THE CHARLOTTE NEWS

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WHAT, AFTER ALL, IS A 'HANDOUT'?

APPARENTLY the decision to cancel a Federal appropriation for extending the runway at the Charlotte municipal airport unless work is started by January 15 is not final. Informed that the City Council was doing everything in its power to get the project under way, Major Willard R. Bloxton of the Adjutant General's office in Raleigh told City Manager Henry Yancey to "write me a letter setting those facts". There is reason to believe that Mr. Yancey's letter might prompt an extension of the deadline.

In any event, this is an appropriate time to discuss the "Federal handout" angle that has been used so freely by spokesmen and an attorney for the Steele Creek-Berryhill residents who have been fighting the runway extension. On several occasions, some virtuous citizen has risen to his feet and proclaimed "It is time to stop accepting these Federal handouts. That's what is wrong with this nation today."

That needs "re-examining", as Senator Taft would say.

In the first place, no patriotic citizen or newspaper, for that matter, of our acquaintance has yet cried defense appropriations "handouts". It is true that the defense bill is heavy. We'd like to cut it sharply if we could do so without impairing the nation's security. But about all the Congress can do, and all that the average citizen can do, is to accept stoically the estimate of our defense needs as outlined by our military authorities. To challenge those without full information on the over-all defense picture would be to invite disaster. The extension of the runway is a defense project. And this newspaper will not place the opinion of the armchair strategists of Steele Creek or the Law Building above the experts of the Pentagon.

In the second place, the time to stop "Federal handouts" is before they are voted by the Congress. This newspaper has a long and distinguished record of opposing Federal expenditures it considered unwise *before* they were approved. It has sought by every means at its disposal to curtail non-essential Federal expenditures, and it has had precious little support from the people of the area, including the residents of Steele Creek. We have no way of knowing, but we doubt seriously that any of the "spokesmen" for the protesting group have overextended themselves in stopping "Federal handouts" while they were still in the discussion stage.

And once the Congress, in its role as representative of all the people, has decided on an appropriation, is it wisdom to reject an appropriation? Or is it merely the belated exercise of one's conscience that has too long been dulled by neglect? Or is it, in this case, just a convenient argument to toss out in a public discussion?

The truth of the matter is that the people of Mecklenburg County, and more particularly the people of the City of Charlotte, who pay tribute on 80 per cent of the County's taxable property and a like proportion of the taxable income, will pay for this appropriation for the runway whether it is spent in Charlotte or somewhere else. They will get some direct return from their tax dollars only if they are spent locally.

And in the third place, there is an irony in this proposition by the Steele Creek spokesmen that would be amusing if it were not so grim. They advise the people of Charlotte to polish up their virtue and reject this "handout". At the same time, the Dixie Road, the re-routing of which they oppose, is a prime example of the "handout" system. In 1930, the County Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, like those of the other 99 counties, shrugged off their responsibility for roads and pushed it off on the State of North Carolina. The Dixie Road was paved and it has been maintained since 1930 by the State of North Carolina—a "handout" which is different from the runway appropriation only in that it was handed out from Raleigh instead of from Washington. And during all those years, until the passage of the long-overdue Powell Bill in 1951, the people of Charlotte and other incorporated cities in the State got little more for their city streets than crumbs from the huge highway fund to which they have contributed better than 50 per cent, according to the report of the Municipal Roads Commission in 1950. They have had to build their city streets with local funds, and pay for more than half the Dixie Roads to boot.

If the "spokesmen" and lawyers for Steele Creek and Berryhill have their way, the good citizens of the City of Charlotte will throw back their shoulders, puff out their chests, and proclaim for all to hear that "we will not accept this Federal handout". And then, when the day comes that the runway will have to be extended anyway, they will dig down into their pockets and pay for a bond issue to extend it, just as they have paid for every local investment in the City's aviation facilities. And the people of Steele Creek and Berryhill will sit back and enjoy the benefits of the City's aviation facilities just as they are doing today and just as they have been doing these last two decades, all without paying one penny of the cost.

It's a great routine if it works—and it appears to be working. At least it has the County Commissioners entranced—three of them, that is.

1,2,3—AND 4 TO GO?

HAROLD STASSEN was probably considerably annoyed when he announced Thursday that he was a Republican candidate for President. Declaring for the Presidency is not to be taken lightly, especially by the candidate himself, who would normally expect the reporters to want to know his campaign plans and specific stands.

But was Mr. Stassen bombarded with queries about his plans and positions? No. Instead, the reporters, phrasing the same question dozens of different ways, wanted to know what Mr. Stassen knew of the candidacy of another man, General Eisenhower, whom he visited recently in Paris. Being a shrewd man, Mr. Stassen knew that an intimation of Ike's plans would be of more public interest than his own declaration and would steal the headlines, and so Stassen was discreetly silent regarding the General. Furthermore, it is highly doubtful that Mr. Stassen received anymore information from the General than is divulged to other politicians who make the popular pilgrimage to Paris, usually to return to say what they thought, or hoped, all along.

Indeed, foxy Mr. Stassen probably visited Eisenhower for the express purpose of getting people to assume what some are now assuming—that since Stassen was undecided (or so he said) before visiting Eisenhower, but has decided to run since visiting the General, it must be that Ike isn't a candidate, because Stassen is too smart to run against the popular Eisenhower.

Such an assumption, which we believe erroneous, fits Mr. Stassen's plans beautifully. It will, if accepted, cause Eisenhower supporters to turn to another candidate, and Mr. Stassen thinks he is that other man.

It must be said of Mr. Stassen that he has done a better job than most candidates in making himself all things to all men. As announced Thursday, he stands for a "solid dollar", "plain honesty", "less tax-paying and more profit-sharing", freedom for everybody, full employment, a balanced budget, harmony between labor, farmers and employers, and the defeat of Communism without war. Truly, the millennium—but probably not Mr. Stassen —shall be at hand when all these things come to pass.

Mr. Stassen, who inferred that the present Administration is "a one-man band", named men whose counsel he will seek if he becomes President. He will talk to MacArthur "on problems of the Western Pacific and in devising military plans for that area", to Eisenhower "on problem of Western Europe and of our military policy". He will seek advice from Bernard Baruch, as all Presidents apparently must, former President Hoover, Jim Farley, Senator Byrd, and Ralph Bunche.

Harold Stassen is a proven executive, with a fine record as an attorney, governor and naval officer. He has traveled widely of late, with the stated purpose of broadening his knowledge, a commendable activity for a man who seeks the highest office in the land.

But somehow, Harold Stassen no longer seems to be the knight in shining armor which, to many, he once appeared to be. His charges against Ambassador Jessup before a Senate subcommittee last Fall did not hold up under questioning and the record. His program does not appear to be that of a man who has given serious consideration to the gigantic problems which will face the next President.

Senator Taft, when informed of Stassen's announcement, observed that "Every American has a right to run for President and it's well that the Republicans should have a wide choice."

On this particular point we agree with Senator Taft 100 per cent. The Republicans now have three avowed candidates—Taft, Warren and Stassen. That's not quite wide enough to make a proper selection.

DRIVE SCARED!

A NEW SLOGAN that may be of some use in curbing highway accidents has been coined by the North Carolina *Motor Vehicle*. Short and snappy, the slogan is "Drive Scared!"

Notes the magazine:

". . . that doesn't mean we recommend putting your car in storage, or quaking with fear to the extent that you become hesitant and indecisive at the wheel. A too-fearful driver may easily contribute to an accident by his erratic behavior.

"We mean the kind of 'scared' that makes you realize the life-and-death responsibility of driving in modern traffic, the tremendous physical forces involved, the consequences of careless or heedless behavior.

"Driving scared would keep motorists from going too fast. They wouldn't pass unless there was plenty of room, nor drive after drinking, nor follow other cars too closely. They would keep a sharp lookout at intersections and grade crossings. They might even stay home if the weather or traffic conditions made motoring extra hazardous."

The growing toll of highway accidents during the holiday season is enough to make anybody drive scared. It hit 535 over the four-day Christmas holiday, is expected to soar much higher before the New Year's holiday is over. And the figure doesn't include the thousands of injuries that do not cause death.

We like the *Motor Vehicle's* slogan. It expresses what every automobile driver ought to feel—an acute awareness of the danger to himself and to others from one act of carelessness or thoughtfulness.

'You Got Any Special Rates For Natives?'

People's Platform

Letters should be brief, written on one side of the paper. The writer's name must be signed, but may be withheld from publication in the discretion of the Editor. The News reserves the right to condense.

Going To Hell Is Easy

PITTSBORO

Editors, THE NEWS:

I DID not ask Santa Claus for but one thing—pretty weather throughout the Yuletide season. There remains but one activity in which I can engage with youthful enthusiasm—hunting. I have been handling a gun and following dogs for 54 years. My endurance has been considerably reduced, as three hours is about all I can go before my legs begin to buckle; but my marksmanship is normal, erratic as always. For instance, last Saturday afternoon I got four kills out of four chances, while Monday afternoon I missed seven straight, but got three out of the last four shots. But what hurt most was the fact that Betty, my favorite little bitch, was working her best of the season, while I was at the season's low.

It can't be defined or described, but the gun and dog lover understands it, the mental and physical lift and resiliency that results from the coordination of the faithful and dependable dog and its master's trigger finger, and it is really a question as to which, the dog or the master, gets the more pleasure out of the combined effort. It's all wonderful, and when I am not thrilled as I approach my dog on point, you may know that my end is not distant by far.

But old St. Nick got my request confused. He has forced me in. It is raining and the weather report is not encouraging. So I am doing the best that I can under the circumstances. I have read my favorite commentators and the news generally. Then, too, this old typewriter is always available, to the disgust as well as the displeasure of many of my friends here and there. When I left the house for the office, I was admonished by my boss not to gum up the season by writing about Governmental scandals, the Korean eighteen-month-old "police action" or our inept world leadership. So compliance, and compliance she will have while she is not in the classroom, just about stakes me out.

Anyway, I am going to submit this as a guide for the New Year and its successors: Facilis descensus Averno (Virgil, trans. The descent to Hell is easy). Or, it is easier to get into a mess than it is to get out.

—JOHN W. HESTER

Obligation To Expand Airport

CHARLOTTE

Editors, THE NEWS:

RECENTLY, Gen. Hall Manning, of the North Carolina Air National Guard, was asked to appear before the County Commissioners to state his views and explain the reasons why the N. E. - S. W. runway should be extended at our Municipal Airport. He not only came, but brought a staff of experts with him. The following points were clarified by the general and his staff.

1. Charlotte is the most logical and practical place for an active Air Guard reconnaissance unit.

2. The addition of a flight of jets would not in any way cause a more hazardous condition to exist than was already prevailing when the Air Guard was active before being called overseas for combat duty. The fact that fewer planes will be employed here actually creates a safer condition.

3. Air Guard activity would not in any way interfere with commercial air travel.

4. Commercial air travel would be much safer, due to the greater margin for error in judgment. Also the extension would enable the airport to accommodate the larger and more modern ships now coming off the assembly lines.

The decision not to close the Dixie Road naturally came after General Manning's testimony. In my opinion it was one of the greatest insults that could be dealt to a man of General Manning's esteem. Why was he asked to come and appear here, if his recommendations were to be entirely ignored? Certainly he furnished enough information for the Commissioners to be justified in approving the venture.

I believe that if General Manning had deemed it necessary, he would have elaborated. It seems to me that when our qualified military leaders make a recommendation, the face value should be enough for we citizens to act on, but in this case it apparently was not.

Had he thought it necessary, the General would have probably presented a map of the Southeast, pointing out the fact that approximately two hundred miles to the west is the nerve center of the nation's atomic energy production. Less than 200 miles to the south is the fabulous hydrogen bomb plant. Any embryo strategist should know that the place to protect these areas is on the outlying fringes. From a geographical viewpoint, Charlotte and its airport will be in the position to play a mighty important part in the defense of these areas if an all-out war should come. Our city and surrounding cities would make a wonderful target to an enemy if he knew our airport would not permit a fully loaded interceptor to take off.

Airplanes representing a total worth of more than $26 million are presently operating in and out of Charlotte every 24 hours. We are obligated by all laws of responsibility to furnish an adequate airport. If one concrete reason can be given why we should not enlarge and improve the airport facilities, I will politely bow out of the picture.

BEN HUNTLEY

Lonely Charlottean In Korea

KOREA

Editors, THE NEWS:

I REALLY don't exactly know how to explain these few lines of correspondence, but nevertheless I will do my best.

Of course my objective is to get a few more letters from home. Not from my people in particular, because they write as often as I expect them to. But I am suposed to have quite a few friends in Charlotte.

I am a lonely soldier in Korea and would like to know some of the happenings around Charlotte.

Nothing in particular, but just to know about home, meaning Charlotte as a whole. So would you please print a few lines for me?

Pvt. GEORGE B. ELLIS, U. S. 53100833
567th Med. Amb. Co., APO 201, Care P.M.,
San Francisco

Soviet Attack In Europe, Once Expected, Now Held Unlikely

By STEWART ALSOP

WASHINGTON

THERE HAS been during the past year a change in the whole atmosphere in Europe. This change, deep but difficult to define precisely, is one of the most lasting impressions left by this reporter's recent trip abroad. The difference is essentially this. A year ago, most European leaders believed that Soviet military aggression in Europe might very well be imminent. Now they no longer believe so.

To a considerable extent, this change is a matter more of instinct than of hard evidence. Last week, Winston Churchill warned that war might come, but added, "I do not think it will come." Some time previously, in a talk with an intimate, Churchill drew the parallel between the world situation today and the situation after Hitler had come to power. He pointed out the obvious similarities, and said that from the moment Hitler came to power he had "felt in his bones" that war was coming. But, he said, he did not "feel it in his bones" now.

The change in atmosphere is not entirely, of course, a matter of the feeling in the bones of European leaders like Churchill. For one thing, for reasons already reported in this space, the Soviets cannot now launch a surprise attack in Europe. To make ready an assault on the strengthened forces under Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower would require at least two months of preparations. And there are no signs that these preparations are being made.

SOVIET CHANGED

Military intelligence reports no slackening of the great Soviet rearmament effort which has been going on since the war. Yet the reported Soviet military dispositions at least look defensive in nature, which was not the case a year ago. Moreover, a subtle change in recent Soviet propaganda and pronouncements points in the same direction.

The tone of the October revolution speeches this year, for example, was far more defensive than at any time since the war, full of reminders of the terrible fate which has overtaken invaders of Russia. The reminders were hardly necessary, in view of the immense Soviet manpower superiority. But these and other pronouncements do suggest that the men in the Kremlin are beginning genuinely to respect the power of the West.

Finally, of course, there is Korea, and the simple fact that the failure of the aggression in Korea is not likely to encourage the Kremlin to attempt aggression elsewhere. For all these reasons, the fear of a Soviet preventive attack, designed to nip Western rearmament in the bud, is very much less alive today than it was a year ago. And the growing belief that an attack is not imminent has in turn influenced the military planning of the Western alliance.

This belief accounts in part for the so-called "Ottawa revolt." At Ottawa, the Europeans strongly resisted NATO plans calling for well over 100 divisions by the end of 1954. It was finally agreed that W. Averell Harriman, Britain's Sir Edward Plowden and France's Jean Monnet should re-examine the whole problem. But there was also a tacit agreement to scale down the whole effort somewhat and to extend the time schedule. This agreement was reached because the European leaders and most American officials had begun to come to the same conclusion as Churchill. On the whole, they did not think war would come.

This guarded optimism in the West derives directly, of course, from the growing strength of the West. The stronger the West becomes, the less likely a preventive attack by the Soviets also becomes. Some scaling down of the Western defense effort may now be justifiable and necessary. Yet any real slackening will invite a Soviet attack in the period which lies not more than a year or two ahead — the period when the Soviets have built a really formidable stockpile of atomic weapons.

Why Did Burchett, A Seemingly Average Journalist, Join Reds?

By ROBERT C. RUARK

WASHINGTON

IN THE MIDDLE of the usual Christmas flurries of too much turkey and tinsel, I find myself a touch bemused by the front-page pictures of Wilfred Burchett, the Communist correspondent whose testimony in Korea has more or less guaranteed the existence of Maj. Gen. William Dean, long-missing commander of the U. S. 24th Division.

The pictures of Burchett look the same — happy chipmunk grin, not too much chin, slight little fellow who was mostly more timid than not except when he had a load aboard. I used to know Burchett, back in the old war. That was when he was an ordinary correspondent covering the war for one of the British press combines. That was before he turned Communist — before he blossomed on the scene in a quilted Oriental jacket writing the war in Korea for a French Communist paper, as a high shot with the Red forces.

Burchett and I used to share a room, from time to time, in the Moana Hotel in Honolulu, together with Lyle Shoemaker of the United Press and Bud Foster of the radio. It was Bud's room, I remember, and Burch usually slept on the floor. Even then he was sharing other people's wealth, for a hotel room in Oahu, in 1944, represented plenty money.

STRAIGHT REPORTER

It seemed to me that Burchett did his job well, and as I recall the pieces I censored for him, they were not filled with doctrine of any sort, but were mostly straightaway stuff that incurred small wrath among the guardians of security. This was not true of some passionate American citizens who tried every dodge to sneak forbidden information past Admiral Nimitz's harassed watchdogs.

I liked Burchett. Ran around with him a whole lot in his native Australia, when he switched to coverage of the Australian-based British Pacific fleet. He was a neat little man, in his American officer's uniform with the press brassard on the arm. It was cold in Australia that Winter, and Mr. Burchett drew unofficial RAAF officer's short melton overcoat than he seems to be in Korea, where he wore the quilted jacket of the Red army whose pet he has become.

We did a lot of frivolous things that year in Australia. Burch had a pretty, plump gal who certainly would not fit into the workers' scheme of staunch Red femininity. She was, you might say, a highly dangerous example of the frivolity of the bourgeois. She wore dainty silks and sheer stockings and high-heeled shoes. She loved to give fancy dinners with lots of wine, and she loved to go to the races and to meet at the cocktail lounge of the better hotels for a few Martinis with Burchett and his friends. She had a pipeline into the black market; she was never short of grog or cigarettes at a time when both were premium luxuries.

NO BROODER

I was certainly not aware at the time that I was palling around with the cynosure darling of the Communists — a man of such firm Communistic conviction that he since has completely divorced himself from the Western world by appearing in semi-official position at top Red headquarters. Personally there was no inkling that Burchett was dissatisfied with the world as he saw it from the other side. I would say he brooded no more than the average rollicking correspondent whose first thought was perquisites and facilities — meaning booze, babes, steaks and lodging.

It intrigues me, at least, to reflect on what might have happened to a man of seemingly eminent normality, with a background of freedom and a wide view of the world — a man of above-average intelligence and social adjustment — to drive him into bondage as a spokesman for mass slavery, for complete denial of individual rights.

Drew Pearson's Merry-Go-Round

Good Attorney General Could Stop Graft

WASHINGTON

IT has frequently been possible, both in Republican and Democratic administrations, to escape tax-fraud prosecution if you are important enough and if you know the right people. The chief difference today is that the Truman Administration has gone in for tax-fixing on a much broader and lower scale. Even unimportant people now can get their taxes fixed.

Several years ago, when Justice Tom Clark was Attorney General, he was informed by his U. S. attorney in Los Angeles, Charles H. Carr, that Charlie Chaplin, the famed comedian, had a sealed income-tax indictment hanging over his head ever since the Harding Administration. It had been kept secret and had not been prosecuted.

Why the Republicans indicted, but failed to prosecute, is not known. Carr did not prosecute either, and later left the U. S. attorney's office to become president of the Del Mar race track, owned in part by Joe Schenck, president of 20th Century-Fox.

It sometimes happens that cases against men with influence lie dormant for years—sometimes until the statute of limitations expires. For instance, an FBI report on the bribe-taking of U. S. Court of Appeals Judge Martin T. Manton gathered dust in the Justice Department—until forthright Frank Murphy became Attorney General. He dusted off the files and sent Judge Manton to jail.

FDR's Record

INCIDENTALLY, Joe Nunan, clerk to Judge Manton, and later Bob Hannegan's Commissioner of Internal Revenue, bobs up from time to time in the background of the current Congressional tax probe.

Frank Murphy's record in the Justice Department illustrates what President Truman could do if he appointed a courageous, crusading Attorney General such as Francis Biddle or Estes Kefauver. He would need no corruption committee or Judge Tom Murphy if he made this one simple move. A forthright Attorney General makes all the difference when it comes to corruption in government.

It also illustrates what happened under FDR. During the Roosevelt Administration it was almost impossible to fix a tax case unless it was done right at the top—in the White House. In the Truman Administration, the opposite is true. While Mr. Truman himself would never fix a case, taxes are fixed all over the place, and by all sorts of people. But under Roosevelt, nobody could get by eagle-eyed Henry Morgenthau or crusading Frank Murphy with a fix, except FDR.

Some of the most important cases Roosevelt took a hand in involved Boss Frank McHale, Democratic National Committeeman from Indiana, Brown and Root, the Texas contractors who backed Lyndon Johnson; and Andrew Jackson Higgins, the Louisiana boat builder.

'And Louisiana Purchase'

THERE was also the "Second Louisiana Purchase"—when prosecution of certain top politicos was stopped dead in its tracks by a phone call from the White House.

This occurred in 1940, after graft exposures by the Washington Merry-Go-Round caused Attorney General Frank Murphy to prosecute Louisiana's Gov. Dick Leche, Democratic National Committeeman Seymour Weiss, president of Louisiana State College J. Monroe Smith, Abe Shushan and various others.

Murphy, who loved to prosecute like a hound dog likes to chase rabbits, was in full chase and determined to draw blood, when something happened.

I first heard about it from the foreman of a grand jury in New Orleans who told how John Rogge, Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Justice Department's Criminal Division, was summoned from the jury room by a phone call from Washington. The jury was considering a hot oil conspiracy case between Mayor Robert Maestri of New Orleans and the late Bill Helis, otherwise known as the Golden Greek, and a partner of Frankie Costello.

When he came back from that Washington phone call, Rogge told the grand jury that their work was over.

Curious, I asked Frank Murphy what had happened. He admitted that he had called Rogge and instructed him to drop the case. He had done this regretfully, he said, on orders from the White House. The President needed the support of the Louisiana delegation to be renominated in Chicago.

Thus was consummated the "second Louisiana purchase."