

# THE CHARLOTTE NEWS

1886—Sixty-Fifth Anniversary Year—1953

THOMAS L. ROBINSON, Publisher  
J. E. DOWD, General Manager  
B. S. GRIFFITH, Executive Editor  
C. A. MCKNIGHT, Editor

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 1953

## N. C. 'SPEED TRAPS' MUST GO

A LETTER IN THE PEOPLE'S PLATFORM several days ago told of the unhappy experience of a retired Air Force medical officer from Little Rock, Ark.

He was arrested by State Highway Patrolman Frank Potter in Cherokee County at 1:23 p.m. on Oct. 17. He was charged with speeding 75 m.p.h. and taken before Magistrate Sam N. Jones.

The Little Rock man did not contest the charge, but wanted to pay his fine and the costs and be on his way. He wrote:

"This lousy had a new idea. He imposed no fine, but wanted me to plead guilty or not, it made no difference. He was posing me for appearance at the November term of the Superior Court in Cherokee County at Murphy, N. C. and demanded an appearance bond of \$100 which fortunately I was able to post."

(Magistrate Jones tells a different story. By telephone, he told The News that the doctor said he "was not going to plead guilty to anything." He said also that he had been told by Solicitor Thad Bryson Jr. of Bryson City not to accept fines and costs in speeding cases, but to bind offenders over to Superior Court. The solicitor, said Magistrate Jones, instructed him to ask \$50 appearance bonds on charges of speeding up to 70 m.p.h. and \$100 on charges of speeding more than 70 m.p.h.)

Subsequently, an investigation by the American Automobile Association was made at the doctor's request. The AAA took an effort to get the doctor's letter in chert at the November term of Cherokee County court, in which case the combined fine and costs will be considerably less than the \$100 appearance bond.

In this incident is found again one variation of the "speed trap" technique that has brought such unfavorable and wide-

spread publicity to North Carolina. (The ARKANSAS GAZETTE, for example, also carried a letter from the doctor about the case.)

Officials of the Carolina Motor Club here, who investigate hundreds of such complaints every year, say that in the overwhelming majority of the cases the arresting patrolmen are only doing their job. It becomes a racket at the justice of the peace level. In most cases, the layman pays a stiff fine and costs on the spot. In other cases, the motorist is required to post an appearance bond of a greater amount. In the case of the Little Rock man, it was obviously cheaper in the long run to forfeit the bond than to make a special trip back to North Carolina to stand trial.

Several constructive things could be done to assure fair play for motorists from the state and others. Motor Vehicles Commissioner Ed Scheidt favors a statewide system of traffic courts, which would assess a uniform schedule of fines and costs, thus eliminating the gross variations from county to county. Under such a plan, on the statute books, county commissioners are authorized to limit the number of magistrates and put them on a fixed salary, thus removing the opportunity to pressure jayvees to great proportions.

And wherever there are duly authorized lower courts, highway offenders should be routed to them rather than to magistrates.

North Carolina expects and demands stern enforcement of its highway laws. But penalties should be uniform, and fair, and the profit motive should be removed entirely. Most of the "speed traps" have been cleaned up. The few that remain not only give the state a black eye throughout the nation, but also obstruct the collective conscience of this state.

## ENOUGH OF THESE 'FREE' TONSILLECTOMIES

LAST week the Veterans Administration took a step toward removal of an abuse of veteran privilege. The only trouble is that the VA did not go far enough.

It announced that hereafter veterans who seek treatment for non-service-connected ailments must disclose their financial status.

Heretofore, all they have been required to do is swear that they could not pay for hospitalization. After that, they could get free treatment if there was room in a VA hospital—which there usually was.

And under the new policy they can still get free treatment, even if the financial report indicates that they are millionaires.

The majority of the patients in VA hospitals are there for treatment of non-service-connected ailments. A great many of these patients have plenty of money to

pay their own way. A recent survey by the Government Accounting Office disclosed that a considerable number of them had annual incomes in the \$10,000 bracket. Some made considerably more.

The nation should be required to subsidize tonsillectomies, appendectomies and cold tablets for these men. The VA can make them pay their own way by adoption of the logical next step: denial of free treatment to veterans with non-service-connected disabilities who have adequate income to have their disability treated privately.

This further step will permit substantial reduction in government appropriation. It will increase the demand for VA hospitals and personnel. And it will leave more funds and facilities available for the treatment of those veterans entitled to them, the war-disabled and the destitute.

## NEW TAX APPRAISERS WILL EARN THEIR PAY

COUNTY Attorney Dockery has ruled that the County Commissioners acted improperly Monday when they authorized the employment of four more tax appraisers. So the board will have to make the decision next week with a favorable vote already assured.

The form of the action is not so important. The substance matters a great deal more.

It happened like this: The regular meeting had adjourned Commissioners Lawing and Brown had departed. Commissioner McInch remembered that he had intended to bring up the question of hiring more tax appraisers. So he, Commissioner White, and Chairman McAfee reconvened and approved the transaction. Subsequently Commissioner Lawing gave his approval by telephone. No opposition is expected next week from the fifth

member, Ernest Brown, who has been in favor of the proposal all along.

Currently, Tax Supervisor Rufus Grier has but one team of two appraisers on the job. At the Oct. 30 special meeting of the County Commissioners, the two appraisers said the work had to be heavy that they could not keep up with the listing of the heavy volume of new industrial, commercial, and residential property.

The addition of two more teams of appraisers should enable the tax office to keep up with the backlog and get ahead in the future. It is important to all taxpayers that this be done. Delay in listing new taxable property causes the city and county governments to lose revenue, thus placing an unfair burden on owners of property already listed.

## A NEW KIND OF 'NUMBERS' GAME

WHEN Motor Vehicle Commissioner Ed Scheidt took office in June, he expressed confidence that the North Carolina highway death toll would be reduced—though he said he did not expect it to happen right away.

So far, his confidence seems to have been justified.

When Scheidt took office, the death toll was four above the same date in 1952.

For a few weeks thereafter, it continued to increase, until at one point the 1953 total exceeded the 1952 figure by 20.

Then it leveled off; then it began to curve downward. Yesterday's "Blooded Bore" showed this tabulation:

Killed this year 802  
Killed to date last year 11,044  
Injured this year to Oct. 1 11,044  
Injured last year to Oct. 1 11,072

That is a drop of seven in the death toll, and of 28 of the total of injured. And this decrease has occurred in spite of an increase in travel. Although no current figures are available on total vehicle miles, the state gasoline tax revenue for the first three months of the fiscal year—July, August, and September—was 7.7 per cent ahead of the same three months in 1952.

Hence, you can estimate that the decrease in the death and injured figures

has taken place in spite of an increase in travel of roughly seven per cent.

Commissioner Scheidt's multi-phased attack on the highway accident system, including the building of dual lane highways and downflow intersections, is an important factor.

But it is an indisputable fact that North Carolinians today are more alert to the danger of the highway, and more fully aware of strict enforcement, than ever before.

For this accomplishment, Mr. Scheidt's department deserves most of the credit. And many North Carolinians will join with his statisticians as they play a new "numbers" game—watching the 1953 totals to drop still further.

The game has but one rule. You play it with your fingers crossed.

Pome In Which Reverse Word Is Put On An Old And Accepted Philosophical Tradition.

Constant play and little work. Often makes a guy a jerk—Atlanta Journal.

## Jones Usually Supported President

## Congressmen's Pro-Ke Record

By CONGRESSIONAL QUARTERLY

IF President Eisenhower favors the election of all Republicans wherever they run for office, as Press Secretary James C. Hagerty declared Oct. 29, he will be supporting some GOP Congressmen whose first-session voting records, analyzed by Congressional Quarterly, placed them in the "anti-Eisenhower" camp.

Conversely, Mr. Eisenhower will be asking the electorate to defeat the state and others. Motor Vehicles Commissioner Ed Scheidt favors a statewide system of traffic courts, which would assess a uniform schedule of fines and costs, thus eliminating the gross variations from county to county. Under such a plan, on the statute books, county commissioners are authorized to limit the number of magistrates and put them on a fixed salary, thus removing the opportunity to pressure jayvees to great proportions.

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## The Search For Peace

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## Harry Dexter White Case May

Prove To Be Two Edged Sword

By MARQUIS CHILDS

WASHINGTON

THE attack made by Attorney General Herbert Brownell Jr. on Truman President's secret agent, Harry Dexter White, is a radical reversal of policy. Significantly, as the "White House" was at pains to point out, this was done with the approval of President Eisenhower.

How radical the shift becomes apparent in the light of the previous attitude taken by the administration on the sins of the past. On at least a half dozen occasions, efforts have been made to draw President Eisenhower out of press commitments on blunders of Truman administrations.

Each time he has refused the bait, saying, in effect, that he would not indulge in recriminations over the past. In his response, he implied that the constructive tasks before the new administration and a new political era were important that no time could be wasted in raking up old quarrels and passing out the blame to predecessors.

Reparable errors committed in the pre-Eisenhower era. While the President left the accusations to a subordinate, he nevertheless appears committed to a radically different course from which he will find it difficult to remain permanently detached.

An effort was made to remove the Truman record from the context of the politics of the recent elections by dating the White House on broadcasting the charge prior to the defeat. But it will seem to most to be the beginning of a new political era, presumably the status of limitations would have run.

It is, of course, a precedent. The Democrats ran against Herbert Hoover and the depression and Hoover's administration in his term. This continued long after Hoover was retired to private life. Invoking Hoover's name before a large audience, a Democrat stump speaker could always draw a crowd of thousands.

Brownell, as attorney general, can go again and again into the confidential files of the FBI. He can make these files confidential, withheld even from members of Congress by a Truman order coming from the private office of the executive.

It is the FBI files is the hazard to the privacy of the FBI files. If one attorney general can do this for the confidential files of the FBI, he may think justified by the seriousness of the case, another attorney general may do the same thing with far less justifications.

There were good practical reasons why Truman's FBI files declined to rise to the bait and indulge in recriminations. He needed the votes of Democrats in Congress to get the administration measures opposed by many in his own party. He will need these votes in the future.

What is more, J. Edgar Hoover and McCarthy had smeared the President's name in the past. More than anyone else made him what he is today, Gen. George C. Marshall. And in so doing, he had taken some sideswipes at Eisenhower himself.

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