THE CHARLOTTE NEWS

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FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 1949

SLUM CLEARANCE PLUS

THE ideal goal in any slum clearance program is, of course, the complete elimination of slums, preferably by erasing them from the face of the city and redeveloping the property for other uses.

For a good many reasons, not the least of which is the inevitable deterioration of residential fringe property in the face of business district encroachment, cities can hardly expect to achieve the ideal. Slums of one degree or another will always be with us. The problem is how to maintain human dignity, self-respect, health, sanitation, good behavior, and happiness in low income residential areas.

Though it has failed notably in some spots (Palmers Alley, for example), the five-point slum clearance program of the Charlotte Real Estate Board is a good deal more enlightened in philosophy and productive in results than the average city anti-slum law.

The five-points which are slowly showing their effect are (1) a standard house ordinance; (2) minimum requirements for new residential sub-divisions; (3) playground facilities in congested slum areas; (4) better lighting and street improvement; (5) a deadline for bringing existing houses up to standard.

Now the real estate men have launched a campaign for the sixth point: the extension of community social service into slum areas on a well-defined pattern. They propose that community houses be built and staffed with full-time playground supervisors and social-health workers. Neighborhood libraries would be established, health and sanitation education increased, family counsel provided.

In brief, what is proposed is an effort by private and public agencies to make living more pleasant in low income areas at the same time that houses are being brought up to standard.

Administrative details and a method of financing remain to be worked out, but they are not insuperable problems.

Such a program as this would not work miracles overnight. Environment can create a state of mind and a way of living which respond only slowly to treatment. But it would certainly help in the long run. To deny its ultimate benefit is to deny that man is capable of bettering his life even though his worldly goods remain modest.

THE ROOSEVELT BOYS

THE masterminds of the Republican Party must view with considerable chagrin the political progress of the two Roosevelt boys.

Jimmy Roosevelt has just announced his candidacy for the governorship of California. That would have brought a laugh some years back. Now so seasoned an observer as Drew Pearson says Jimmy will "win in a walk," whether President Truman supports him or not.

California has 25 electoral votes, and is no mean prize in the Presidential balloting. And California stands to gain several more votes after the 1950 census, when experts say the West Coast state will nudge out Pennsylvania as the second most populous state in the Union.

The other Roosevelt boy, Franklin D. Jr., showed his mettle when he whipped all opponents in the recent New York election to fill Sol Bloom's place in Congress. There is already talk—serious talk, too—that he has his eyes on the governorship of New York. And again the experts rate his chances as excellent.

It would be most disconcerting for the Republicans if the Roosevelt boys took over politics in California and New York. It might be somewhat disconcerting for President Truman, also.

But it can happen, and may very easily happen. The American people, who voted for Franklin D. Roosevelt four times, still find some magic in the name—especially when the bearers thereof appear to have an uncommon amount of their father's political adroitness.

THE PECAN AVE.-CONTROVERSY

UNTIL the lawyers get through with it, or have no way of knowing whether the City of Charlotte has legally bound itself to close the Pecan Ave.-Seaboard Railway grade crossing, if it has, then the crossing will have to be closed, we suppose.

It doesn't, however, seem the logical thing to do under the circumstances even though, as a rule, grade crossings ought to be eliminated wherever possible.

Pecan was never designed to carry the volume of traffic it has borne the last ten or fifteen years. It is one of the busiest streets in Charlotte, since it is the shortest connection between the populous Midwood-Chantilly area and Elizabeth-Eastover-Myers Park.

The original plans for Independence Boulevard called for a bridge over the Seaboard Railway a few hundred feet west of Pecan. It was thought that the traffic now using Pecan could proceed from Chantilly, for example, across the bridge, turn left on Clement Ave., and then follow a new and wider connection to Caswell Road.

The State Highway engineers, however, decided to make a dead-end street of Clement at the Boulevard. Now the first street available is Lamar Ave., a considerably more roundabout journey. Chantilly residents accustomed to using Pecan have protested closing the grade crossing.

In all probability, the Pecan traffic will drop considerably when that section of Independence Boulevard is opened. Chantilly residents who now use Pecan and Seventh to reach the main business district will use the Boulevard. But there will still be a need for a connecting link between Chantilly and Seventh St.

It would be better, of course, to go under the railroad, perhaps at Westover St. Until such an underpass is provided it doesn't make much sense to close Pecan. It is fully as safe a crossing, and as important to the city's traffic pattern, as the Central Ave.-Seaboard grade crossing. No one has proposed eliminating that.

A SPUR FOR PRIVATE PENSIONS

THE RASH of pension plans in big industry and the probable increase in Social Security benefits next year will still leave many millions of Americans without an easy-payment plan for old age security.

Pension plans can be a big burden on a small business or industry, especially in the early years when payments are high and reserves are low. Since the workers are not able to employ the coercion of an industry-wide strike, it is unlikely that they will share the benefits of the Bethlehem or Ford formulae.

What is needed is some method of easing the burden of contributory pensions on the workers to encourage private pension programs.

If you grow old with no Social Security or private pension, the Government will take care of you on direct relief. (At a higher average grant, incidentally, than you get from Social Security.) Yet, if you try to lay aside something under a retirement plan, there is no exemption from income taxes. Your contribution comes from your income after taxes, and taxes all the harder to make.

Up to a maximum of a percentage of income—say 5 per cent—and to a certain amount of money annually—say $500—the Government ought to allow a deduction from individual taxable income for contributions to bona fide retirement plans.

It would seem only fair to make this concession to people who are endeavoring not to become public charges. Such an allowance would have a direct bearing on the expansion of private plans.

From The Christian Science Monitor

JUDGE MEDINA'S FAN MAIL

THE 50,000 letters to Judge Harold R. Medina from everywhere. The community letter from the little town of Leslie, Mich., which two-thirds of the citizenry turned out to sign. They are all heartening just from a warm human standpoint, coming as they have to commend a military judge for a job well done.

But this outpouring of appreciation brings encouragement on wider grounds as well. The writers, apparently, have sensed what Judge Medina was doing. They do not commend him, it appears, for his part in convicting and sentencing the eleven Communist leaders. They commend him for being fair.

Perhaps these letters furnish a more accurate index of the average American's concepts of justice than did the tirades from some quarters of Congress and of the press against Judge Samuel H. Kaufman for his handling of the Hiss perjury trial. They make us hope the public does sense that both Judges Kaufman and Medina were following faithfully one of the cardinal doctrines of American jurisprudence: that the accused shall be given the benefit of every doubt.

We think, too, that the authors of these letters were aware that in so doing Judge Medina was made the target of a brutal technique—to provoke some to wear him down, to make the trial a sounding board for Communist propaganda—and that he came through the ordeal a winner.

And we would like to think that those who put pen to paper, and other Americans too, see that Judge Medina's victory before his fellow citizens likewise is democracy's victory before the world.

We never saw so many banged-up, dented cars as are now on the roads. Every time there's an accident it might have been more serious. Motorists should drive with care.—*Lexington (Ky.) Herald.*

'Oh, No!—No!'

Marquis Childs

Operation Bootstraps

BELGRADE, YUGOSLAVIA

SHUT OFF from the countries of Eastern Europe, Marshal Tito and the men around him are trying to convert Yugoslavia from a peasant economy to a modern industrial nation with very little help from anyone. It is almost literally Operation Bootstraps.

Under total Communism every effort is directed toward new construction—railroads, factories, highways, government buildings. After they put in a full day from 8 A. M. to 2 P. M. on their regular job, most workers are required to do "voluntary" labor on government projects for another six or seven hours. Political prisoners are commonly sentenced to do "socially useful work," which is often manual labor of the harshest kind. Manpower must make up for the lack of machines.

Little is left over for amenities or even for rudimentary comfort such as heat in the cold, damp Winter. Except for bare necessities, prices are extremely high. While soldiers, shock workers and some other categories can buy in special shops on special rations, life is difficult for nearly everyone.

The visitor gets two directly contrasting views of this experiment. Younger officials in government, ardent Communists and fierce youths who lead the young groups talk with determined enthusiasm about constructing a new civilization. They believe fanatically in the Marxist doctrine of the transformation of society from bourgeois decadence to workers' paradise.

There is good reason to believe they were badly shaken by the break with the Soviet Union. Russia has for so long been the Mecca and the mother of holy Communism.

RECONVERSIONS

But defections or even doubts indicating serious dissension seem to have been small. The number of arrests growing out of the break is estimated at from 2,000 to 4,000. Today the newly reconverted are being admitted to grace again.

Borba, the Communist Party newspaper, recently published a letter signed by 22 students of Belgrade University who had been sentenced to "socially useful work" after the break. It reads like a religious confession:

"We have now understood the gravity and shamelessness of our betrayal. We have deserved to be punished, the more so in view of the fact that, as students, we were surrounded with the greatest possible care of our people's authority . . . Our awareness of all this compels us to express our gratitude to our party for its magnanimity; to thank it for having forgiven us our sins, and for making it possible for us to re-educate and correct ourselves. . ."

In the opposite view, the denial of freedom and the thousands of the police state are so revolting as to make any material achievement worthless. For the small minority who knew and in some degree shared the freedoms and privileges of the Western world life is grim indeed. One is told of arrests without trial on such flimsy charges as associating with foreigners and of men and women who simply disappear.

RAW MATERIAL

In between these two viewpoints is the great mass of the people who have known little but grinding toil and recurrent waves of bloody conflict fanned by ancient racial feuds. They are the raw material to be reshaped in this Communist experiment.

As peasant farmers are forced into collectives, you can hear much grumbling. Land and crops are taken from the reluctant and the recalcitrant.

But the informed opinion of trained observers is that this discontent is limited to griping and complaining. There is no chance under total Communism of its finding any hostile expression directed against the government. The controls are too thorough and too far-reaching.

Just now they are being tightened. Pressure on both the Roman Catholic Church, particularly on monastic orders, and on the Serbian Orthodox Church is increasing. Observers suggest that one reason for the tightening of the wheels of authority is the awareness of the party bosses that Western influence is bound to grow with greater trade. They want to be sure all the escape hatches are nailed down.

Whether help from the West is vital—whether the regime will falter without it—no outsider can say. The man around Tito insist that either with or without outside help and assistance the transformation will be worked.

The greatest asset is the stamina and endurance of the mass of the people. And there seems little doubt that the Russian propaganda attacks have brought increased popular support for the government. Short of war in the next few years, Operation Bootstraps would seem to have a good chance to succeed. The historians and the theorists then can debate how much it will owe to the bent backs of the people and how much to Karl Marx.

People's Platform

Christmas Festival Too Early?

CHARLOTTE

Editors, THE NEWS:

OH, for the good old pre-Roosevelt days when Thanksgiving Day was always observed on the last Thursday in November, as a time of enjoying the fruits of the harvest, singing and praying our thanks for God's care and bountiful goodness, and family planning for the most glorious season of the year: Christmas—birthday of Jesus of Nazareth, greatest event in the 2,000-year history of man—was then observed annually as a time of rejoicing and sharing, symbolic of the night when a glorious star was seen in the East over the Judean hills and angels appeared to tell of God's wonderful gift to a troubled and evil world.

Christmas was such a sacred season just a few years ago that Charlotte merchants did not dare show their Yuletide wares and decorations until after Thanksgiving and Charlottians did not get into the "spirit of giving"—the true spirit of Christmas—until after a day of thanksgiving. Ideas, attitudes and the value of the dollar changed a lot during the unsettled post-depression years when historic Thanksgiving Day was shifted about by Presidential decree until it became just another day without much significance.

As I sit at my typewriter, I hear the marching beat of drums and the muffled roar of a multitude of people. A parade is forming on East Boulevard, just a few blocks from my home. I glance at a small calendar on my desk and note the date is Wednesday, Nov. 16. I also note that it is still eight days before Thanksgiving! Mrs. Jones and our three small children are out with the multitude to watch Charlotte's third annual "Christmas Festival" parade. They will probably see, as I did last year, huge balloons spelling out the words "Merry Xmas". The entire festival could, and probably should, be labeled "Charlotte Xmas Festival", for "X" does not and cannot stand for Christ and the planners of this commercial event have certainly taken Christ out of Christmas for this occasion.

Christ cannot be taken out of Christmas and leave us the birthday observance of the Saviour of Men.

Why do Charlotte merchants, many of them the most prosperous of any in the two Carolinas, have to choose Christmas in mid-November as a theme for a festival and parade to attract more dollars into their cash registers? Why can't our historic city have a great festival, pageant and parade around May 20, bringing recollection, dignity and honor to our growing city in commemoration of the signing of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence? This could be done in a big way—for Charlotte merchants have shown that they are capable of doing things in a big way—to revive and expand the fine "Shout Freedom" drama so well presented here in 1948.

Then—maybe—Charlotte will once again be known far and wide as a city that appreciates and observes a genuine "good will to all men" Christmas, and a city that realizes the true significance of a real Thanksgiving!

Mrs. Jones and the children have just come in—with fresh colds—from the Xmas parade. The children were awed by the bands and balloons, thought the floats were beautiful. They were, I am sure, for I saw them on my way home from the office. But I wonder how much they learned of the true meaning of Christmas from this display?

If Charlottians were given the opportunity at the polls to name a date for a city-wide festival, I believe few thinking citizens would vote for an "Xmas Festival" in mid-November!

—PAUL S. JONES

A Last Appeal

CHARLOTTE

Editors, THE NEWS:

THIS is the last appeal for donations for the Spastics Center to be located near Memorial Hospital. For the past several weeks I have been working on this drive, and at the last report, $12,000 is yet needed for the completion of the Spastics Center.

I have been hoping and praying that someone will send us the money so our prayers will be answered. I still have faith that someone will.

I heard a song about a little crippled boy saying his prayers and asking God to let him walk and play again like other children. That prayer could be answered if we could provide a hospital for those children who need treatment.

So much have already given but we still need further donations. Please mail in your donation to the Spastics Center and help someone today, and see if it doesn't make you happy, too.

—MRS. MAYME BARGER.

'Finish The Job'

CHARLOTTE

Editors, THE NEWS:

YOUR reporter did a good job in exposing conditions existing in Palmers Alley. Disturbing as it is, few people have paid any attention to this situation. Nothing has been done about it. Some one must own the land on which the hut stands. The land owner is responsible for this condition in the first place. In the second place the city officials should not permit a situation of this kind to exist. There is no need to arrest the occupants of Palmers Alley. Rather those responsible for its existence should be haled into court.

The slum clearance program has caved in. It couldn't buck the real estate promoters.

Your next exploit in this field is to delve into the responsibility for having a Palmers Alley. Finish the job. Don't stop now.

—J. L. FOLEY

Explanation Appreciated

CHARLOTTE

Editors, THE NEWS:

I HAVE read with much interest the article entitled "Sources of NSLI Dividend Explained" as printed in the Nov. 7, 1949, edition of your fine newspaper. I have also read the editorial which appeared in the Nov. 12 edition.

May I compliment you for these excellent articles. Occasionally a life insurance representative is misunderstood when he is unable to justify his company's dividend schedule as compared with the NSLI refund. Of course, we in the life insurance business understand the situation, but so much misleading publicity has been propagated on the public that it is encouraging indeed to see the actual facts in wide distribution.

—B. B. PLYLER JR.

There Is No Low Class

ATLANTA

Editors, THE NEWS:

MR. Braderman (People's Platform, Nov. 14) should travel. If eleven out of thirteen persons in N. Y. State are middle class, there is no low class in any state in the Union. Your note answering him was wonderful.

—H. L. MACON

Robert C. Ruark

Honored Guest

DENVER

THE hotel business, for so many of the past years a grim nightmare for the transient, finally seems to have settled into its old courtesy and efficiency.

The genial host is actually genial now, and not a snarling opportunist with supreme contempt for the folk who feed dollars into his establishment. The help seems pleased to have you aboard, rather than sullenly bored with you and your scattered largesse. The service is generally dependable, courteous and in some instances, eager.

This even may be a slight harbinger of return to the old days of elegance in hotel living. Certainly a few of our better hostelries are sneaking quietly back to the frills and furbelows of the early century—of which, I assure you, I have only read and rarely experienced.

The Ritz-Carlton in New York still clings stubbornly to the old European grace of service and accommodation, with a board of pushbuttons in every room and the waiters lurking outside the door, eager to spring in to serve you without beckoning for a tip.

The St. Charles in New Orleans is a gracious and unhurried tavern with more emphasis on the customer's happiness than on Cap O'Leary's cash register. There is a wonderfully-sedate and serviceable place called the Vernon Manor in Cincinnati. The St. Francis in San Francisco is a home-from-home in the old-fashioned sense and the Broadmoor at nearby Colorado Springs operates on the basis that nobody expected a tourist camp when he checked in.

But my favorite of all (favorites is the gingerbready old Brown Palace here in Denver. It was built in 1882 by an itinerant carpenter named Henry C. Brown, who struck it rich in real estate and wound up owning a great deal of the land on which the city now sits.

The old boy searched the world for building materials and decorations to make his boarding house a palace in the old opulent sense. Even the tremendous waste space of gallery was a curtsy to his idea of elegance—possibly to erase the fact that the three-connected old building was erected on a cow lot.

Ever since a baleful date in 1906, the Brown has made a stekdy practice of celebrating the moment that he is right. On that day the hotel was on the receiving end of a fine object lesson. There was a rich old miner named Stratton, iron Stratton, who liked to come in from the mountains on a week-end to see the Elephant and near the owl. He loved music, ladies and whisky, in approximately that order, and he was a free and heavy spender.

One week-end brother Stratton and his cronies raised the roof with an impromptu piano recital and half the guests in the hotel screamed murder. The assistant manager was instructed thereafter to see that Mr. Stratton and Stratton away from the door.

Next week-end, the miner came in, weaving on the arm of a girl. The blonde was flanked by a poodle dog. Stratton attempted to register and was informed that the place was full, so sorry.

Stratton turned away and climbed into his buggy. He went to see old B. C. Brown and asked him how much he'd charge for his hotel. Mr. Brown said $1,500,000. Stratton whipped out a checkbook and scribbled his name on the bottom of the check.

Next morning, with title in hand, he appeared at the hotel and fired the staff. He kept the hotel until 1923, when he sold it to C. K. Boettcher. But they still remember Mr. Stratton around the Brown and the customer since generally has been awfully right.

Hotels are fine things, indeed, but utterly useless without patrons, and patrons are notoriously cantankerous people.

Drew Pearson's Merry-Go-Round

Civil Rights Don't Hold For Young Dems

LOS ANGELES

WHILE President Truman has been preaching civil rights for the South, he has practiced exactly the same kind of vote discrimination toward groups of Young Democrats as he has criticized in Southern states.

The national convention of Young Democrats in Chattanooga this week illustrates this vote discrimination, and also highlights the fact that the Young Democrats, once a live, wire, progressive organization, in many states has become—Charley McCarthy for Democratic bosses, sometimes bought and paid for.

The Young Democrats of New York State, for instance, are no more representative of the Democratic Party than Boss Hague of Jersey City. New York Democrats are not even permitted to hold an election. Their president is appointed, not elected—by Paul Fitzpatrick, Democratic state chairman, who keeps an ironclad hold on the Young Dems organization for fear they will bolt, to young Congressman Franklin Roosevelt.

Undoubtedly the great preponderance of Young Democratic votes in New York would definitely be in the Roosevelt camp—if they had a chance. Fitzpatrick has his eye on the governorship of New York himself next year, and he doesn't want control to slip into the hands of Franklin Roosevelt, a potential rival candidate.

California Case Flagrant

THE throttling of Young Dems in New York State is not Truman's fault. But definitely at Truman's doorstep can be laid an even more flagrant case of vote denial—this one in California.

In that state the Young Democrats of California Inc., has disintegrated into a group of about 100 jaded party hacks who, in effect, have sold the letterhead of their organization to any political faction that would reward them with jobs. When David Price and Edwin T. Thayer of the California Young Dems were given jobs by George McAdoo of the California old-age pension group, the Young Dems promptly lent their letterhead to promote McLain's old-age pension plan.

As a result a rival group of Young Dems—"The California Young Democratic Clubs"—has mushroomed up to 4,000 members, in contrast to fewer than 100 members for the old regulars. And on July 8 the new group officially applied for recognition by Washington. Their application was signed by Mrs. Edward Heller, Democratic national committeewoman; James Roosevelt, national committeeman; and Oliver Carter, California chairman of the Democratic State Committee.

White House Intervened

FURTHERMORE, it developed that the old and decrepit Young Dems had not paid their dues. They had borrowed $1,250 from Ed Pauley and Jimmy Roosevelt in 1947 to pay their dues, but something happened to their money—per haps too much entertainment at conventions. Instead, a promissory note was deposited at headquarters for $1,500 in lieu of dues. This promissory note was never paid.

Under the Young Dems' constitution, the state organization which pays for the dues is recognized by the state committeemen and gets official recognition. But in the case of California, the White House mysteriously intervened.

Perhaps, however, it wasn't so mysterious. Pat Matt Connelly, secretary to the President, got a phone call from George Luckey, California cattleman friend of Mr. Truman's, asking that the new Young Dems not be recognized.

This was on July 8, and the application of the new group has cooled on ice until this week.

Roy Baker, national chairman of the Young Dems, has ordered recognition of the new California group. Bill Boyle, chairman of the Democratic National Committee, had promised recognition on Sept. 14. The Los Angeles County central committee voted 188 to 1 for recognition. But, thanks to White House intervention, 100 old and shopworn "Young Dems" continued to represent the entire state of California until this week, while 4,000 new members remained out in the cold.

Note—One trouble with the Young Democrats is that in many states is that the party bosses don't want intelligent youngsters, in the organization. If the youngsters are intelligent they are discouraged. For intelligent youngsters don't make good party hacks.

Merry-Go-Round

WITH the coal and steel strikers returning to work, the labor outlook is more cheerful than in spite of this, however, 33 critical areas are still harassed by hard times, of which eight are worse off than during the depression. They are Lawrence, Ala., Bridgeport, Conn., Cumberland, Md., New Bedford, Mass., Muskegon, Mich., Greensburg, Pa., and Pottsville, Pa. . . . Elliott Roosevelt is planning to go to Moscow in April to interview Stalin again. . . . Tommy Manville, the millionaire playboy, is worried that his telephone wires are tapped; has offered $5,000 to anyone who can prove it. . . . The American Medical Association has signed up the big insurance companies as an ally in its million-dollar propaganda drive against the President's health insurance program. . . . The British general staff has just sent a highly important secret report to the American joint chiefs of staff stating that London could stand up under bombardment from Russian A-bombs. The London subways, it is reported, are the deepest in the world and would escape atomic radiation. However, the subways will be reconditioned immediately. . . . The real estate lobby is nibbling away at rent control in Los Angeles by preparing suburban towns into decontrolling on their own. Governor Warren, however, will not approve decontrol.