THE CHARLOTTE NEWS

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

FRIDAY, JULY 18, 1947

Secretary Marshall And The Grass Roots

SECRETARY MARSHALL'S latest statement on foreign policy was delivered as an address before the Governors Conference at Salt Lake City. It was a frank admission of the difficulties attendant to "the finding of a course of action fully consistent with our national interests and yet equally considerate of the incalculable stake which this country has in the preservation of European civilization."

In effect, the Secretary's address was a plea for support directed not so much to his hosts as to the people as a whole. "I will say right now," he told the Governors, "that the greatest problem I feel we have to deal with is in bringing the American public to a general understanding of the conditions involved at home and abroad which influence all negotiations and therefore all efforts to re-establish the peace and prosperity of the world."

The Governors responded at a later session by passing a resolution urging that foreign policy be divorced from partisan politics. Secretary Marshall, we suspect, will regard this as reward enough for his hasty trip half-way across the country. It is in line with State Department policy, which has fostered bi-partisan co-operation in the formulation of both the Truman and Marshall Plans.

And yet there is reason to wonder whether the continuing effort to keep foreign affairs out of partisan politics may not turn out to be the greatest handicap to that public understanding Secretary Marshall is seeking. Partisan politics, after all, is part of our machinery of government; it is the device through which issues are presented to the people for decision at the polls. When our new foreign policy—and certainly it represents a fundamental break with American tradition—is ruled out of bounds for campaign discussion, or even partisan criticism in Congress, the people are being asked to accept it on faith.

There is, as Secretary Marshall seems to recognize, a great danger inherent in this. Already there are stirrings of resentment on both the left and the right, and they are reflected in contradictory Congressional attitudes. The State Department so far has been able to obtain from Congress impressive support for the general principles underlying its new policies. But at the same time Congress has been reluctant to provide the funds with which these policies can be implemented. The general applause for our new, tough attitude toward Russia has not succeeded in drowning out the demand for immediate tax reduction.

This attitude now separates the wish and the deed and Secretary Marshall recognizes that the conflict can be resolved only by an informed public. Thus he and his assistants hammer away the gravity of the situation in Europe—crisis is a standard word in Washington now—in preparation for the great explosion that is almost certain to follow when Congress is finally asked to foot the bill for a vast program of economic rehabilitation backed by armed might. Although he was several levels removed from it, he was seeking grass-roots support when he laid his case before the Governors. It remains to be seen whether he can obtain it without the assistance of those party politicians who still stand as a direct link between the people and their government.

Tuesday's Special Election

THE late John Barrymore once made a movie called "The Great Man Votes" based upon a situation in which a city's redistricting turned up an election precinct with but a single voter. The plot gave Mr. Barrymore an opportunity for the sort of mugging in which he delighted, and led him at last to the steps of the voting place where he delivered a classic address on the value of the ballot.

We thought of this when we learned that two registrars and a judge will have to set up complete election machinery out at Crab Orchard box on Tuesday so that a single voter may cast his ballot in a special school election. Whether the gentleman who bears the honor of old Crab Orchard will see fit to make a speech or not, we don't know. But his vote could very well be the one that decides an important issue.

This is true because under North Carolina's peculiar election laws the vote on Saturday will be against registration and a mere 433 persons are registered in the ten boxes in which the election will be conducted. The usual attrition between registration and election days will work against the project under consideration; uncast votes will be counted in the negative.

Stripped of all its legal technicalities the issue to be decided by Tuesday's balloting is this: Will the citizens of those fringe communities which have already voted to join the City of Charlotte also come into the City School District? If the vote is yes the new residents will be subject to the recently-approved supplementary school tax and in return will be allowed to send their children to City schools. If the vote is no, they will be exempt from the tax, but they will also be required to send their children to County schools unless they choose to pay special tuition charges.

The decision of these 433 voters will affect all the citizens of Charlotte. If they vote no, Charlotte will wind up with a City School District smaller than the City itself, and this, obviously, will have a considerable bearing on the expansion of the school system that is inevitable in the next few years. It will establish a special class of citizens numbering at least 10,000 who will be exempt from certain obligations borne by other Charlotteans, and who will also be denied some of the privileges accorded the majority. And it will force the County to serve an urban group with a school system that is designed for a rural population.

There is, however, no reason to read a lecture on the high cost of political apathy to the thousands of citizens in the area who didn't bother to register. Most of them must have thought that all this was settled at the time they voted to come into the City. They are now faced with an issue so confused by technicalities that they can hardly be blamed for declining to have anything to do with it. We can only hope that enough of those who registered will cast affirmative ballots to prevent the creation of a situation that doesn't, under any definition, make much sense.

It's A Joke, Listeners

THE other night a Raleigh radio commentator took off on a flight of fantasy about the flying saucers. He had, he said, been in communication with one of the saucers, which were really space ships, and had discovered that they were flown by little green men from Mars who were trying to locate Hollywood. The result was a sort of second coming of Orson Welles on a local scale. Newspaper and radio switchboards were jammed with calls from frantic listeners, and *The Raleigh Times* indignantly noted that the control tower at the local airport was knocked out of action briefly by the deluge of excited queries.

We confess to a certain puzzlement over the tizzy into which the normally calm citizens of North Carolina were thrown by this stale joke. It could be, of course, a symptom of strained nerves. Perhaps we have lived so long on the edge of nightmare that only the slightest nudge sends us into an area where green men from Mars are quite commonplace.

But the most interesting aspect of the incident is the comparison it affords between news conveyed by radio and by newspaper. Hal Boyle, the roving reporter of the Associated Press, had written a series of reports from a flying saucer prior to the Raleigh program. They were equally fantastic (or childish if you prefer) and in all probability had been read by most of those who heard the broadcast. Yet the same subject matter which caused mass hysterics when it came over the air caused not a ripple when it appeared in print.

We seek no invidious comparisons. As a matter of fact, the incident probably serves to demonstrate that radio has something that newspapers do not have—the added dimension that a voice-of-doom manner can give the dullest news report. But any envy we may feel for our air-borne contemporaries is tempered by the realization that their advantage is also a terrible burden. They cannot, it is clear, make a joke, even a bad joke, without precipitating a riot. That means that they must stick to the plain, unvarnished truth in order to stay out of trouble, and we can think of no greater handicap for any commentator.

Another Voice

Democracy Was The Loser

BOSTON, which modestly lays claim (and with considerable justification) to having been one of the chief nurseries of certain notions about liberty and free speech which most Americans still treasure, has just witnessed an utter negation of those historic ideals.

The Rev. Gerald L. K. Smith, whose "Christian Nationalist Crusade" preaches hatred of Jews, Communists, Negroes, Roman Catholics, of international co-operation, and apparently "foreigners" in general, recently chartered the Old South Meetinghouse for an address. Some 40 of his followers showed up. But when Mr. Smith arose to speak he faced many times that number. He faced them for an hour and then departed without uttering an audible word.

For the Meetinghouse was packed with hecklers, most of them pre-organized—a few Communist representatives, it is reported, some "pinks," and some veterans, liberals and others who ought to know better. All together they howled the speaker down, and with him the right of free speech of which, we doubt not, most of the hecklers consider themselves sturdy champions.

We decry the false gospel of hatred which the "Christian Nationalist Crusaders" would spread. And we oppose with equal vigor the doctrines of the Communists and fellow travelers among the hecklers. That, however, is not the point we would make.

That point is: The big winner of this battle of the boos was Mr. Smith and his "Crusaders." This Boston "persecution" will be worth ten times more to him than a two-hour speech—in free publicity, and as Exhibit A in his hands to back up all his frantic charges and subtle insinuations.

That point is: In this hall, hallowed by patriots of the Revolution, the big loser was democracy.—*Christian Science Monitor.*

Open Door

People's Platform

Common Commonsense

OXFORD

Editors, THE NEWS:

WE need on this occasion to remind ourselves that to have won the war and no more would have been both to lose the civilization the war was fought to save and to betray the valiant dead who died for the people's freedom and people's peace.

"The people's freedom means the political and civil liberties of Jefferson, the human emancipation of Lincoln, the four freedoms of Roosevelt, and the economic rehabilitation of the world as proposed by Marshall.

"The freedom of the peoples includes the freedom of autonomous nations to provide for all their citizens freedom of person, speech, assembly, worship and equal educational opportunity, protection of property, equal freedom to vote, to work, to organize business enterprise, agricultural co-operation and industrial collective bargaining, and broaden the foundations of economic security in order to raise the level of human life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness everywhere in our one world."

Now, the foregoing apocalypse was not delivered on the isle of Patmos to St. John The Divine some two thousand years ago, but this week on the Hill to Brother Frank Graham.

How can so many exaggerations and misstatements of fact be explained?

For instance, the Atlantic Charter is the document containing an enunciation of the four freedoms whose authorship has never been accredited to any individual exclusively. Churchill is supposed to have had to do with its authorship. Also there appears some enlargement of the Marshall Plan. Only European nations have been invited to participate in this plan. Conceivably, the whole of the American people may be permitted to have a vision similar to that had by Brother Frank, but until that super-Heavenly vision has been made generally available, let's remain as we are of the earth, earthy, or somewhat realistic.

Speaking from the base and not the mountain top, I wish someone would tell me what is meant by the four freedoms. I think I understand freedom of speech, which includes assembly and press, and freedom of worship; but I am utterly lost when you talk about freedom from fear and freedom from want. Of course, we do not mean freedom from fear of God, of law, dishonor and disgrace; nor do we mean freedom from want of comforts and conveniences, a good name, social distinctions, etc. I think freedom from fear of invasion of home and person, and freedom from famine and pestilence are the freedoms meant; certainly these are about all the freedoms attainable without reducing man to the level of the beasts of the field. Wants produce incentives, thrift, industry and the other attributes that go to make up worthwhile men and women. A man without fear or want would be the ne plus ultra of worthlessness.

Now, I am for as much of the abundant life here or elsewhere and as large an area of the promised land as we can currently buy and pay for; but I am not ready to hypothecate all the equity the living and unborn Americans have in this country to rehabilitate Europe or "our one world" under the Marshall or any other plan. We have got to exercise a little common commonsense in this rehabilitation program, be it domestic or foreign, or both.

—JOHN W. HESTER.

Hell-Bent

MOUNT HOLLY

Editors, THE NEWS:

WELL, I guess it is about time for me to crank up my 13 model gabtrap and say a few words about the conditions that exist in the world today.

We have a gang of well-paid loafers in Washington City who are all the time just busting their gizzards hollering world peace, world court and United Nations and at the same time just raising general hell trying to raise the money to pay for all manner of death-dealing devilment to use in war. They holler for peace and the same time say keep your gun loaded.

Then they turn right around and announce the opening of a peace conference somewhere in Europe and we send a gang of long-coated legal lights over there to beat the air into fizzle dust pleading for peace and disarmament and while our peace congress is in Europe whooping it up for peace your war congress is over here ripping and ranting around with its shirt tail out and busting its belly band hollering for war.

There is some logic in such business. But that is the way this high-stepping, hell-bent generation of social vipers look at it.

—J. A. MULWEE.

To The Gills

CHARLOTTE

Editors, THE NEWS:

IN regard to one of your reader's letters of July 15 on crowded conditions on Duke Power busses—he is absolutely right. I have ridden on them when they were "packed to the gills", so to speak, with no ventilation whatsoever. In one instance a lady fainted while standing in the aisle and it was so crowded she couldn't fall down.

You could imagine the casualties in case of a fire or a bad wreck when passengers are packed as is done. After all, the war is over now.

I have ridden 40 & 8s in Africa—35 men to one of those small dinkies, but it was nothing compared to this.

—C. V. ORR.

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

People's Lobbyist?

WASHINGTON

WHEN the list of 842 registered lobbyists was made public some time ago, almost every interest was represented. Wool, sugar, metals, motors, they were all there with a man to break a lance for them.

Maybe an addition to this list is called for—a lobbyist for the public interest. A people's lobby does exist here in Washington, but it never has had very much influence, perhaps because it lacks the generous operating funds that most lobbyists have.

The other day, with little debate, a bill passed the House which will cost the average household money if it finally becomes law. It is a bill to scale down the authority of the Federal Power Commission to regulate the sale of natural gas.

How much it would cost the consumer is arguable. The sponsors for the measure say the added cost would be nominal. The opposition says no one can foresee how much would be added onto the consumer's gas bill.

GAS INTERESTS

Among the backers of the bill are Congressmen from states in which there are important natural-gas interests. They said repeatedly, during the discussion on the floor, that "the public" had been given full opportunity to express opposition.

The record of the hearings shows, however, that "the public" took a minor part in the proceedings. Many of the witnesses were from oil and gas companies that have been trying for a long time to curb the authority of the Power Commission. Others were Washington lobby-lawyers representing one or another of the private interests involved — including coal, with the mine owners anxious to check the expansion of the natural-gas industry.

Still others spoke for State utility commissions. They argued for States' rights as controlling the production and local use of natural gas, limiting the Federal authority to interstate transportation.

Public spokesmen appeared for Kansas City, Mo., Cleveland, Ohio, and Rockford, Ill. They opposed the bill because it would increase gas rates in their cities.

One thing becomes evident when you look into an issue such as this one. It is so complicated, so hedged around by legalisms, that "the public" rarely gets the point. In the present Congress, these changes are being brought about quietly, with as little publicity as possible. And "the public" may discover what it means when the cost of living keeps going up.

INDUSTRY'S ENVOYS

In theory, Congress is meant to represent the interests of all the people. More and more, however, the tendency is for the Congressman to speak for the special interests of his district or his state. He becomes a kind of ambassador for the major industry back home.

Thus, Ross Rizley of Oklahoma was the chief sponsor of the bill to cut down Federal authority over natural gas. In the Senate, a similar measure is backed by Senator Ed Moore of that same state. Rizley and Moore are ambassadors for oil and gas.

In spite of the last-minute rush, it is possible the Senate may go along with the House in curbing the Power Commission. But it would certainly be wiser to take more time, so that the effects of this move can be studied and made clear.

Several years of preparation went into the amendments to the Power Commission Act which give the FPC authority over natural gas. Chairman Nelson Lee Smith of the FPC recognizes the need for some changes. The corrective changes he proposed were incorporated in a substitute bill introduced by Rep. Percy Priest of Tennessee. But these changes did not go far enough to suit the ambassadors of gas and oil. The substitute was voted down, 254 to 64.

EXPENSIVE MIDDLEMAN

The special-interest ambassadors have, of course, a legitimate right to defend the group back home that means prosperity and jobs. That right, however, is not superior to the public interest. If Congress is to be nothing more than an arena in which the special interests struggle to get their own way by the familiar process of log-rolling, then we might better substitute the lobbyists themselves. In this light the Congressman appears to be merely a rather expensive middleman for transmitting the wishes of a wide variety of special interests.

Drew Pearson's Merry-Go-Round

Senate Slow To Probe Theft Of Secrets

WASHINGTON

CAPITAL observers who have seen a lot of probes launched by Congress with relatively unimportant matters are wondering why the Senate War Investigating Committee has failed to probe the recently disclosed leak of atomic-bomb secrets.

If anything is important to the national security, it is atomic-energy secrets, and the fact that they were so loosely guarded by the military certainly would appear to be something a War Investigating Committee would investigate.

However, the current silence of the old Truman Committee—now the Brewster Committee—has led Capitol Hill observers to speculate as to whether Senators want to protect the Army which happens to have been responsible for the atomic leak. Had the civilian commission under David Lilienthal been responsible, probably Senators would now be investigating up to their armpits.

Should the Brewster Committee later decide to probe, it would discover some starting facts; namely that atomic security under the Army was woefully lax, also that security was so bad Lilienthal hired Frank Wilson, former head of the Secret Service, to reorganize the atomic setup inherited from the Army.

Note—Several weeks ago the Atomic Energy Commission decided to report to the Joint Atomic Committee of Congress the fact that two ex-sergeants had stolen data while the Army was in charge. One Congressman talked, and that was how the news got out.

Jimmie Byrnes' Scholarships

EX-SECRETARY of State Jimmie Byrnes, who, like old wine, gets better with years, will make a minimum of $60,000 on his soon-to-be-published memoirs but will give the money away.

His law partner, Donald Russell, a trustee of the University of South Carolina, wants him to found the "James F. Byrnes Department of Political Science" at the University. But Jimmie says no.

He remembers the struggle his mother had raising and educating two fatherless boys and he wants to do something now to put fatherless boys through college.

Jimmie's father died when his brother was about two years old, and a few months before Jimmie was born. His mother raised her sons by sewing and by singing at church, where she got $5. On this she managed to bring up one boy who became a Senator, Supreme Court Justice, War Mobilizer and Secretary of State.

"I have never forgotten the struggle she had," Byrnes mused to a friend recently. "And I should like to found some scholarships to help fatherless boys get through college."

No Third Party For Wallace

THE third-party conference called by California's ex-attorney general Bob Kenny in Fresno tomorrow has high-up Democrats more on pins and needles than almost anything occurring since the 1944 convention.

For if Kenny should go through with his plans and form a sure-enough third party, it automatically means a Republican victory in 1948. It also means that the prediction of Harrison Spangler, "the Republican Party can win with a Chinaman," would come true, and that Bricker or Taft—admittedly less popular candidates, but strong with the party leaders—might be nominated.

However, though Kenny is calling his meeting for the express purpose of booming Wallace, the third-party movement may be launched without the blessing of the man who is supposed to head it. For Henry Wallace privately has made it quite clear he is a Democrat and will remain a Democrat. He does not intend to head a third party.

Wallace has suggested that his friend, Senator Claude Pepper of Florida, might head a third party, which has caused Pepper to toss the ball back to Wallace. This "after you, Alphonse" act indicates exactly one thing: a third party has no chance of getting anywhere and the wise politicos know it.

Truman Argues For D.P.'s

PRESIDENT TRUMAN put up a stiff argument to the "big six" Congressional leaders this week to permit 400,000 displaced persons a haven in the United States.

The Congressional chiefs had claimed that the American people had to be "educated and adjusted" to receiving the foreign homeless; but Mr. Truman rejected this, declaring that all but a few American citizens were ready to welcome the DPs to our shores. The 400,000 persons, he contended, could easily be assimilated in our economy, and he maintained it was chiefly an American responsibility to give them refuge.

To this ex-Speaker Sam Rayburn of Texas replied that Southern Democrats in the House would vote almost en bloc against the displaced persons. Senators Vandenberg of Michigan and Barkley of Kentucky also expressed doubts that the bill would "have a chance" in the Senate—though they agreed it stood a better chance there than in the House.

Truman finally gave in, but only on the promise that the DP issue would have a top legislative priority at the next session of Congress.

As the meeting broke up, the President said he was happy to learn that Congress had decided to make Speaker Joe Martin "my successor, if anything happened to me."

Whereupon Vandenberg, with a side glance at Martin, quipped:

"Thanks, Mr. President. But if you take any long plane trips, I hope you take Joe along with you.

"That's not only chance," explained the Michigan Senator, who, as President Pro Tem of the Senate, is next in line behind Speaker Martin to become President under the new succession bill.

Friendly Senate Enemies

DESPITE heated debate on the Senate floor, GOP leader Bob Taft and the Democrats frequently exchange sympathetic words.

Such an exchange occurred during the heat of the debate over confirmation of Joe B. Dooley as U. S. judge for Texas, an appointment vigorously pushed by Texas' statuesque senior Senator, Tom Connally, and just as vigorously opposed by Texas' junior razzle-dazzle Senator, Pappy O'Daniel.

Because O'Daniel votes so frequently with the Republicans, he had lined up most GOP Senators against Dooley. But during the debate, Taft came over to Senator Connally and whispered:

"If you need a vote or two, we can switch them over to you. We wouldn't be for this guy (O'Daniel) except that he has supported us (the Republicans) so much we had to do something."

Samuel Grafton

Soporific Campaign

NEW YORK

THE 1948 Presidential campaign may turn out to be one of the dullest in the memory of man. It hardly looks, right now, as if either side is going to get up a good holler against the other. And a listless campaign represents a great danger to the Democrats, for dull political weather is good Republican weather.

Listlessness actually is as great a danger to the Democrats as a third party movement would be. It is, in fact, a phenomenon of the same kind; as a state of being bored with the Democrats, it is a way station on the road to a third party.

I remember the California elections last year, when so many liberal and independent Democrats stayed home that the Republicans swept both primaries. California liberals could hardly have hurt the Democrats more by forming a third party. Listlessness is, in its own futile and negative way, the most deadly kind of third party movement, for it needs no leader and no organization, and fighting it is like fighting a bale of cotton.

PING-PONG GAME

Yet it is hard to see how the 1948 campaign can be much more than a campaign of mild sneers and debaters' points, rather than of those solid blows on the conk that bring the voters out. With both parties fairly well agreed on foreign policy, at least verbally, and with both studiously ignoring the housing issue, it is unlikely that Dewey and Truman, or Vandenberg and Truman, can do much more than play ping-pong.

The Republicans may claim that the Democrats will harbor too many Communists, but Mr. Truman need only quote from the Daily Worker's support of a third party in refutation. Or the Republicans may do the one about how the Democrats spend too much money, to which the Democrats can answer that the Republicans have been in the Congress, which means in charge of spending. The danger is that the populace may doze off while the two sides hurl these tired words at each other.

TRUMAN'S POINTS

Mr. Truman has two fine points, in the Taft-Hartley labor bill and the Republican campaign against price controls; prices may rise by 1948, washing out that controversy; and so many Democrats voted for the Taft-Hartley bill that it is going to be easier to make a local rather than party-wise use of the issue. The Republicans may make big mention of their fight for tax reduction, but it is going to seem a little sad for that to be the chief issue in the first Presidential campaign after the biggest war in history.

In this situation, perhaps the best thing to do is to sweep everything off the table, and reset it. If the Democrats were wise, they would detail some attractive figure to make a whopping national campaign for more housing, and then run him for Vice-President. Or the Republicans could pick the issue up. There it lies, smoking, in the street, yet utterly disregarded, while the two parties fling their tired spitballs at each other.

YAWN IS WARNING

Otherwise, the next campaign will be so exquisitely technical that the public is going to find it too hard to follow it. County committeemen will, of course, roll on the floor with delight at the points their candidates will make to the general public will wonder what the joke is. It will be like stamp-collecting, which can arouse a certain number of persons to fever pitch, while leaving the rest of the community cold. It is not the third party which menaces the Democrats, but that state of listlessness which comes before a third party, and which gives listless warning as it stifles a yawn.