

The Leviathan And TV's Channel 9

ARTHUR KROCK once called the United States government "the biggest fish in the world." At times it seems to toss and turn, flip and flop, and get as little done as a dyspeptic whale.

An example is the Federal Communications Commission's agonizingly slow, red-tape-ridden procedure in the case of Charlotte's television channel 9. There are three candidates for this particular spot on the band. The first application was filed in 1948. Hearings did not begin until the middle of this year. A recommendation of the final examiner is not expected until next February, or later.

Meanwhile, many thousands of dollars have been spent by applicants in preparing their cases and conducting arguments during the marathon contest to win the channel. Millions more have gone down the drain in 1955. Such a campaign, one authority says, costs as much as it does to run for the Senate in North Carolina.

Naturally, not all this time has been spent in active competition for the rights to channel 9. For several years, no new TV stations went on the air and no new applications were processed because of an FCC freeze.

Tsk, Tsk, This Older Generation

HENRY WARD BEECHER—it is safe, we suppose, after 90 years to invoke his testimony—once declared that "nothing marks the increasing wealth of our times and the growth of the public mind toward refinement more than the demand for books." If that be true, and we are not inclined to dispute it, there is hope for North Carolina. This despite the chorus, in which we sometimes join, lamenting the citizens' reluctance to crack a cover except on lousy and lurid prose.

Public libraries house most of the best and few of the worst books. Their per capita circulation is slowly rising in this state. It was 292 books in the last fiscal year. Almost 12 million books were checked out, an increase of about 11 per cent over the previous year.

Here in Mecklenburg the figure was 3.14 books. But the most interesting aspect of the local situation is the increased circulation in the juvenile department. Here's how it breaks down over a 13-year period:

Year	Children	Adult
1941	138,159	193,067
1942	182,720	190,567
1943	170,285	175,525
1944	190,313	167,423
1945	214,422	170,227
1946	223,323	177,068
1947	228,249	153,103
1948	241,158	153,771
1949	302,650	169,953
1950	340,599	175,594
1951	363,690	202,776
1952	379,123	219,578
1953	386,127	236,832

Thus, over a 13-year period, circulation of children's books almost tripled, while circulation of books in the adult department increased less than 25 per cent. One factor in the increase, particularly in the children's department, was inauguration of bookmobile service, in 1949.

Laugh Harder And Live Longer

ADJUSTING their rose-colored glasses, a particularly jolly group of scientists has finally confirmed what we have suspected all along: Laughter is wonderful medicine. And the bigger the dose, the better the results.

Laughter can even have far-reaching effects on the digestive system, blood pressure and heart, say the experts. For instance, when you laugh the diaphragm is lowered and raised vigorously against the right portion of the heart. "This acts as a direct stimulant to the heart, increasing the heart rate and the heart-beats."

Far-fetched? Not at all. Leading physicians even believe that if people could get off a few more hearty guffaws they would actually laugh off many of their minor physical ailments.

Unlike most wonder drugs, laughter is free, available to everyone, can be taken in any quantity and you don't have to see a specialist for a prescription.

Of course, as Groucho observed, man is the only creature endowed with the power of laughter—and the only one that deserves to be laughed at.

From The Asheville Citizen

THAT SUBJECT IS BOOBY-TRAPPED

OUR WHIMSICAL friend, the CHARLOTTE NEWS, borrowed itself a peck of trouble the other day when it strayed into that mine field of taboos, Santa Claus and Christmas. Briefly, as THE NEWS confessed later, it "pecked a little innocent fun at a mythical department store Santa," who professed to regard most children as unmitigated monsters and who thought of himself as something of an old fraud.

Well, sir, the sky fell in. Habitually gentle old ladies cried a peep on THE NEWS. Men of substance flailed the December air with walking sticks. One part time, semi-pro Santa, speaking for the profession, defended kiddies in general and assailed editors in particular, all in a vehement "dear-sir-you-cud letter."

We could and should have warned THE NEWS to lay off. Even the faintest allusion to the Santa Claus myth is as risky and as profitless as intervening in a dog fight. We found out that out some years ago after writing an editorial about the remarkable dispensation of the Bird machine as to state patronage, captioning the piece, "Yes, Santa Claus, There Is A

People's Platform
Smog, Santa And Salaries

Charlotte
Editors, The News:
FOR awhile there I thought something was going to be done about the smog in Charlotte. There was a lot of talk. The politicians came out with high-sounding statements. The newspapers carried editorials. Well, everybody's had his say. So what happened? Nothing. Not a peep. Not a word. Not a city choked with smog. The same old unhealthy conditions exist. If anything, the smog is worse. It seems to me that a city as big and progressive as Charlotte would get down to business and do something about this situation. What's wrong with the people anyway?
—JOHN G. BIRKS

Charlotte
Editors, The News:
NAME on your After-Printing. A delightful story of the toyland Santa Claus situation you let a lot of humorous complainers broust you into what was almost a retraction. I liked it better the first time. I think the majority of editorial page readers did, too. If this country isn't grown up enough to have a little fun with our institutions I don't know what is going to happen to us. Oh for another H. L. Mencken or Philip Wylie!
—PETE DANIEL

Charlotte
Editors, The News:
IN your "How's Your I.Q.?" of Nov. 29, there is an error. Question 10 asks, "What salary and expense allowance does the President of the United States receive?" The answer is given: "Salary, \$100,000; expense allowance, \$50,000 a year."

"The American System of Government," Ferguson and McHenry, published by McGraw-Hill Book Co. Inc. (New York, 1933), p. 346 states: "The compensation of the President is fixed by Congress... in January 1949 it was raised to \$100,000 and an additional \$50,000 tax-free allowance was provided. Beginning in 1953 the salary was set at \$100,000, fully taxable, and the allowance eliminated."

Has Congress violated the Constitution in changing the President's compensation? Which shall neither be increased nor diminished during the period for which

Ike Gets \$100,000 And Expense Money

Marshallville
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'Hold It, George — We've Decided To Try For A Balanced World'



Drew Pearson's Merry-Go-Round Roy Roberts Case Won't Be Junked

WASHINGTON
WHEN the Kansas City Star and its publisher, Robert H. Ross, were indicted criminally during the closing days of the Truman administration, almost everyone in politics figured this was one indictment which wouldn't last long when the Eisenhower administration took over.

For it was big, burly Roy Roberts who was among the first to urge Ike for President, and who advised with him during the pre-convention Draft-Ike campaign. Furthermore, Roberts, though under indictment, has been a frequent caller at the White House. He has been frequently invited to the intimate staff dinners the President gives to a chosen few.

However, two years have passed and not only has the indictment against the publisher of the Kansas City Star not been dropped, but the Justice Department plans to begin prosecution early next year.

Thereby hangs a significant story. The man now in charge of the Justice Department's antitrust division, Stanley Barnes, a California Republican of the Chief Justice Earl Warren school of politics, has been promoted to be one of the most forthright members of the Eisenhower administration. He has also turned out to be just as tough on big business and on monopoly as any member of the Roosevelt-Truman administration, even perhaps including famed trust-buster, Thurman Arnold.

It's significant that Judge Barnes, a former California state judge, is not playing any political favorites. A close study of the case has convinced him that it was by no means a political indictment brought as a result of rivalry between Harry Truman and Roy Roberts; but rather a bona fide case involving freedom of the press and the right of people in Kansas City to advertise where they please, not where Roy Roberts wanted them to advertise.

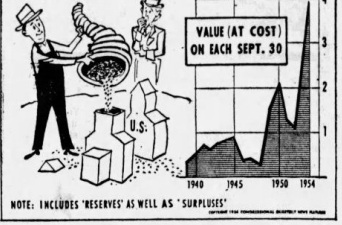
So he's proceeding with the prosecution. White House advisers aren't publishing it, but they have been busy on a new security program which will head off the Democratic probe of the so-called "numbers game."

This is the game in which Vice President Nixon, Attorney General Brownell, and other GOP campaign speakers have claimed Republicans cleaned out Democratic security risks which menaced the government.

The Democrats deny this. And to prove their case, Sen. Olin Johnson of South Carolina, chairman-to-be of the Civil Service Committee, plans a sweeping probe of Republican firings. He believes he can prove that only the security risks were hired by Republicans.

To head off this probe, Eisenhower has referred the whole problem to the National Security Council which has already prepared top secret report No. 5437, which will not be made public for some time. However, it can be revealed that the report recommends giving a far better break to security risks, plus a standard procedure for all government agencies, instead of the hit-and-miss divergent

FEDERAL CROP HOLDINGS



Rigid Price Supports Face Uphill Climb In Congress

WASHINGTON
TALK and tinkering, but no retreating. That's the outlook for farm legislation in 1955, according to agricultural authorities checked by Congressional Quarterly.

Headlines again will spotlight the argument over rigid vs. flexible price supports, but congressional action probably will focus on less dramatic farm issues. Most new farm laws will be designed to old existing machinery. Congress voted last summer for flexible supports to replace rigid supports for five basic crops in 1955. Expiring rigid supports are at 90 per cent of parity. Parity is a formula measuring the purchasing power of farm prices. Flexible supports will range from 82.5 to 90 per cent of parity, depending on whether supplies are short, down when surpluses mount.

NO REVERSAL
Losers of the 1954 contest predict no reversal in 1955. Even at their most optimistic, they express only cautious hope for an upset.

No one doubts that rigid-support legislation will be introduced and hearings held. Sen. Allen J. Ellender Sr. (D-La.), who will become chairman of the Agriculture Committee, told CQ he is on guard to see that the Secretary of Agriculture, Ezra Taft Benson, meets his commitment to keep 1955 supports for all the basics except wheat well above the 82.5 per cent minimum.

Since supports will stay near 90 anyway, Ellender said, he sees no point in pushing rigid supports through Congress only to have a "lot of effort end in failure"—a legislative veto. But he's still for 90 per cent supports and predicts their passage in 1956. Unless Congress acts, the price-support bill will drop to 75 per cent of parity in 1958.

BIDDING TIME
Several key advocates of rigid supports believe wise strategy dictates postponement of an all-out battle until 1956. By then they reason, farmers will feel the impact of lower supports.

But a spokesman for Sen. Herbert H. Humphrey (D-Minn.) contended the Democrats "are morally obligated" to try to repeal flexible supports in 1955. If they don't, he said, they'll lose a "real issue" in the 1956 election. Opposing Senate Agriculture Chairman George D. Aiken (R-Vt.) told CQ the "extremists" were soft in their warnings against flexible supports that they'll have

Substance Before Form The Stevenson Look

By DORIS FLEESON
WASHINGTON
DEMOCRATS decided in New Orleans last week that they were going Adlai Stevenson's way. By an overwhelming vote, two men unknown to the party two years ago have insured the continuity of a national headquarters regime which takes its flavor, its philosophy and its standards of conduct from the 1952 presidential candidate.

That regime will control the national convention machinery in 1956. While no doubt it will be have correctly, as a practical matter Stevenson is his candidate.

NEW LOOK
Here again, as in art, the substance preceded the form. The country looks to Stevenson not just as the titular but as the real leader of the Democratic party. Its new look is a Stevenson look. It is clear now that National Chairman Mitchell was justifiably confident of this when he calmly picked as his successor the newly elected Paul Butler of Indiana.

Mitchell, after two years of tireless travel up and down and across the country, had heard what the grass roots were murmuring.

Butler was not a prestige candidate; he lacked glamour and he had no arc of victory, for Republicans rule his state. He was handicapped by the arm-length dislike of Harry Truman, whose friends Butler had deposited in the Indiana organization.

But Butler had Mitchell and Mitchell had Stevenson. Mitchell put the Stevenson imprimatur on Butler in a masterful strategy based on Mitchell's intimate knowledge of Stevenson's character. Mitchell felt Stevenson would never openly interfere, which he didn't. In the resultant vacuum, the Butler-Mitchell forces remorselessly exploited the Mitchell-Stevenson intimacy.

In so proving that he understood the kind of power, Mitchell demonstrated that he will be around quite awhile.

White House Advisers Also Propose Separating Bona Fide Security Risks From Heavy Drinkers, Now Talkers, and Politicians

White House advisers also propose separating bona fide security risks from heavy drinkers, now talkers, and politicians, hitherto all linked with loyalty cases as security risks.