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Political Chills And Fever For North Carolina's 1955 Legislature

NORTH CAROLINA'S 1955 General Assembly will be rapped to order next month in an atmosphere of urgency. Seldom has a Tar Heel legislature been confronted with such momentous decisions, such notable challenges. It will be a year of portent or promise—depending on the use state representatives and senators make of the next few months.

Official Raleigh lives today in a state of political malaria in which alternating moods of hope and apprehension—about segregation, about fiscal affairs, about state government reorganization—take the place of physical chills and fever. This feeling penetrates every scrap of news that comes out of the capital. The sudden change in governors—from an "old pro" to an "eager amateur"—has only served to increase the tension.

Against this psychological backdrop, the 1955 General Assembly should find more to do and talk about than any legislature in years. Instead of the political soda pop of past sessions, Tar Heel lawmakers will be tasting the raw whiskey of one major issue after another.

Whether any action can be taken on segregation is doubtful. But it will certainly be discussed—backstage and on the floors of both houses. It is to be hoped, however, that this issue will not become the tail that wags the dog during 1955.

The state's financial predicament is another matter entirely. It must receive the serious attention of every legislator. If North Carolina's delicate tax balance is destroyed, irreparable damage could be done to the state's economy. Still, some adjustments will be necessary—together with cost-cutting along the line. We have suggested that the General Assembly look into the possibility of abolishing most of its sales tax exemptions—a move which would bring up to an estimated \$36 million dollars a year in extra revenue.

Bound up in the financial puzzle are North Carolina's highway and school needs—discussed in detail this week on the News' editorial page. Neither problem can be neglected if North Carolina is to move ahead into a new era of progress.

A great number of other important items need legislative attention. The highfisted, thoroughly undemocratic "secrecy law" should be junked. It is utterly contrary to the interests of a free people.

The legislature should yield to the will of the people and to the dictates of the constitution by redistricting the state according to population for election of senators. The defeat of Amendment Three on Nov. 2 was a clear and unmistakable sign that Tar Heel citizens want no part of minority rule.

3—North Carolina's woefully inadequate workmen's compensation law should be revised to provide adequate benefits for injured workers and their families.

4—The coroner system is plagued by vague laws and absence of professional standards. About four-fifths of the 100 coroners in the state are not doctors. Because the coroner is a constitutional officer professional standards cannot be set for the job without amending the constitution, a long and laborious process.

Worse Than Cutting His Tongue Out

DEMOCRATIC Rep. Madden of Indiana had a maddening idea. He wants to cut out oratory at political conventions. He would have had two speeches and devote the rest of the time to "forum discussions of the major issues."

"Thunderer! There, if I ever saw one, is a dastardly Yankee Yank. Turk attempt to deprive the South of some of her most glorious moments. It's a sneaking attempt by Junior Roosevelt, Walter Reuther and the whole cabal to

The best answer appears to be adoption of the medical examiner system used in several states. Competent examiners (probably but not necessarily doctors) would handle the medicolegal work, and refer special cases to a pathologist. The coroner would handle routine work. Possibly, in due time, the office of coroner could be abolished through constitutional amendment.

5—A minimum wage law should be passed to help North Carolina out of its disgraceful position (44th) on the national yardstick of per capita income. An Unstead-backed bill setting a minimum of 55 cents an hour or \$30 a week (with many exemptions) got past a barricade of reactionary foes in the Senate last session but a House committee stopped it short.

6—The prison division should be separated from the state highway department to provide a more satisfactory penal system—along with greater economy and efficiency.

7—The prison system should also be improved to provide better care for mentally deranged prisoners and a more satisfactory system of rehabilitation.

8—A car inspection law should be enacted to promote greater safety on Tar Heel highways.

9—Election laws should be reformed, abolishing the troublesome absentee ballot for civilians.

10—The legal puzzle over an officer's power to arrest a drunk without a warrant should be cleared up—to meet the minimum requirements of public safety and security.

11—New legislation should be enacted providing adequate regulation of the practices of small loan companies.

12—North Carolina's congressional and judicial districts should be rearranged to remove some of the most ridiculous gerrymandering in the history of American politics. Judicial redistricting is needed, also, to provide more judicial manpower on a uniform basis for a growing state and to provide an adequate number of courts for counties with congested dockets.

13—The legislature should study the advisability of establishing a North Carolina Water Authority to meet the threat of diminishing water resources.

14—A greater degree of home rule should be permitted North Carolina counties, cities and towns.

15—A state urban redevelopment law should be enacted that is strong enough to enable cities to condemn and redevelop blighted areas.

16—A 1949 law permitting 29 North Carolina counties to limit the number of justices of the peace and place them on a straight salary should be made statewide—and should be implemented on the local level. This might prevent the "bribe" system in the crude and imperfect jaypee system.

These are but a few of North Carolina's pressing needs. They are outlined here for the scrutiny of the general public and Mecklenburg's legislative delegation. We have already drawn up a program of local legislation for the city and county (News, Nov. 22). We may add to both lists from time to time.

The tasks ahead are large. Tar Heels will need vision as well as energy to master them.

KISSING ROOM

of kissing that takes place at the gates. Imagine a fellow saying to his girl, "let's go into the kissing room." Out the window goes all spontaneity and romance.

Says the girl, "What's the matter? Ashamed to be seen kissing me?" So they would separate mad instead of sweetly sad. And the kissing room would have to see your ticket before going in the room. Be sure this was really good. Also some method would have to be found to put time limit on goodbyes, or you would have potential travelers on the 11:30 p.m. starting to say goodbye at 6 p.m.

The fellow has wonderful intentions, but it won't work.

The fellow at the next desk says if he ever moves into a new subdivision he'll insist that the street he lives on be called Skiss Row. The address, he figures, would automatically cause him to be dropped off about 1,000 mailing lists—RICHMOND TIMES-DISPATCH.

'It Needs Something At The Bottom'



Enterprising Reporters Criticized News Suppression Increasing

By MARQUIS CHILDS

AMONG Washington reporters in a growing concern over what appears to be a concerted effort to suppress legitimate news and with a system of rewards and punishments to see to it that only news which is favorable or reported in a favorable light gets to the public.

Partly this is a carry-over from the big and little wars of the past 15 years when propaganda was an instrument of warfare. Partly it reflects the tensions of the cold war and the continuing struggle with Communist imperialism. It also reflects also the general climate of caution and conformity evidenced by the orders issued at West Point and Annapolis forbidding debating teams from the academy to engage in the subject of recognition of Red China.

THE CHAIRMAN: Were his views in line with our foreign policy at the time?

SEN. JOHNSTON: I would say "no." It was a very harmful criticism which he made of our efforts in Greece. He particularly entered the guerrilla, territory through Yugoslavia and spent some time with the Communist guerrillas in Northern Greece and eventually came through the lines and surrendered to an American advisory group with a Greek

national unit. I thought the whole episode was wrong. SEN. JOHNSTON: Was he ever tried? SEN. VAN FLEET: No, he was not. He wrote quite a story about his experiences. SEN. JOHNSTON: Who had the authority to try him at that time? SEN. VAN FLEET: I do not suppose anybody had unless it would be this committee, with new legislation.

Bugart's stories were an effort to present the true picture behind the Communist line. He had obtained his factual material at considerable risk and at the cost of no little hardship.

ABLE American correspondents abroad have consistently tried to report the facts as they are when visiting diplomats and generals with extraordinary authority were putting out an official "line." One of these is Keyes Beech of the Chicago Daily News, whose recently published book, "Tokyo and Beijing," tells of the remarkable propaganda machine that functioned for Gen. Douglas MacArthur both during the war in the Pacific and later in the occupation of Japan.

Any correspondent who dared criticize MacArthur or his works," Beech writes, "and the correspondents were the only people in Japan free to criticize, was called a 'petty carter' or something worse. I was often called something worse."

The attitude in Washington, as working reporters see it, is to keep back news even if it is in our best interest. This is not in itself new, but the effort seems to be to clamp the lid tighter and ever before in peacetime.

When this is cracked, as in Chairman Robert's story in the Washington Post and Times Herald telling how President Eisenhower ordered that the National Security Council decision to forbid bombing of the China mainland, there is wide-spread consternation and an effort to clamp the lid all the more tightly.

This Is Free Enterprise?

From The Carolina Israelite

WHAT'S happened to Free Enterprise and Moral Fiber? Some of the southern states are going all-out in their "hand-out" along the lines of the welfare state, creeping socialism, and all that stuff. The result will be that we will raise a generation of southern manufacturers without moral fiber.

Drew Pearson's Merry-Go-Round

THE more you study what went on behind the scenes in the McCarthy debate the more you reach the unfortunate conclusion that it resembled what took place in prewar Germany. And the better it is to have a democracy.

A Verdict On McCarthy: He's Nation's No. 1 Bore

By DORIS FLEESON

WASHINGTON THE pro-McCarthy rally in New York's Madison Square Garden laid an egg. The famous hall which the Communists have never had a trouble filling since they were expelled from the program was bereft of drama.

Even anti-McCarthy New Yorkers seem aggrieved over what a good theater. Also, Monday night's show was free and well-advertised.

It is possible that the McCarthyites who staged it, being amateurs, made some mistakes. Any politician knows that if you want to fill a hall seating 20,000, you distribute 50,000 tickets. The retired admirals and generals who ran the rally talked in terms of 20,000 tickets and then fatally announced all had been taken.

Even so, no cause has ever had the benefit of so much free advertising. When the Garden flop is added to the fact that similar rallies announced for Chicago and Los Angeles were canceled, it is necessarily significant.

It supports the conviction of many Washington correspondents including this one that McCarthy is well on his way to becoming the nation's No. 1 bore.

McCarthy himself, who has always been shrewd politically, slugged the Garden rally and Monday morning was moving in the Senate to cut his losses. He knew he would be censured in some form and wanted to get it done quickly so he can play the prejudiced martyr. Actually he

preferred an immediate vote on the Flinders resolution of last summer, to move the Senate leaders foiled in obedience to their own excellent political instincts. McCarthy's big trouble is that, like Communist spokesmen whose tactics he so often imitates, he is fresh out of the follow-travelers who are always essentially to the success of his operations.

His respectable facade has faded away in the wake of his wrecked President Eisenhower, his conduct in the televised hearings before the Mundt committee and the report of the historical Watkins committee re-examining his tenure.

Even IKE, ONCE. In that facade were conservative, both Democratic and Republican, who would walk across the bridge with a devil to stop the New Deal. It included Republicans who felt any method of defeating Harry Truman was fair and Democrats almost as angry at the former President. Once it even included President Eisenhower's own candidates who identified his success with the safety of the country.

It included Vice President Nixon who did his best to achieve a modus vivendi between Ike and the White House. McCarthy also attracted many decent people who had come to fear Communist infiltration in the government and the army.

McCarthy following now consists chiefly of malcontents and people once in power who no longer have anyone to order around plus a crowd of the inevitable lunatic fringe. Those who sincerely followed him as an important anti-Communist force will stick to other leaders.

Remington, Dead, Luckier Than Alger Hiss Is Alive

By ROBERT C. RUARK

IN an odd way, it seems to me that perhaps the late William Remington, beaten to death in prison the other day by fellow convicts, experienced a kinder fate than the one which awaits his associate in prison, Alger Hiss, who was sprung Saturday.

Both men were sent to the same jailhouse for lying about secret-passing to a Russian spy ring. Remington's troubles are at least terminated, his punishment finished, Hiss's troubles are just beginning. He is free—but only in a sense, and without

man of sensitivity and high intelligence. A man convicted of perjury, which was tantamount to treason, even for the scorn of the public, and then surrounded by vandals with whom he was cooped in the pen. His associate, William Remington, was beaten to death while in prison—although I have a hunch the evidence will show something more basic as a motive than outright malice.

If Hiss were an ordinary crook, he would find comfort in the society of his own kind around plus of course, the camaraderie of the prison. Thieves and murderers and racketeers have their own solid fraternities, their own rough chivalries toward one another. The fresh-sprung hood is given a party and his buddies welcome him with food and drink and comfort and dough, if he needs it.

But the only companions-in-crime that Hiss may meet would be his Communist friends, and these he will certainly receive no aid or comfort as a liability to their own status. His so-called liberal friends may remember that Hiss was once a member of the Democratic Party when Acheson refused to turn his back on Hiss.

ALGER HISS SURVEILLANCE SURE The old gang in the tweed-suit and lofty-thought fraternity is not apt to welcome their hero around plus of course, the camaraderie of the prison. Thieves and murderers and racketeers have their own solid fraternities, their own rough chivalries toward one another. The fresh-sprung hood is given a party and his buddies welcome him with food and drink and comfort and dough, if he needs it.

As a felon, Hiss cannot practice law and he is a lawyer. He cannot hold a government job, and he was a career government man. He cannot vote. He cannot hold a country to start afresh elsewhere, for he may not be issued a passport. He was to have received a pension at 62; that pension has been canceled.

The scorn of strangers is a fearful thing, and it is likely that Hiss will spend a great deal of his time, if he walks abroad in public, closing his ears to rude remarks and the importuning of strangers. If he stops in a bar for a beer there always will be some drunk to challenge him, some person to insult him.

I can think of no more fearful pattern for the future for a man of Hiss' stature. I confess I feel a little sorry for Hiss, the man, as he steps into the world again as an exile: Hiss, the adviser to presidents and the haughty career man. To be a man without a country is a dreadful thing, and I think William Remington was lucky when they socked him on the head.