fact, OPA is serving only as an impediment to rising prices anyway. The present New York ceiling on oak flooring, for instance, is \$175 a thousand, more than double the ceiling of a year ago and almost triple the prewar price. Obviously, if OPA allows the price to rise further, the ceiling will serve no purpose at all for flooring will be beyond the reach of the vast majority of home-seekers.

Nobody, not even those who are making a killing out of it, can take any pride in this dismal situation. Federal ineptitude, restrictive trade union practices, the anarcho-opposition of most of the building industry, to even reasonable controls—these have combined to produce one of the most shameful chapters in this nation's history.

The Times predicts that a national scandal will be in the making. The scandal, we would say, is already here. Nothing could possibly be more scandalous than the failure of the greatest, the richest, the strongest, the most Godly nation on the face of the earth to make even an intelligent start toward meeting the basic needs of its citizens.

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People's Platform

Are We Being Unfair?

ARE we as a nation being unfair to Russia? Or have we tried to force our form of government on the Russians? Let's look at the facts as they come into us daily via the press and radio, and try to be fair to all concerned. What is the truth with reference to our relations with Soviet Russia?

Instead of ourselves and Britain trying to force our form of government on Russia, it would seem that the opposite is true: that Russia has set out to impose Communism on her neighbors, whether they like it or not; and apparently she is willing to sabotage all peace efforts unless she gets her way, unless all of her selfish demands are met by her allies. As to the charge that the USA deliberately allowed five million Russians to starve to death after World War I this writer has certainly been misled by false statements of supposedly reliable writers, if this be true.

It would seem to be a matter of history that the Russian Government, shortly after the Communists came into power, moved several million peasants from one part of Russia to another, from land that had been cultivated to an untended wilderness, and that uncounted numbers of these poor people starved to death. Should we be blamed for that?

Only recently I read the statement that our nation tried to send food at that time to those starving Russians and that our offer was curiously refused. Our rulers preferred that millions should die rather than receive aid from a country run by capitalists.

Finally (so the story ran) after millions had perished from starvation, and some food was shipped in to relieve the famine victims. But the fact remains that the USA offered help, which was refused.

During the recent war when Russia fought with her back to the wall, the USA and Britain helped with all possible aid. And now the thanks we get is constant abuse, with hope and a lasting peace becoming more and more dim, as the UNO struggles daily for peace with justice; while Russian demands grow more unreasonable. What a sad and foolish farce! It is still an unbroken chain.

—MRS. E. C. HENDRICKS.

The Caste System

Editors, The News: In view of many objectionable developments that have taken place recently where basic American institutions are involved; and since the Robert B. Anderson Post No. 13 of the American Legion is concerned about all of them; therefore, the following resolution was presented to the Post, moved, seconded, discussed and unanimously adopted:

RESOLVED THAT: We of the Robert B. Anderson Post No. 13 of The American Legion protest and condemn a Caste System that produces a Hitlerite attitude, at which time that most unworthy person, but gentleman and success by American standards, Mr. Kilian, and other officers involved were scarcely more than reprimanded and the "Enlisted Men," who acted under orders from the above named, were sentenced to seven years at hard work over 48 hours.

AND THAT: We protest the system so glibly referred to by ranking officers as the "so-called caste system."

INSIDE fact on the jumbled maritime strike is that both the AFL and the CIO maritime unions have had a 121 percent increase as early as last June if they had been firmer. The AFL and CIO leaders—Harry Bridges of the West Coast Longshoremen and Joe Curran of the Maritime Union—were the main beneficiaries.

What happened was that last May Secretary of Labor Schweikert and Granville Conway, War Shipping Administrator, had a talk with Hoyt Haddock, Washington representative for Curran's CIO maritime union. Both agreed that the seamen were entitled to a substantial wage boost. The tentative figure of \$30 a month was mentioned, with time-and-a-half for work over 48 hours.

Haddock later sent a telegram to both Bridges and Curran reporting this, and to his amazement got a hot wire back from Bridges telling Haddock to mind his own business. Bridges even told Haddock to go back to Schweikert and Conway and inform them to disregard their previous conversation. This Haddock did.

Labor Retreats

LATER, when the CIO maritime strike was called, public reaction flared. The railroad strike had occurred only a short time before and Congress was seeking with labor agreement. The Case Bill was under discussion and labor leaders knew that if the CIO maritime unions went out on strike, drastic anti-labor legislation not only would pass Congress but would not be vetoed by the White House.

In the end, CIO leaders settled for \$17.50 a month increase. This was far less than the \$30 figure Haddock offered Haddock with Schweikert and Conway before Harry Bridges had wired him to mind his own business.

June 26, just twelve days after the \$17.50 award was made, Captain Conway, who as War Shipping Administrator, operated 70 percent of the nation's ships, completely ignored the \$17.50 for the CIO and agreed to \$22.50 for AFL seamen.

Obviously this meant bitter war between the CIO-AFL rivals. Also it meant trouble with the Wage Stabilization

system" that permits such inequalities. The Doollittle committee made some excellent recommendations (Doollittle was one of the few civilians who reached high rank during the war). The Army selected such as would least disturb the status quo and widely publicized the fact that a more democratic Army would be forthcoming. The other recommendations were, in their words, "taken under consideration," which is plain language means they were carefully buried and forgotten.

FURTHER RESOLVED THAT: We believe that the Litchfield trial is a glaring example of the caste system that grants special privileges to the chosen few; a system in which "it is not what one knows but who one knows" that so often influences one's standing in which "it is not what is done but who does it" that determines the nature of a deed.

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED THAT: The Army clique has no intention of giving up any of its privileges and will do anything to get new recruits just short of actually relinquishing a thing. It resorts to such inducements as higher pay, and high-pressure Congress for a draft law that would make it unnecessary if it were to clean house so that any red-blooded American, who places freedom and self-respect above security, could volunteer without fear of losing either or both. We believe that such obvious evils can only be corrected by pressure applied from outside military circles by veteran groups through Congress, and hereby advocate immediate action by The American Legion.

AND: Be it resolved that copies of this resolution be sent to American Legion Headquarters, to each of our U. S. Senators, and to our Congressmen.

—Robert B. Anderson Post No. 13.

The People's Platform is available to any reader who cares to mount it. Communications should be sent to the Editor, The People's Platform, c/o The American Legion, 1000 Broadway, New York, N. Y. 10003. It is possible, and on only one side of the paper. Libel and obscenity will be deleted—otherwise the platform will be printed in full. It is possible, though, in exceptional cases and upon request, we will withhold the writer's name.—Editors, The News.

Quote, Unquote

IN my opinion there is no doubt that this bomb is a powerful enough to flatten completely all buildings within a radius of a half mile even if the William C. Penney, British physicist at Birklin.

English should become the second language of all nations. In fact, English today is the Esperanto of 1946. It has become the universal language of the modern world. The English of Norway, world teachers conference delegate.

I am afraid that if we haven't a show of strength, a force strong enough to impress the ideas of freedom on the world, that we will take the darkest licking any country over took. The reparations that Germany and Japan are paying won't be in the bucket to what we will pay—Maj. Gen. Charles F. Born, 145th AAF commander.

Drew Pearson's: Maritime Strike Bungled By Government

Board, which had just set the increase at \$17.50. However, Mr. Conway blundered ahead just the same. So later, when the Wage Stabilization Board scaled down the AFL's \$22.50 to the CIO's \$17.50, the AFL struck. The whole lie-up could have been avoided by a little more Government foresight—largely on the part of Captain Conway.

FDR's Exiled SEC

WHILE the diplomats battle privately over "displaced persons" and migration to Palestine, big business is battling privately over a "displaced agency" in Washington.

The Securities & Exchange Commission, exiled to Philadelphia in 1942, now wants to come back home. But reactionary Congressmen and bureaucrats, secretly angry at big business, are opposed.

SEC, watchdog of the stock market, was one of Franklin Roosevelt's first and best reforms. Remembering the watered stock and money deals which helped bring on the 1929 crash, nobody can deny SEC's importance. However, big business and pro-utility elements in Congress and the Budget Bureau have sniped at SEC for years, cutting its appropriations, considered it a major victory to get SEC out of Washington.

Now these defenders-of-the-dividend have vowed to keep SEC in Philadelphia where it can't defend itself, can't operate, and has no power. The question is whether the utility lobbyists now running wild in the Capitol.

Soviet Giveth And Taketh

FINAL decision for the Jimmy Byrnes speech on Germany was made by high officials in Washington about 12 days before he made it. The question is that the Russians learned about it at the same time.

Byrnes phoned President Truman about 12 days in advance, told him the Russians were on the ramp, and nothing could be done to satisfy them. He therefore proposed that the United States and Great Britain try to set up

A PROJECT for a new Democratic Party in the South is scheduled to be put before the little Democratic convention of Arkansas when it convenes soon. The proposal is likely to evoke more indignation than support.

Southern conservatives today are all the more reticent within the present Democratic Party because the two-thirds rule for the Presidential and the Vice-Presidential nominations was abolished at the 1936 convention in Philadelphia. While the two-thirds rule obtained, the South enjoyed in effect a veto power over the nominations.

The Arkansas now proposing a second Democratic Party in the South declare that neither major political party is following policies acceptable to "great majority of Southern white people." They charge further that the present Democratic Administration is working hand-in-glove with "Communists, pink socialists, and other traitors." They also charge that the present Administration is "perpetrating and determined policy of undermining all the things the South holds dear."

SENTIMENT STRONG

The width and depth of this anti-administration sentiment in the South can hardly be over-estimated. In the Democratic national convention in Chicago in 1944, three Southern states—Louisiana, Mississippi, and Virginia—voted solidly for Senator Harry F. Byrd of Virginia for the Presidential nomination, although he was not a candidate and although President Roosevelt was sure of re-nomination. And Byrd received 21 1/2 votes from other Southern delegations.

However, difficulties facing any Southern political group desiring a national Democratic administration also can hardly be over-estimated.

In 1944 the State Democratic Convention of Texas, meeting two

Douglas Larsen

Army Outmaneuvered

WASHINGTON But now, it is reliably reported, the Air Force, in some quarters, has scored on the whole plan. Several reasons are offered for this change.

The officers concerned might have been shocked by the Air Force's becoming a separate department in itself. It is possible they don't like certain compromises the Navy has won from the original merger plan.

The Navy liked the Army over having a single chief of staff, as far as President Truman's composition of the staff is concerned.

FEAR ARMY RULE

The second key issue on the merger is the method of achieving the combination. Navy officials feel that any legislation setting up the new Department of National Defense should spell out specific powers and responsibilities. A separate setup would be. Unless this is done, they say, the result would be a "bureaucratic mess," with the Army usually getting its way in any dispute.

All during the dispute the Navy has been asserting that the War Department's two services would make America's national defense stronger. But now the Navy's objection to a quick throwing-together of the two fighting forces was generally ignored. The Air Force, the War Department were putting out tales of propaganda for their side.

Another point the Navy feels should be explored before a law is passed combining the services is just how much of the merger can be effected by administrative order of the President.

NAVY HAS BILL

But, as an ace in the hole, if Truman's success in merging the services is limited, the Navy is known to have a bill of its own. The bill would give the Navy one which it is believed would get more by early than the Truman measure.

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