THE CHARLOTTE NEWS

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PLAYGROUNDS AND POLITICS—III

HAVING outlined the background of the Latta Park community center controversy, and having discussed the departure from good zoning practices inherent in Councilman Coddington's amendment, we pass on today to what we believe is the biggest issue of all—a threat to the community's fast-growing program of public recreation.

The Coddington amendment is designed to block erection of the Latta Park center. It would do so by banning any "public building" in a park, Residence I, or Residence II area without the specific approval of the City Council. Hence, it would partially bring the semi-autonomous Park & Recreation Commission under the direct domination of the City Council.

The Park & Recreation Commission was established by act of the General Assembly in 1927. The main reason for giving it an independent status was to keep the public recreation program out of politics. Mr. Coddington's amendment would put it back into politics.

It would do more than that.

1. It would give notice to the members of the Commission—all of whom are putting in long hours of hard work without any compensation except the satisfaction of serving the people—that the current Council no longer trusts their judgment. Since four members of the present Commission were appointed by the present Council, adoption of the Coddington proposal would be an outright repudiation of them.

2. It would negate the findings of an authoritative survey of the City's recreation needs made in 1945. These findings called for a community center in Latta Park. Adoption of the Coddington amendment and subsequent blocking of the Latta Park structure would substitute "hoss-back" opinion for expert opinion. It would also repudiate a former Council which, in 1945, accepted the long-range master plan for public recreation which included the Latta Park building.

3. It would nullify, by inference if not by fact, the expressed will of the voters of Charlotte who approved the $1,000,000 recreation bond issue last year. For weeks prior to the election extensive publicity was given through every medium to the detailed plan for spending the money. The people did not vote any unrestricted *carte blanche* authority to the Park & Recreation Commission. They voted for a specific plan. The Commission has endeavored to adhere to that plan. Unless Mr. Coddington can produce abundant and convincing evidence that the survey was inaccurate, or that the movement of population has changed the situation since 1945, arbitrary use of Council authority to ride rough-shod over the Commission and disrupt the City's carefully-drawn recreation plan would be a dictatorial flouting of the voters' will.

4. It would make a fundamental change in the Park & Recreation Commission set-up by taking away its authority to erect needed structures on parks and playgrounds. There are several ways to administer a public recreation program. In some cities, parks and community centers are operated as regular departments of the City Government. In others, a Park Commissioner appointed by the Mayor and/or the Council has sole authority. But in the overwhelming majority of American cities, parks and playgrounds, like schools, are detached from municipal politics and placed under commissions of non-salaried, public-spirited men, whose continuity of tenure and whose relative isolation from politics enable them to plan and carry out adequate long-range recreation programs. If the Council wants to change the present set-up, it should ask the General Assembly to amend the City Charter, having first ascertained by referendum or by public hearings what the people really want. It should not do so by using the zoning law to punish the Commission.

5. Finally, it would establish a bad precedent for future civic projects of all kinds by substituting the will of well-organized, vocal minorities for the will of the great, silent majority. Virtually every public improvement project in Charlotte's history—the E. Trade St. underpass, the municipal airport, the Morehead and Graham St. widening projects, the Municipal Stadium, and that controversy-of-all-controversies, Independence Boulevard—stirred militant opposition from affected minorities. Had these minorities been heeded, none of these, and other, projects would ever have been completed. If a small group of citizens can prevent the erection of a building which will be of great benefit to a much larger group of citizens, other minorities will block other community centers and streets and auditoriums. The Council had a taste of what will happen when a suggestion that the center be moved to Freedom Park brought sharp yelps from residents of that area.

In summary, Charlotte's public recreation program limped along for many years with inadequate money. The system—if it could be called a system—was a disgrace to the Queen City of the Carolinas. Thanks to ABC revenue, a higher recreation tax levy, and the $1,000,000 bond money voted last year, the system now has a respectable budget. Amazing progress has been made in the past twelve months under the present Commission. The people of Charlotte are at last getting a decent system of public recreation. It would be most unwise to jeopardize this program by subjugating it to the tug-of-war of Councilmanic politics.

Park Commissioners and City Councilmen are scheduled to meet tonight in an effort to resolve the dispute before Wednesday's Council meeting. It is our fervent hope that a compromise will be worked out satisfactory to both groups. In the event no compromise is possible, it is our hope—and we believe the hope of most people in Charlotte—that the Council will not turn the public recreation program into a political football by adopting the Coddington amendment.

A LISTENING POST

A footnote to an item in a recent Washington Merry-Go-Round column makes a point that has long wanted making.

To a report that President Truman's decision to appoint a minister to the Vatican rather than name a successor to Myron Taylor as Presidential representative there was taken against the advice of Catholic leaders (who feared a Senate fight on religion), there was appended this comment:

"U. S. and British intelligence experts consider the Vatican the best 'listening post' in Europe."

That the Holy See has unequaled facilities for finding out what is going on in the world goes without saying. There are Catholics, and priests to serve them, in all countries—albeit clerics in some of the Russian satellites must now operate clandestinely. Their reports on the state of their parishes, channeled through the bishops, ultimately reach the Vatican's Secretariat of State, where *monsignori* old in the ways of the world collate and evaluate them. A good deal of this information finally becomes available to the diplomats of friendly countries accredited to the Vatican.

It was this consideration—fully as much as the troublesome stand of American Catholics on co-operation with Russia—that in 1939 persuaded Roosevelt to send Taylor to the Holy See as his personal envoy.

Our need for full and accurate intelligence is greater today. We are foolish when, for partisan or sectarian reasons, we turn our backs on sources of information. That, it seems to us, is the proper answer to the Protestant churches that have so vociferously opposed Taylor's replacement.

From The Baltimore Sun

A 'VOICE' BUT NO FIRM POLICY

THE State Department people working out an expanded program for the "Voice of America" now have a good laboratory problem to work with. Assuming they had the $80,000,000 more they are asking for, how would they handle the situation arising out of General MacArthur's flying visit to Chiang Kai-Shek on the island of Formosa?

This visit has been seized on by the Communist propagandists the world around as an opportunity. It emphasizes one of the paradoxical aspects of Mr. Truman's first announcement of the intervention in Korea and Formosa. For while the Korea intervention was under the flag of the United Nations, Formosa is strictly an American undertaking.

Thus when Mr. Truman announced that we would neutralize Formosa pending final settlement of its status, the Communist propaganda machines, nevertheless, had a ready-made horror figure already at hand with which to belabor us. Any gesture of support for Chiang could be made to seem sinister—even if it included—as it did—a veto of Chiang's attacks on the China mainland.

But then Chiang continued to fight the Communist massing of possible invasion craft. And just as he was doing that General MacArthur flew to Formosa for conferences with the generalissimo. That worthy, not inexpert in the art of propaganda himself, issued a jubilant communique making the most of the MacArthur visit.

On this new ammunition the Communist propagandists fell again with zeal. They have now worked the MacArthur visit into a black Truman-Chiang plot to subvert freedom across the whole map of Asia.

How would the State Department counteract this new Communist lie if it had the big megaphone for the stepped-up "Voice of America" which it is seeking? Could even men who spoke with the voices of angels sell American policy when American policy itself is indistinct? Until General MacArthur and Mr. Austin pull a little more conspicuously in harness, can the result of their non-integration be glossed over by the most eloquent persuasion?

It's A Poor Father Who Won't Set An Example For The Family

People's Platform

Mr. Boyd Outlines Stand

CHARLOTTE

Editors, THE NEWS:

I WANT to thank you for your editorial on the subject "Mr. Boyd Is At It Again", in Thursday's paper.

Yes, I am "at it again" for improved, increased and extended bus service for the people of Charlotte. I have been "at" this since I was elected to the City Council. I will stay "at it" until my term expires next May, unless something improves.

You chide me about my speech-making, which is all right. You write—I will talk. Wish I could express my ideas in writing as well and briefly as you do.

From a careful reading of your editorial, I see that you agree with me that we should have "more busses, more routes and better coverage." You admit also that you would like to see that. That makes us together, so we haven't "parted company" in reality on the main issue, except that you desert me because our needs and wants would cause "the Duke Power Company to lose money."

Let's don't worry about that. According to the financial statements recently published in the press, the Duke Power Company "made more millions net profit last year than ever before."

Furthermore, the Duke Power Company is a public utility corporation with an exclusive franchise in Charlotte to operate busses over fixed routes. Under this monopoly or exclusive franchise, this company is obligated to furnish reasonably adequate bus transportation to all sections of the city, not to just some of them.

Duke Power Company has not been doing this. That is why the City Council authorized Mr. Hoose to get the facts upon which we could base a demand for improved, enlarged, increased and extended bus service here.

As a citizen and a City Councilman I had no ideas of taking off or taking away any bus service to the citizens of Wesley Heights and other sections, as Mr. Hoose recommends.

Of course, anyone knows that increased and extended service to sections not now served would require more busses and more operators and more expense to Duke Power Company.

The effect of the Hoose recommendations is to shift certain bus routes where people are now served and put busses where no busses are now, and tend to decrease the number of busses instead of increasing the number. I have never had any such idea as that.

I wanted, and want now, busses to continue to serve those people and sections as heretofore, but I also want those sections of Charlotte now without adequate bus service to get this service.

To take away bus service from those people who now have it and need it, and give that service to those who do not have it, is no way to improve bus service and facilities.

Of course increased and extended bus service is what I "mean." Of course this would require more busses, extended routes to areas not now served, and better, "all over" transportation service here for all the people.

Maybe the Duke Power Company needs some competition here!

Let's improve, add to, enlarge, increase and extend bus service in this fast growing city to keep up with the needs and demands of our increased population in many new sections.

That has been the request and the plea of the Duke Power Company in every action ever passed by this City Council as the record will show in the City Clerk's office.

That is my position, and I shall not depart therefrom. I am not interested in fewer routes and fewer busses, but in more routes, extended routes, improved schedules and better "all around" service to more people and more sections of the City.

If that makes me "Peck's Bad Boy" in the Shaw Administration, as you say, then I gladly accept the nomination.

You admit we need the very things I am asking but you part company with me "for fear" we might increase expenses to Duke Power Company. Sure, it will increase their expenses, I suppose. Good bus service costs more than poor bus service, but so long as Duke Power Company assumes the obligation to give adequate service, it is the duty of the City Council to see that the citizens get adequate service.

The Hoose recommendations have some good features, but when he recommends taking away bus service from those who now have it in order to reduce busses and give service to some who have it not, I part company with those recommendations.

I represent, or try to, the people of all sections of the City and I know it is the duty of Duke Power Company to give reasonably adequate service to all sections.

Now is no time to talk about taking this service away from people. We are facing, perhaps, a shortage of gasoline, tires, automobiles and private transportation. Thousands of our citizens may soon have to depend upon bus service who now ride in their own cars. No, let's not abdicate to the Duke Power Company by compromising on less service.

—BASIL M. BOYD,
City Councilman

Quote, Unquote

A lesser woman would have screamed and fled but when Mrs. Cora McInaff found a five-foot rattlesnake in her kitchen, she coolly picked up a rolling pin and threw it with all her might. Her aim was lousy and the snake bit her on the leg.—South Plains (Tex.) Press.

* * *

Fellow who complains about the weather this Summer wouldn't be satisfied in heaven.—Elizabethtown (Ky.) News.

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A hormone treatment is found to make a new man of the alcoholic. There is of course the danger that the new man will need a drink.—Asheville (N. C.) Citizen.

* * *

A Duluth, Minn., lady who died last week requeathed two-thirds of her estate to Uncle Sam "to help reduce the national debt." The bequest was $1,443.82—which lacked just about $250 of being her per capita share of this encumbrance at the time of her departure.—Nashville (Tenn.) Banner.

* * *

Summer brings the urge to hit the open road, which you usually find closed for repairs.—Fort Myers (Fla.) News-Press.

Drew Pearson's Merry-Go-Round

Mrs. Roosevelt Suggests Johnson Boot

(Ed. Note—While Drew Pearson is on a brief vacation, his column will be written by members of his staff, Tom McNamara and Jack Anderson.)

WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT TRUMAN has received some blunt advice from the former First Lady, Eleanor Roosevelt, suggesting that he fire Defense Secretary Louis Johnson.

Mrs. Roosevelt expressed her views last week in a confidential letter to the President, following his categorical statement that he would keep Johnson and Secretary of State Acheson in his Cabinet as long as he remains in the White House.

Writing as a private citizen, the former First Lady suggested that Truman might have qualified this by saying he would keep Johnson and Acheson "as long as they do a good job." She pointed out that every President occasionally finds it necessary to make changes in his Cabinet and it isn't a good idea to "freeze" a man in an important position.

Injecting a more personal note, Mrs. Roosevelt wrote that it was apparent to her from the tremendous volume of anti-Johnson mail she was receiving that the public had lost confidence in the Secretary of Defense. In view of this statement and in the interest of national defense, she suggested firmly that Johnson should be replaced.

Low On Sugar

THIS won't be pleasant news to the G.I.'s in Korea, but the home folks' sweet-tooth appears to be stronger than their patriotism. In spite of the appeals against hoarding, the nation's sugar stocks are critically low.

The Agriculture Department's commodity boss, Ralph Trigg, candidly admitted this the other day, testifying behind closed doors of the Senate Banking Committee.

"Regardless of how you cut the cloth, there is no sugar available," Trigg reported flatly.

"Nothing has changed except that the sugar is in the pantries of the folks throughout the nation," suggested Indiana's GOP Senator Homer Capehart. "The consumption has not increased. It is hoarding that has done this."

"That is true," agreed Trigg. "You will not increase the consumption per person a great deal . . . but there is no sugar available for a great many people who are unable to get it at the retail stores."

NOTE—In the hope that public opinion may still shame hoarders and profiteers, we have been urging patriotic Americans to organize "home front" committees and to campaign through the local press, radio and civic groups against war greed.

Rough Going-Over

JACK REDDING got a thorough going-over behind closed doors before the Senate confirmed his appointment as Assistant Postmaster General.

At one point, Sen. Bill Langer, North Dakota Republican, noted that Redding claimed to be a "writer of fiction."

"Yes, he was director of publicity for the Democratic National Committee," dryly remarked Sen. Zales Ecton, Montana Republican.

Economy Cut

PRESIDENT TRUMAN won't take the proposed 10 per cent across-the-board slash in Government spending with his bat on his shoulder.

At a recent meeting with Federal agency chiefs, Truman strongly indicated that he might send a special message to Congress if the two Houses don't reconsider the 10 per cent reduction.

"This so-called 'economy' cut is one way to destroy Government agencies without outright abolition," declared the President. "You can cripple an agency so badly by chopping off its personnel that it cannot do the job. This is a grave situation."

"It's all the graver in wartime," broke in Federal Communications Chairman Wayne Coy. He explained that his agency was engaged in top-secret projects, vital to the war effort.

"We cannot do the job right if we are deprived of key personnel," he added.

"The same applies to my agency," broke in Thomas Buchanan, acting chairman of the Federal Power Commission. "The FPC must see to it that our war plants have enough gas and electric power to keep them going. We must establish a balance between consumer and war use of fuels and power."

Buchanan pointed out that Government departments, like Agriculture and Interior, might be able to withstand the 10 per cent cut by spending less on "construction contracts," such as road-building and reclamation projects. But regulatory agencies, like FPC, would be dangerously crippled, he said.

"I would like to get a memo from all agencies that will be crippled by the 10 per cent reduction," Truman finally decided. "We've got to do something about it—right away."

Iron Curtain Chaff

CONCRETE evidence that the Chinese Communists are openly supporting North Korea is contained in a message from Chinese Communist Leader Mao Tse-Tung to Korean Prime Minister Kim Il Sung. "The Chinese people warmly support the Korean people in the just war against U. S. imperialist aggression," wrote Mao . . . Political observers attach significance to reports from the Chinese capital indicating that Mao Tse-Tung left Peking on Aug. 11 for an "unannounced destination." . . . This could mean Moscow or somewhere in Korea . . . The prestige of the United Nations is still troubling Communist leaders, judging by their propaganda efforts to conceal the fact that Americans are fighting in Korea under the U.N. flag . . . No reference is ever made to United Nations' authorization of American action in Korea . . . Despite careful censorship, reports are trickling through the Iron Curtain that Communist officials must resort to desperate measures to make labor toe the mark. For example, in Rumania, a recent law has made "illegal production and negligence at work" punishable by the death penalty.

Johnson Conducts Guerrilla Warfare Against State Dept.

By STEWART ALSOP

WASHINGTON

SHORTLY before the Korea attack, one of the more intuitive of the State Department's policy-makers sensed that the Kremlin's next move might well be aggression by one of the satellites. He accordingly ordered a study to determine where the Kremlin was most likely to strike.

During the course of this study, a Defense Department view of the military situation in Korea was requested. The Defense Department quickly returned an answer—the South Koreans were so strong that the North would never dare attack. Thus Korea was stricken off the list of possible areas of satellite aggression, and the United States was even less prepared to deal with the danger than it otherwise would have been.

NO TEAMWORK

This might be interpreted as an intelligence failure. In fact, it was nothing of the sort—the Central Intelligence Agency had estimated with reasonable accuracy the strength of the North Korean forces. It reflected something a great deal more serious than inadequate intelligence — the total breakdown of any close working relationship between the State and Defense Departments.

For so obviously nonsensical a military estimate would not have been either submitted or accepted while the two departments were working intimately together, as in the days of George Marshall, James Forrestal, and Robert Lovett. This sort of thing could only happen when the two departments were "working at arm's length. And the fact is that the State and Defense Departments are now not only working at arm's length, they are working in an atmosphere of beady-eyed mutual suspicion and open hostility. This is a situation which simply cannot be allowed to continue indefinitely.

There are all sorts of minor, personal and petty instances of this hostility. A second-level Defense Department official, for example, whose job was liaison with the State Department, was recently demoted because he was "too friendly to State." Another top-level Defense official, who must also work with the State Department, remarks that he is "in the doghouse because I haven't tried to beat State down." And so on.

There are other, far more serious examples of what is going on. Effective liaison between the State and Defense departments on the real political-strategic situation is virtually non-existent, because, as one official put it, "State isn't on the Defense Department's confidential list." The State Department, thus must try to make Far Eastern policy, for example, without knowing the real military estimate of the likelihood of holding in South Korea, or the true estimate of the rapidity with which a counter-offensive can be mounted.

There are, of course, straight policy disagreements. Defense Secretary Louis Johnson's "economy" line, which before Korea made nonsense of all Secretary of State Dean Acheson's anguished appeals for strength and sacrifice, has now been abandoned with indecent haste. Instead, Johnson is now warning members of Congress and others that defense spending is due to go up to $50,000,000,000 or so in the near future. Aside from the fact that this knocks into a cocked hat Truman's stand against all-out controls, these warnings are also conveyed with the implication that general war soon is inevitable. This flies in the face of both White House and State Department policy.

There is also a petty, but important, personal element. Johnson has consistently distorted, to newspaper men and others, the position of Acheson and the State Department on a whole series of vital issues. Johnson is fond of describing high State Department officials as "do-gooders" and "pacifists." Inevitably, this sort of thing gets back to the State Department, and it is hardly conducive to the intimate partnership in defense and foreign policy planning which is now absolutely essential to American security.

Truman is also quite aware of Johnson's private war on the State Department, but he apparently takes the tolerant view of an indulgent father toward a wayward son—"poor old Louis just can't keep his big mouth shut." Yet the fact remains that the present situation simply cannot continue for very much longer. And it is a pretty good rule that situations which cannot go on do not go on.

At 80, Life, Lassie-Loving Baruch Has Vitality Of Kid

By ROBERT RUARK

NEW YORK

AN old hunting partner of mine hits his 80th birthday this month, and I'd like to hold him up as a prime example that having a lot of fun never hurt anybody. Bernie Baruch, at 80, still has more laughs and gets around more than most young fogeys of 40.

B. M., today, has gone underground as advisor to President Truman, but the President's advisors still buy Baruch on the mental blackmarket — possibly because the old boy has a 50-year record of being right about nearly everything.

TROUBLE SHOOTER

"They wait until they get in trouble," the old gentleman likes to say, "and then they send for me to get them out. The only thing is that I am never a very popular fellow because I tell them the truth. People do not like to hear truths if truths are uncomfortable."

Baruch, at 80, looks backward at an unparalleled career — and forward to another 20 years or so of excitement. He was a millionaire at 30, and he made every dime himself. As official advisor to Woodrow Wilson and Franklin Roosevelt, as unofficial advisor to some of Truman's cabinet, as a close friend of all the big ones from Clemenceau to Winston Churchill, Baruch has been in on the big doings since World War I — and still makes more sense than anybody around.

But his involvements with statesmen and crises and wars and millions never made him stuffy. If he pontificates a bit, it is because he generally knows what he is talking about, and his knowledge is founded on facts. "What are the facts?" is his best known question, whether he is surveying a rubber shortage or a plan to harness the atom.

Baruch always played hard — and still does. He was the beau of many a ball as a youngster of 70 or so. He likes to sit up late. His friends are young, many of them, and he loves to surround himself with youth. Television came into its own, so far as B. M. was concerned, with the advent of the low-cut neckline. He purely loves the gals.

The senior statesman doesn't drink much any more. He'll sip a glass of champagne or steal a swallow of his nurse-compounded old-fashioned, but there was a time when he was fairly handy in the assault department. He quit smoking in 1934, because he was never without a cigarette in his hand. A couple of years later he knocked out a cab driver who gave him some lip.

Baruch does something today that men half his age would find wearing. He loves to shoot quail, and he hunts six days a week, at his plantation in South Carolina, for three months every year. This means that he goes on a hunting tour two-three hours every afternoon, mounting and dismounting possibly 30 times.

TIGER GAMBLER

The old gent is still an eager gambler, and spends considerable time at the races. He almost invariably invests the month of August at Saratoga, taking the baths and going to the horse park daily. Next to shooting quail and eating, figuring the horses is his prime recreation.

As a free-hand eater, B. M. Baruch holds several local and international championships. He eats simply, but he packs it away with boyish enthusiasm. His Southern upbringing still dictates a great fondness for turnip greens and yams and similar truck. He loves sweets, and sometimes candy and fruit between meals.

If I could have chosen a single life above all lives, I think I would settle for Baruch's. He has enjoyed everything man holds important — health, wealth, prestige, charm, good looks, friends, intelligence, adulation — and, at 80, still savors living and expects to enjoy himself for another quarter century. Happy birthday, Chief. It's been real nice knowing you.