THE CHARLOTTE NEWS

THOMAS L. ROBINSON, Publisher — J. E. DOWD, General Manager — HARRY S. ASHMORE, Editor

FRIDAY, JUNE 6, 1947

The Government And Housing

THE most peculiar political aspect of this strange season is the absence of public discussion of the housing shortage. By rights this should be the hottest issue on the Congressional agenda, and, of course, it would be if the voters showed any real concern over the dismal construction record of the post-war period. Instead the citizenry seems to accept the housing shortage as its just due, and even the unhoused veterans have subsided into silence in their chicken-coops and abandoned filling-stations.

In the absence of public clamor, the Congress has buried any and all proposals for a Federal housing program—such as the Wagner-Ellender-Taft Bill—in one of its deep-freeze committees. The gentlemen on The Hill have displayed a marked reluctance to take action on anything even remotely connected with housing. Even so logical and harmless a proposal as the merger of all existing housing agencies into a single unit has run into Congressional resistance.

The Administration, of course, has no more enviable a record in the housing field than the Congress. Mr. Truman did propose a Federal program that might have produced houses for veterans in some quantity, but it was never implemented with adequate funds or authority. Finally, in the face of the last-ditch opposition of the building industry, Housing Expediter Wyatt was tossed overboard without much of a struggle.

The result has been the sort of compromise that is unhappily typical of the post-war period. Enough construction controls, priorities, subsidies, etc., have been maintained to hamper and annoy the private builders, but not enough to insure an even flow of materials at prices low enough to make low- and medium-cost housing possible. These controls have been relaxed somewhat in recent weeks by Housing Expediter Creedon (the latest of a series) but they still remain on the books. And enforcement is divided, as it always has been, among a half-dozen independent agencies.

A large measure of politics is involved in this, of course. The Administration has sought to keep the appearance of a housing program, while at the same time leaving the field to private industry. If anybody is being fooled, however, there is no sign of it. Starts on new housing have actually declined in recent months and prices are still sky-high. The homeless veteran, it seems, has lost any interest he may have had in whose fault it is; he just wants a house at a price he can afford to pay and he has about lost hope of getting it anytime soon.

If the Administration and the Congress are really interested in speeding home construction there are many things the Government might do. But a handful of controls and priorities are no answer at all to our number one domestic problem. The Government should either get into the housing field with an effective program and a genuine determination make it work, or get out altogether. It will take private industry many years to take care of the housing shortage in its traditional uneconomic fashion and real estate values will be knocked into a cocked hat in the process, but there is no point in hampering and delaying the effort with a handful of controls that have neither produced houses nor checked rising prices.

A Raise For The GI Students

THE Congress has always given the veteran a great amount of sympathy and a fair amount of cash, and another appropriation on his behalf is under consideration in the House at the moment. A bill is before the Veteran's Committee which would raise the subsistence pay of married veterans going to school under the GI Bill from $90 to $105 per month, with an allowance of $20 extra for the first child and $15 for any others. In addition, Representative Hamilton C. Jones of the Tenth District is working for an increase in the monthly allowance for unmarried veterans from $65 to $75 a month.

Mr. Jones makes out an impressive case for the bill, which he believes will pass the Congress without difficulty. The amount of money involved is not great, by comparative standards, and the need for the increased appropriation is very real. The original subsistence allowance was intended to be just what the name implies—a minimum sum to meet the living expenses of GI students. But the amount was set almost three years ago, and in the meantime the cost of living has soared.

On those campuses where no special low-rent quarters are available, the subsistence allowances simply do not cover living expenses. This means, in many cases, that only those veterans who have financial assistance from their families are able to take advantage of the educational benefits of the GI Bill. This certainly was not the original intent of Congress, which sought to provide equal opportunities for every veteran who cared to take advantage of them.

The veteran's education program is one of the few concrete benefits the Government has thus far offered the men and women who served during World War II. And, happily, it is a program which may also be of vast benefit to the country at large. It has been properly called the first great experiment in mass education in American history, opening the doors of institutions of higher learning to hundreds of thousands of young men and women who could not otherwise have passed through them. This aspect of the program is most important, and it could easily be nullified if rising costs actually make Federal subsidies inadequate.

The Government has already invested many millions in the GI program, and additional millions are ear-marked. It seems to be necessary now to plough in a few more millions, as Mr. Jones points out, in order to insure maximum public benefit from the original investment. We agree with Mr. Jones that failure to adjust the GI Bill's subsistence allowances in accordance with the inflationary economic trend would not only mean breaking faith with the veterans, but would, in fact, be false economy.

Education By Remote Control

IT must be conceded that John F. Day and D. C. Little have a better excuse for nodding off in class than most college students. They work at Fort Knox by day and attend engineering classes at the University of Louisville by night, and it's a long ride from the job to the campus.

Their solution to the problem is ingenious, to say the least. Their instructor in physics (a subject that still puts more students to sleep than any other, we gather, despite Hiroshima) attaches a small microphone to his lapel and when the boys feel themselves slipping they simply throw the switch on their private wire recorder. Thus anything said while they are asleep in class is preserved and they can play the lecture back at their convenience.

The professor, it seems to us, may unwittingly have touched off a chain reaction. If a man can sleep in class without missing anything, why should he bother to come at all? Why not simply have the professor drop the recording in the mail after each class? And, if a younger brother or a neighbor becomes intesested in physics, why send him to college when a file of transcriptions explaining all is handy at home?

We've always had an idea the scientists would one day outsmart themselves. It may have begun here.

Another Voice

Welcome For An Altruist

REPRESENTATIVE JAMES B. VOGLER, for ten years a member of the General Assembly, announces his candidacy for State treasurer, to succeed Charles M. Johnson, who is running for Governor.

The Daily News, of course without commitment, welcomes Mr. Vogler into the field for a variety of reasons First, a five-term legislator should know his own mind about whether he wants to move to Raleigh, where certainly he could be expected to know his way around. Second, interest on the part of a Charlotte man in the discharge of the routine duties of State administration is so unusual that it should assist materially in the recapture, so to speak, by North Carolina of Mecklenburg, which since Clam Morrison left the Governor's office and South Carolina legalized the sale of liquor has been tending toward becoming a lost colony.

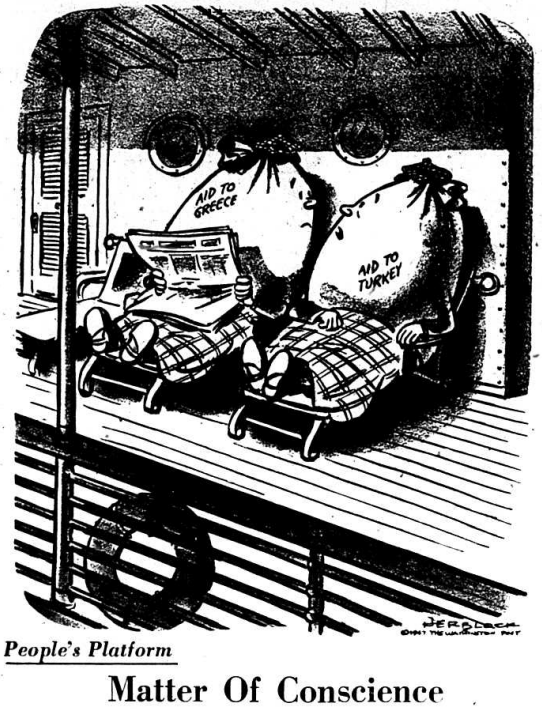
Too, Mr. Vogler, who is chairman of the North Carolina Food Dealers Association, cannot possibly be other than altruistic in his desire to serve. — *Greensboro Daily News.*

The Acoustical Society of America is told that music is closely linked to mathematics. If you wondered how Willy cleaned up his Algebra homework with a radio going, this is it.

The Maine Legislature has upped State taxes on gasoline and cigarettes, and Summer visitors to those parts may recognize the native by his surrey and chewing tobacco.

Rep. Kennedy of Massachusetts hotly denounces cheap gibes at Congress by comedians. It must be realized, however, the country at the moment is without a Vice-President, the comic's natural prey.

'How Are Things In Nicaragua?'



People's Platform

Matter Of Conscience

CHARLOTTE

Editors, THE NEWS:

I HAVE read most of the letters to the Charlotte newspapers about legalizing the sale of liquor in ABC stores. From these letters I was not able to get much help in making up my mind about the way to vote, for no evidence was presented showing conclusively that ABC stores would either harm or benefit a community in which the sale of alcoholic beverages, in the form of wine and beer, is legal and where any adult person may transport, or have in his possession, a gallon of whisky and where the retail sale of hard-liquor through bootleggers is practically unrestricted.

In considering the evidence for or against the establishment of ABC stores, all the fulminations about the harm that the abuse of alcohol causes are irrevelant, as on this all sane persons are in agreement. And the argument based on the revenue to be derived from the licensing of ABC stores only has validity if these stores do not appreciably increase the abuse of alcohol.

The opponents of the ABC stores appear, in the main, to be prohibitionists. They are therefore unalterably opposed to the sale of alcoholic beverages, in any form, anywhere. We may assume that they favored legalizing the sale of beer and wine and the 3one gallon" provision in the law prohibiting the sale of hard liquor in Mecklenburg County. They lost both of these fights. They, no doubt, now hope and believe that winning the fight against the establishment of more ABC stores will reverse the trend. Believing this, the prohibitionists are being consistent in opposing the ABC stores, irrespective of the effect the stores may have upon the consumption of alcohol.

However, it does not follow that the anti-prohibitionists should necessarily vote for the ABC stores, as they are concerned with lessening the evils incident to the illegal sale of alcoholic beverages and not primarily with the amount of alcoholic beverages sold. (Except with respect to increased revenue.) Hence the anti-prohibitionist may vote against the ABC stores on the grounds that he does not think that these liquor stores reduce or mitigate the evils resulting from illegal sale; or, if he believes that the ABC stores would increase the consumption of beverage alcohol, that the harm that would result from such increase would not be more than compensated for by decreasing the amount of bootlegger liquor sold.

Inasmuch as no-one can evaluate or forecast the amount of injury or benefit to Mecklenburg County that would result from the establishment of ABC stores, we are justified in disregarding all other considerations and voting selfishly. To determine what is your selfish interest, I suggest you ask yourself:

"Will ABC stores in Mecklenburg County cause me, or mine, to spend for liquor money, or more money, that might be spent more advantageously?" (In answering this question it is permissible to take into account any reduction in taxes that could be credited to the ABC stores. And "advantageously" is subject to your own interpretation.)

If you are troubled by the morality involved, you might ask yourself:

"If I knew I had to answer to my God the day I voted, would I change my vote?"

So in voting for or against ABC stores on June 14th, let your conscience be your guide, while harboring the comforting thought that we are not condemned for errors in judgment.

—LEWIS AYER SMITH.

Definition

CHARLOTTE

Editors, THE NEWS

WITH reference to the editorial captioned "Fascism is a state of mind", and in which the House Committee for the investigation of un-American activities is made the object of uncomplimentary criticism and accused of taking advantage of every opportunity "to smear the reputation of a liberal" it will not be inappropriate to question as to just what is meant by the use of the term "liberal?"

Personal experience serves to substantiate that a majority who impassionately scream praises about "liberals" are radicals with a distinct "Red" tinge, and that what these enthusiasts really mean by "liberal" is some one who will favor them or their organization with special privileges. Any person or parties who will not promise or anyone who refuses, to give them priority and special privilege, regardless of whether or not it is to the disadvantage of others, that person is to the "liberal" elements, not a liberal, but a fascist or reactionary.

As for this writer, a liberal is some one to be viewed with suspicion. I am decidedly not a "liberal", for I do not believe that any person, group or organization should ever be granted special privileges, favors or advantages to the detriment of even one other person. Granting of special favors and privileges to either persons or organizations, is not an act of being "liberal," on the contrary, it is un-American, a rotten insidious system of thievery, that robs one person of the right to enrich and attain, at the expense of sorrow, hardship and theft of other citizens.

I am personally not concerned how liberal anyone is with their own rights, privileges and happiness. But when such "liberals" start being "liberal" by depriving others of their Constitutional rights and freedom as an individualist, it is time to turn thumbs down on liberalism and expose it to the light of fact in its relationship with internationalism, and its confused theories of "racial and religious tolerance."

And if being an advocate of America for Americans, and a Nationalist, placing the Constitutional American way of life in the fore—first, last and always—and intolerant of subversive alien ideologies, constitutes, in the "liberal" concept, fascism, then so be it. And neither their threats nor their boasts impress me. Indeed, I challenge their animosity and intolerance on exactly the same basis that they mouth so many hypocritical vaporings, revolting to natural instincts and cultural interests of human refinement.

—A. W. BLACK.

The People's Platform is available to any reader who cares to mount it. Communications should be less than 300 words, typewritten if possible, and on only one side of the paper. Libel and obscenity will be deleted—otherwise anything goes. Each letter must be signed, although, in exceptional cases and upon request, we will withhold the writer's name.—Editors, THE NEWS.

Marquis Childs

European Social Item

WASHINGTON.

ANDREI Y. VISHINSKY, Deputy Foreign Minister of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, has gone to Carlsbad in Czechoslovakia for a rest cure at that famous spa.

This is a social note which the Foreign Offices of every capital are studying with great diligence. Mr. Vishinsky is not the kind of man who goes traveling for pleasure nor even for his health.

He is, in fact, one of the most able, brilliant and ruthless operators in the inner circle of the Kremlin. He paid a little visit to Rumania in 1945 and immediately there was a change in the Government. Gen. Nicolai Radescu was replaced as Prime Minister by the wholly subservient Peter Groza. Vishinsky is said to have delivered an ultimatum to young King Michael to kick out Radescu or else. Radescu finally succeeded in escaping from the country. Groza is still puppet Premier.

While Vishinsky's visit to Czechoslovakia may be wholly innocent of political motive, it is bound to be linked to what has just happened in Hungary. Czechoslovakia is a key piece on the Soviet chessboard.

STRONG-ARM TECHNIQUE

Ringing down the iron curtain on Hungary was comparatively easy. That country was occupied by Soviet troops. Force could be used to drive the non-Communists out of the Government even though they represented a majority of the voters. It was another demonstration of the strong-arm technique in its cruder form.

But the same method would not work in Czechoslovakia. To begin with, Russian troops long since evacuated that country. The Government is not dependent on a Russian prop.

Of the 26 Cabinet members in the present Government in Prague, nine are Communists who have key positions. A Communist, Klement Gottwald, is Premier. Communists hold the posts of Interior, Information, Labor and Social Welfare, and Finance among others. A Communist is in much the power in the Foreign Office, although the post of Foreign Minister is held by a non-Communist, Jan Masaryk, son of Czechoslovakia's founder.

At the last election, the Communist Party got the largest percentage of votes—38 per cent. All indications, however, are that this tide has receded. It is believed that another election might show quite a different result.

The Russians would find it embarrassing to have a country so close to the Soviet orbit turn against Communism. They could be counted on to do everything in their power to prevent it. Consequently the extreme interest in Vishinsky's pilgrimage to the healing waters of Carlsbad.

TROJAN HORSE

With brains and money in sufficient quantity, a Communist coup in Czechoslovakia could be organized. There, of course, it would be essential to use the native Communist Party in the Trojan Horse as contrasted to the strong-arm technique.

The No. 1—Discovery of a wicked Fascist plot conveniently focussed in the Slovakian Democratic Party, which is anti-Communist. Step No. 2—Declaration by the Premier of a state of emergency. Step No. 3—Communists replacing non-Communists in important posts not already held, and combination of the Government in power by force of police and soldiery in a virtual dictatorship.

That would not be easy to engineer. The Czechoslovaks are a valiant and a proud people. They fiercely resisted the Nazi oppression even after their betrayal.

The stakes, however, are high. If the Politburo in the Kremlin has decided that this is the next move in the contest with the West, then Vishinsky can be counted on to move heaven and earth to bring it about.

It is significant that the hotels and baths at Carlsbad, once frequented by the rich to cure their gout, are reserved for high-ranking Russians. To Carlsbad nowadays come Soviet military men, both because of their valor or their injuries—often both—are granted this privilege. Carlsbad is not far from Joachimsthal, where mining of extensive uranium deposits is said to be going forward under Russian direction.

DEVELOPMENTS WATCHED

What happened in Hungary is bound to make a deep impression on the Czechs. Censorship and propaganda cannot conceal the brutality of the method used to destroy a duly elected Government. The West will certainly watch with bated breath the course of developments in neighboring Czechoslovakia. And the Czechs can hope, and pray that Mr. Vishinsky will go quietly back to Moscow after a successful rest cure.

Stewart Alsop

Crystal Ball Again

WASHINGTON

FOR what it may be worth, the President's economic seers are reporting fewer clouds in their crystal balls than two months ago. The great price scare, which led to the emergency Cabinet meeting on prices and the President's subsequent warnings to business, has begun to slacken off rather noticeably. No one is climbing on the rooftops to cheer the achievement of a "permanently high plateau"; but on the other hand, the ominous word, "depression", is no longer much heard.

The new line of the official augurs is that we are now entering a period of healthy economic readjustment. It will be marked, they admit, by fairly sharp declines in some prices now violently out of balance, as in the construction industry. But although they expect it to be accompanied by some temporary unemployment, they voice the hope that the readjustment period will not be long-lasting, and will leave the country ready to go forward economically with renewed vigor.

NAGGING ACHES

An interesting comparison is being used by one of the ablest and most authoritative of those who consult the business statistics (and, one sometimes suspects, the livers of sheep) in order to foretell the future for the Administration. The current falling off of employment, the sharp cuts in all luxury businesses, and the decline in construction work are said, by this particular soothsayer, to resemble those first nagging aches which announce an attack of grippe.

There will be, he says, a short bout of grippe to follow; but the grippe will not turn into pneumonia. And as is sometimes the case with sharply overstrained individuals, it is also predicted that the patient will leave the sickroom all the better for the enforced confinement. This source, and the many other Government economists who agree with him, quote with approval a recent statement by W. Randolph Burgess, vice-chairman of the National City Bank in New York, to a group of London business men.

"The important new opinion," said Mr. Burgess, "is that our readjustment—our recession—is likely to be brief and mild. That is because it has come to our forseen and planned for by business and banking."

To this mood of restrained optimism the Government economists make only three qualifications, all of them obviously sensible. Serious trouble can arise, they predict, in the following events:

1. If there is a bad crop failure in the United States, world food shortages will continue. Food prices here will then rise, and renewed labor trouble will follow. In this connection, the recent snows in the West are extremely bad news.

COAL OUTLOOK

2. If there is a coal strike at the end of June, the American production line will be halted, with catastrophic results. The satisfactory supply arrangements for industries is a major source of the new optimism. Luckily, the bad news of the Western weather is balanced off by the good news that John L. Lewis' negotiations with the coal operators are being conducted in a surprisingly hopeful atmosphere.

3. If the dollar exchange shortage abroad causes sharp reductions in American exports, coinciding with the domestic recession, the recession can conceivably be transformed into a severe downward spiral.

GRIM EFFECTS

All this has meaning to every American business man and worker. We are now selling abroad at the rate of between $14 and $15 billions annually. And the Government economists figure roughly that each cut of $1 billion in exports means unemployment for one million men and women in the U. S. The grim effects of a series of such cuts, coming in the middle of a difficult readjustment, can easily be imagined.

Drew Pearson's Merry-Go-Round

Federal Court May Retry S. C. Lynchers

WASHINGTON

THOUGH public reaction has subsided regarding the South Carolina lynching case, the Justice Department has not. The case may reach the Supreme Court yet.

Attorney General Tom Clark, who comes from Texas, and Assistant Attorney General Lamar Caudle, from North Carolina, both believe that Southerners must demonstrate that they can handle their own lynching cases.

Accordingly they are working on an entirely new phase of the South Carolina lynching. The 26 self-confessed lynchers were tried for murder and acquitted. But they were not tried for violation of civil rights. Furthermore they were tried by the State of South Carolina. And while the Federal Government cannot retry them for murder, it can try them for violation of civil rights.

The important point is that State law frequently differs from Federal law. In many of the Southern states, for instance, operating a whisky still is only a misdemeanor. But under Federal law, it is a felony. Furthermore, Federal juries represent a more intelligent cross-section and there is a better chance for conviction.

These are some of the factors Attorney General Clark and his Assistant Attorney General Caudle are working on in their plan to retry South Carolina's self-confessed lynchers.

John L. Outsmarted

JOHN L. LEWIS, who has outsmarted a lot of people in his day, outsmarted himself in no uncertain terms last week. In so doing he also left the entire labor movement outsmarted regarding a Presidential veto of the Taft-Hartley Labor Bill.

What really happened was that the coal operators called Lewis' bluff on wage boosts and walked out—in a coolly calculated move to put Truman on the spot so he would have to sign the labor bill. They knew that with a coal strike threatening the country, it would be difficult for Truman to veto.

Usually it is John L. Lewis who walks out. But this time Lewis was caught flat-footed. A few hours before the breakdown, his lieutenants were spreading word that a settlement, at least with the Northern operators, was "imminent." The operators themselves were cagily maintaining the illusion of a "quick settlement."

In addition, Lewis had two friends among the coal operators with whom he confidently felt he could do business—Charles O'Neill, top spokesman for the Northern operators, and Harry Moses, negotiator for U. S. Steel's "captive" coal mines. Both men like to boast that they can "get along" with Lewis, even in a tough wage fight, and Moses always makes it a practice to call on the United Mine Workers chief, when in Washington, for a social chat.

Reversing Mr. Lewis

LEWIS wasn't unaware that the Taft-Hartley Labor Bill might affect his own negotiations, but as one close friend put it, "John didn't think that Charley O'Neill or Harry Moses gave a damn about using the mine negotiations as a bludgeon to force Truman to sign the bill."

However, the burly mine-labor chief got the surprise of his life when he walked into the meeting with the operators. For once, O'Neill and Moses didn't want to "do business" with Lewis. The two operator spokesmen were about as cooperative as cigar-store Indians all during the brief and hostile conference.

Lewis had opened with a demand for a 35-cents-an-hour wage increase. This is usual in wage dickering. Lewis always opens high, waits for a conterproposal, then compromises at a lower figure. This time, however, there was no compromising. O'Neill flatly refused to consider any wage boost above the 15 cents he had offered. It was only then that it dawned on Lewis that the operators apparently were working with business leaders on the outside and intended to use the mine negotiations to put President Truman on the spot.

O'Neill carried out his role to the last with fine theatrical flair, staging a red-faced, belligerent exit from the meeting. It made good headlines, and it put responsibility for a strike party on President Truman's lap.

Note—John L. Lewis is now in an extremely difficult bargaining position. Recently he told friends: "Before I had to negotiate with an injunction and jail sentence facing us. Now I must negotiate with the Sword of Damocles hanging over my head."

Mail Bag

H. J. T. H., New York—There were two Axis Sallies, one broadcasting to U. S. troops in Italy, the other to troops in Germany. The Italian Axis Sally has been tried and punished by the American Army in Italy. The German Axis Sally will be tried for treason in the United States—provided the Justice Department can get two witnesses to testify to the same act of treason; they cannot testify to different acts. However, several ex-GIs, who were in German prison camps when Axis Sally asked them to make radio recordings, have volunteered as witnesses and it looks as if the Government had a reasonable chance of conviction.

So far it has been impossible to convict Tokyo Rose, and will continue to be. There were four different Tokyo Roses, all broadcasting at various intervals to American troops in the Pacific. One of them now has a sister living in San Francisco. The difficulty in getting a conviction, however, is due to the fact that we had no witnesses who saw any of the four Tokyo Roses broadcast. No Americans were in Japanese broadcasting stations where they could witness Jap radio work. Furthermore Tokyo Rose did not visit prisoner-of-war camps in Japan, as did Axis Sally in Germany.