

THE CHARLOTTE NEWS

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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 16, 1954

Tammany Cooks Spoil The Broth

A GOBLIN labeled "Politics" menaced Charlotte municipal government's personnel policy yesterday. Basil M. Boyd's proposal that the City Council seek legislative authority to appoint all municipal department heads without the informal approval of a thin majority of councilmen. The plan would strip Charlotte's city manager of the right to name 11 key officials who work under him.

It was an open invitation to a system of political appointments in the best Tammany Hall tradition. Because of the peculiarities of the city's charter, the county now names half of the municipal department heads and the city manager the other half. Admittedly, this 50-50 scheme is unsatisfactory. But the solution is not to hand the business of hiring completely over to politicians. It is to give the city manager, the municipality's top administrative officer, full authority in the matter.

The city manager, in turn, is responsible to the council for the efficient operation of the municipal government.

This latter plan is being advanced by Mayor Phil Van Every. The mayor and Councilmen James Smith and Herbert H. Baxter all opposed Mr. Boyd's proposal yesterday but with no success.

It will be a pity if the Boyd plan wins legislative approval. The business of government is carried on by individuals. Good government can only arise from its conduct by able and intelligent personnel, suitably placed in positions appropriate to their ability and so supervised that opportunity for promotion is always present as a stimulus. The one to manage such a system is a man highly trained in such matters, a man superbly equipped to select and direct the best available personnel for highly specialized public jobs. This man is the city manager. A councilman is simply not qualified—nor can he be expected to be qualified. Furthermore, a councilman is subject to all sorts of political motives and pressures.

Under the present form of municipal government, it is the city council is a policymaking body only. As Mayor Van Every has wisely pointed out, it should not be directly concerned with administrative details.

We hope the council majority will reconsider its position on the Boyd proposal before the meeting—later this month—with Mecklenburg's legislative delegation.

Timely Action After Untimely Doubts

"THE time has come," said Herbert H. Baxter, "when this council has got to learn to pick 'em up and put 'em down. We can't go on postponing this forever."

It was 3:45 p.m. in 15 minutes, Charlotte's City Council was to open its public session and consider one of the most important transactions of the year—the transfer of Duke Power Company's bus franchise to City Coach Lines Inc. But not until an informal caucus in the regular meeting, some 1 1/2 hours later, did the council meet to discuss the transfer.

Questions came up about the structure of the purchasing firm and the need for a general revision of the city's franchise. As a possible result of the hearing and final reading of the franchise transfer was frankly discussed.

Mayor Phil Van Every read from the letters of mayors of cities now served by CCL subsidiaries praising the line's operations and service. At the end of the clock touched four, councilmen filed into the public meeting hall—several of them still uncommitted on how they would vote.

By 4:21 p.m. the matter was settled. The approval transfer was unanimous—even after two requests from the audience that action be postponed.

The council's final decision was a practical one. It placed Charlotte's official approval on a plan which very likely will result in better public transportation service for the city and its fringe areas. A remaining step: Approval by the State Utilities Commission.

The questions raised yesterday about the wisdom of going ahead with the final reading of the franchise transfer were

reasonable even though they were poorly timed. Satisfactory answers, however, could be found for each.

For one thing, the quality of service CCL had rendered in other cities—Jacksonville, Fla., Evansville, Ind., Flint, Mich.—was well documented. A careful study was made of the firm's operations and financing. Both the city and the News had queried municipal officials in other CCL cities. In addition, The News received good reports on CCL from the newspapers of Jacksonville, Evansville and Flint.

The question about the nature of the franchise itself was largely academic. At the time a franchise had great significance and great value. It could be sold by a city for money. Today it is nothing more than a license to operate, a permissive letter. The real watchdog agency is no longer the city. It is the State Utilities Commission.

Big Boy Now

CITY COUNCILMEMEN, bolstered by a fresh insight into the problem, warmly endorsed Mayor Phil Van Every's proposal that the city should seek more "home rule" legislation yesterday. Last week, some members had serious doubts that "home rule" had any significance at all.

We are pleased to see a change of heart. All that remains now is to convince legislators that a grown-up city like Charlotte can perform a few simple functions by itself without asking the General Assembly's permission.

'Never Do Today What You Can...'

FRANTIC "mail-now-for-Christmas" appeals from Charlotte's harassed post office remind us of the parting words of Chris Martin, prior to his final retirement in Detroit last December after 41 years as a mail carrier. "Folks were late with their Christmas mailing in 1911, they'll be late this year and I guess they'll be late in 1954."

The problem accents a favorite trait of many a citizen—procrastination—and the sheer futility of attempts to blast it out of anybody's nature. The modern philosophy is, "Never do today what you can put off until tomorrow."

To the Post Office Department it is a costly peculiarity, for late mailings puts extra strain on regular facilities and cripples normal service. The result: Slower deliveries for everyone.

But with most Americans, procrastination has become an art—the art of keeping up with yesterday. It's almost a terrible strain on regular facilities and circles. Being on time is now most "unfashionable."

Unfashionable or not, it's common sense to mail early. Or has common sense been completely discredited in 1954?

FROGS CROAKIN' 'YOU ALL'

FROGS and toads not only converse with one another—they also develop emotional accents.

This pungent declaration, informing us that Dixie toads ululate from the swamps in that old-time Confederate drawl, would have gladdened the heart of Sen. Claghorn. It will be recalled that the senator—a southern statesman sprung full-blown from the imagination of comedian Fred Allen—was, in his college days, voted "the member of the senior class most likely to succede," and was graduated "magnolia cup laude."

The above-mentioned scientific findings concerning frog and toad accents come from a scientist. He recently divulged these arresting thoughts to the American Institute of Biological Scientists in convention assembled at the University of Florida.

In other words, when a tall, leaping amphibian of the genus "Rana" desires to chat with a tall, leaping amphibian of the genus "Bufo," in the Okefenokee Swamp, the accents are those of Dixie, "cris" with "You-alls." No rolling of "r's," no sounding of final "g's" in such a conversation. If the shade of Gen'l Beauregard or Gen'l Forrest should happen along, he would doubtless conclude that he was in the middle of his own regiment.

For a girl to get into TV she must know somebody or have some body.—GRAYSON (Ky.) JOURNAL-ENQUIRER.

Situation In Indochina Remindful Of China Debacle

By JOSEPH ALSEP

HERE IN SAIGON, Viet Nam, the surface of life is immensely pleasing, the memory of the end of Free China comes back like a recurring nightmare.

Once again an American general—this time Lawton Collins—has a big part to play. Gen. Collins' directive, no doubt, shows considerably more political realism than the directive James F. Byrnes gave Gen. George C. Marshall; but that may not help greatly in the end.

For once again the effort to find a solution is complicated—to put it very mildly—by the personal ambitions and intrigues of the politicians on the scene. It is never easy, apparently, for people to

remember that their private motives are not the same as those of the nation when the enemy is at the gates. U. S. HELPED DIEM Because of this all too common failure of memory, and also because of a certain naïveté in past American policy making, there has been a serious crisis here in the last week. Our naïveté consisted in giving all-out support to President Ngo Dinh Diem without any very clear idea of what he would do with his power when he achieved it.

More than once, the American embassy intervened to prevent President Diem from being physically ejected from the leadership on South Viet Nam during his quarrel with Gen. Nguyen Van Hinh and the Vietnamese army.

The idea seems to have been that if only Gen. Hinh could get out of the way, all would automatically be well. Similar illusions used to be cherished in somewhat similar circumstances in Chungking.

The reasons for the American position in Indochina were good. He is scrupulously honest. He is extremely courageous. He is too stout a nationalist to be regarded as a French puppet, which is a fatal label here nowadays.

Unfortunately, however, President Diem, although a devout Christian, takes his political ideas from the ancient maxim of Confucius: "To put the country in order, the Son of Heaven needs only to have a pure heart and to sit facing south." The rapid Communist penetration of South Viet Nam seems to trouble him very little.

In addition, President Diem is chiefly influenced by his own family, who largely compose the government, and he is particularly influenced by his mother, Mrs. Dinh Nhu, and the tigerish Madame Ngo Dinh Nhu, who is in turn the Vietnamese ambassador in Washington and the niece of the foreign minister.

When the quarrel with Gen. Hinh was finally ended by Gen. Hinh's removal from the army leadership, the Americans here, and even the less optimistic French, naturally supposed that President Diem would immediately establish a strong and efficient government. Above all, that most intimate collaboration was needed between the civil authorities and the Vietnamese army, which was the serious instrument of order, the Son of Heaven needs only to have a pure heart and to sit facing south.

The Vietnamese step was to replace Gen. Hinh with Gen. Nguyen Van Vy, a combat soldier who enjoys even greater confidence in the army than Gen. Hinh. But President Diem and his brother and sister-in-law wanted, above all, personal power over the army.

They there insisted on naming a junior officer with no real strength, Gen. Le Van Ty, as chief of staff of an army already widely disorganized and on the threshold of rebellion. The dislike of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek and Madame Chiang for the capable and brave Gen. Chen Cheng, and his clinging to their creature, Gen. Ho Ying-chin, were in short reproduced here on a small scale, but in even more urgent circumstances.

An immediate result has been the crisis above noted, in the course of which Gen. Collins and the wise French commander Gen. Ely have worked together intently

to save the day. It is known that Gen. Collins has some very hard words to President Diem. The outcome, as these words are written, seems to be a compromise.

President Diem's favorite, Gen. Ty, will become chief of staff; but the responsibility of troop command will go to Gen. Vy, and the brave and efficient Phan Huy Quat will be named minister of defense. The theory is that this combination will be so reminiscent of the political contraptions put together in Chungking and Nanking, will somehow work to save the day.

Maybe the contraption really will work, or a better substitute will be devised. Gen. Collins is doing his quite remarkable best. So is Gen. Ely. And among the Vietnamese leaders men of courage and foresight are by no means lacking.

It is already time to prepare for the possible shocks at the future. Gen. Marshall was sent to China to arrange a coalition government because this seemed, at the time, the best and cheapest—above all the cheapest—way out of a bad business. Gen. Collins has been sent to glue something together here for the same reasons. To be sure, coalition government would not have averted the loss of China, whereas Gen. Collins' success can avert the loss of the rest of Indochina. Yet the motives of his mission still limit his effort.

Commercializing Christmas

Tin Pan Alley Trash

By LARRY HIRSCH

In The Florida Times-Union

LAST year, at Christmastide Mommy tussed Santa Claus. This year she has enticed him into doing the mambo. Next year? Let us hope that they mount Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer together, ride off into a Winter Wonderland, and are never heard of again.

We have an idea they may end up in the special kind of purgatory which surely must be reserved for their creators—the popular song writers who have taken it upon themselves to revise legend and myth and religion in order to cop a quick profit at the music counter. This purgatory undoubtedly consists of a 30-day White Christmas, celebrated every hour on the hour in the Chapel in the Moonlight. And the Cry in the Chapel must be very loud, indeed, I believe.

There is a saying that nothing succeeds like success, and it is on this principle that the tinies are achieving a parasitical livelihood. Santa Claus and Jesus Christ have been successful for centuries on their own original merits because they fill a basic need of the human spirit. Clement Moore finally set down, once and for all time, the truth of the legend of Santa Claus in "A Visit From St. Nicholas." Similarly,

controlled all the factors involved, and successfully avoided involving in any wishful theory." So does a newcomer to Tin Pan Alley explain his success.

The handout, in great detail, explains how Guy Singer recognized the commercial possibilities of Ruth's story in song form and then, with all the emog of an electronic brain, calculated exactly how to compose the piece through his "technological approach to music."

"A true engineer, Guy Singer is quick to make it clear that his formula thus far offers no conclusions. As an astronomical engineer, I know there's always a faster plane on the drawing board than there is on the assembly line," he declared. "Who knows? Maybe my next composition will break the sound barrier."

To this, the publisher adds, "Who cares—so long as it breaks into the best-seller list, like 'Whiter Thou Goest'?" "You're right," Publisher Who cares? Your boys broke the sound barrier long ago. Now, may we have a little quiet? Just one small Silent Night?"



1954, The Register and Tribune Syndicate

Drew Pearson's Merry-Go-Round

WASHINGTON PRESIDENT EISENHOWER has made one important concession to military advisers. He has agreed to let him take strong steps in China. These military men are chiefly Adm. Arthur Radford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Gen. James Van Fleet, the Korea commander whose letter on troop-tripping contributed to Ike's election.

What the President has agreed to is the use of the U. S. Navy to seize Red Chinese merchant vessels—if the United Nations fails in its attempt to free the 11 American airmen and two American civilians.

Eisenhower's concession on this point came only after a long and heated debate at the White House. During most of these debates the President leaned over backward against his military advisers.

The man who chiefly backed him up was Gen. Matt Ridgway, Army chief of staff, who has so emphatically disagreed with Eisenhower on reducing the strength of the armed forces that he will probably be retired on his birthday in March. But on the question of getting bogged down in a possible war in China, the two spoke the same language.

Easy To Seize Reds

Radford, therefore, was able to talk Eisenhower into a promise that the U. S. Navy would be used to seize Communist China shipping—if the U. N. negotiations break down. He did this in part by showing how easy it has been for U. S. ships to capture Red Chinese shipping in the Formosa Straits.

Red shipping has to pass through the relatively narrow waters between the Chinese mainland and Chiang's Formosa, where it is easy for Chiang to lay in wait and pick off ships almost at will.

Thus, without a blockade, Red China would not be able to communicate between the vitally important seaports of Peking and Shanghai. The U. N. mission would be of little use if the Red China Navy would not be necessary.

Washington Pipeline

The State Department has drawn up a secret list of 526 missing Americans—472 in Formosa, 48 in Japan, and 6 disappeared behind the bamboo curtain.

People's Platform

Please keep letters brief, and give name and address. Names may be withheld. The News reserves the right to condense.

How Long Will UA Drive Be Extended?

Charlotte, N.C. Sincerely, Mrs. Robert S. Willcox

Don't Forget What Christmas Is For

Charlotte, N.C. I'm a few days late in celebrating my Saviour's birthday. Many will go home to be with family on a most joyous day and never give the honor of our Saviour a thought.

But as the day draws near my thoughts turn to a Saviour who was born on that day — one who carried a cross and was nailed to it on a hill far away and who died for the sins of the world and drank or cursed on that day for fear that something would happen to end the precious life of Jesus Christ. We are all here when we love everybody and live a Christian life when Christmas comes we will be happy, and as Christmas draws near we can bow our heads and thank God for all His blessings and live closer to God than we do now. We all need Him more than He needs us and one knows when He will call.

Tubs Vs. Showers

From The Greensboro Daily News

THE EFFECT on civilization of the electric razor may be something to ponder.

Here's an example of what we mean. Sir Anthony Eden accomplished what our John Foster Dulles called a "diplomatic miracle" by offering to pledge 400 British divisions to the defense of the European continent. With this offer France dropped its opposition to German rearmament.

A real European defense was Eden's explanation for his idea was this: "I just decided it made good sense one morning in the bath. My wife's hair was being washed by the slow scrape of a safety razor or the soapy warmth of a tub bath.

The question is: Would Sir Anthony have struck on his plan while standing under a stinging shower? Would the idea have been electric the whir of an electric razor?"

Understand, we are not being old-fashioned. We doubt that anybody conceived of any really good ideas while jammed in a tin wash tub with the rest of the family standing in line for their Saturday night shave. And we suspect that shaving with an old-time straight razor demanded all of one's attention to avoid a sliced throat.

It's the safety razor and the slow bath that we champion. While admitting that we may be committing the logical error of arguing on a post hoc basis, we point out that civilization has made amazing advances since the invention of the safety razor.

We point also to the accompanying, and we believe, concomitant rise in the use of bathtubs and showers on a post hoc basis.

But let us not labor the issue. It lies too close to us for even a man like Iovine to pass upon with the proper perspective.

Perhaps we shall be vindicated by the fact that Iovine has been electric the whir of an electric razor, picks up the remains of an electric razor and a shower nozzle and says: "The decline began with these."

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