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General Assembly Faces Invisible Barriers Of Timidity And Orthodoxy

THE Pied Pipers of politics whistled a fractured melody today for 170 Tar Heel legislators. Representatives and senators filed into Raleigh from every corner of the state from what one newsman has extravagantly called "the most far-reaching decisions since Reconstruction." After a round of heavy handshakes and the whole state watching and waiting, they will take their seats tomorrow to hear Secretary of State Thad Eure pound the 1955 General Assembly to order.

The opening ceremony will be an arguery of political trials and tribulations. Like dark clouds marking time, the 1955 segregation question, assorted fiscal woes, the insistent demand for redistricting, the proposed governmental reforms.

Almost everybody admits that challenges confronting this year's legislature are great. But anyone who believes the 1955 General Assembly will phrase a clear-cut, positive answer to each of these challenges is politically naive. The invisible barriers of timidity, orthodoxy and backstairs influence are too great. The sectional particularisms and inbred prejudices are too intense.

The best North Carolina can hope for is that the compelling pressures of public opinion, economic necessity and something called kismet will produce a measure of progress.

While action on some issues will be postponed, action on others will be unavoidable. Take the state's financial plight, for instance. During the biennium ending June 30, the state will spend about \$30 million more than it will collect. And general fund requests are bigger than ever.

New taxation seems inevitable for we do not foresee any wholesale slashing of governmental services. By tightening up on sales tax exemptions the state could raise many millions in extra revenue and we hope this technique will receive the due consideration of legislators.

Segregation will be the subject of much talk and little real action—unless the Supreme Court should issue its timetable considerably. Sen. Luther Barnhardt of Concord, who will probably preside over the Senate, has said it would be "leaping in the dark" to take any formal action before the final decree is handed down. He is absolutely right. Since the court has not yet held its hearings on implementation of the 1954 decision, those decrees probably will not be issued before the 1955 session is over.

The legislature can and should do something about another problem, however. North Carolina's highway deficiencies need to be corrected at once. But where can the money be found? Tax reforms and/or bond issues are solutions suggested by a New York firm of consulting engineers. A combination of the two offer the best possibilities.

Separation of the prison system from the highway department will probably have to wait. The move is badly needed, but Gov. Hodges, who favors separation in principle, wants a delay until studies of the cost involved can be made. This aspect of the problem should have been

explored before now but apparently it has received no serious attention. The rural bloc will again be lined up against redistricting for Senate seats and representation of the House on the basis of 1950 census figures. Both the 1951 and 1953 sessions ignored the clear mandate of the state constitution to take care of these matters. (Under equitable redistricting, both Mecklenburg and Guilford counties would be entitled to an additional senator.) Another rough and tumble legislative battle is in prospect—with the outcome shrouded in doubt.

Judicial redistricting—one of 1953's major arguments—will be hotly contested again. Powerful forces will also oppose the fairly mild proposals for reorganization of the state government, since it is bureaucracy's natural inclination to resist change of any kind.

It seems that no legislature can meet without at least one move to call a statewide liquor referendum. There is little expectation that dry forces will be any more successful this year than they have been in the past—with or without Gov. Hodges' help.

Legislation is certain to be introduced for the preservation of North Carolina's dwindling water resources but it will get a suspicious going-over from industry in general and the power companies in particular. Early debate is expected on whether to repeal an act passed two years ago permitting secret committee sessions on appropriations. Already there is talk of a compromise. But Holt McPherson of High Point, president of the North Carolina Press Association, stressed recently that "repeal of the 'Secrecy Law' is our concern but it is rightly the people's fight." We have neither the legal nor moral right to compromise the people's right to know what their legislators are doing. We must report honestly developments, and the really smart public officials on every level—must want to conduct the public's business right out in the open.

The fight will undoubtedly be long and loud. We earnestly hope that, in the end, the people's right to know will be upheld. Mechanical inspection of motor vehicles will be proposed again and again meet sturdy opposition. A compulsory inspection law got on the books in 1947 and got right off again in 1949 after much pressure from an irked public. Motor Vehicles Commissioner Ed Scheidt's new plan deserves the sympathetic scrutiny of 1955 legislators.

A minimum wage law is one of North Carolina's major needs. It is still viewed with alarm in many legislative quarters. It will be proposed again, however, and we wish it well.

Revision of the coroner system, election law changes, a general tightening up on appropriations, and measures for health and accident insurance in the state will also be proposed—and will have to scale a variety of political roadblocks.

While the state's needs are great, if the legislature is to meet those needs it will have to consider them in the cold, clear light of their essential value and draft solutions which sacrifice nothing to the private whims of special interests.

Logmas About Desegregation Exploded In Washington

By DOUGLAS CATER
In The Reporter

SPOTSWOOD Thomas Bolling Jr., a shy 35-year-old Negro boy, has been cast in the role of a modern Moses. His name will go down in history books as the plaintiff in Bolling vs. Sharpe, one of the school segregation cases decided in May by the Supreme Court.

CONVINCED OF SUCCESS

As if made the rounds of various schools, I found no student grading acceptance of an edict handed down from on high; in instance after instance, I found a conviction that the new program was working. In some cases the conviction was expressed as a sense of relief—things weren't as bad as had been expected, in others as a genuine elation over the progress that was being made toward the eradication of the deplorable conditions of public education.

NO RACE RECORDS

Perhaps the most substantial and widespread criticism of the new Negro teacher for 500 Negroes. (This has one such teacher for 490 New Jersey one in about 420. The South has one Negro in five inhabitants; New England has only one in 65.)

Look At Those Motes In The Yankee's Eyes

WAS IN 1949 that Zebulon Vance appealed for federal aid in finding work for Negroes in the North. He was replying to a vicious attack by a Kansas senator. That year Kansas' most famous citizen was born. What have he and his done to aid Vance's ideal? Permit the airing of a few slight statistics.

In the South one teacher in 72 is a Negro, shamefully below the population rights of the Negro.

The South employs one Negro teacher only for every 300 Negroes living there!

Massachusetts has perhaps the poorest record. Only one Negro teacher to 265 Negro inhabitants. Yet this state has been held up by the NAACP as a racial Utopia.

California, lauded as the southern justice, is a city

apart. In a purely negative way, the absence of self-government in the District made the formal act of abolishing the dual school system considerably easier than it might have been otherwise. Since local resistance groups could not generate effective pressures, there is more to the story than that.

During the October troubles, but except for Washington's own newspapers, the story of what was happening to the 54,000 youngsters, their parents, and their teachers has been largely ignored. Ironically, even some of the participants, conditioned to the traditional concepts of news, do not seem to realize how big the story actually is. As Miss Mildred Green, principal of the Raymond Elementary School, with 390 Negro and 140 white students, has insisted, "There is nothing to tell. From the very first day of school we have been so busy with education that we haven't had time to think of what has happened."

She reports that the very young, as might be expected, have adapted to change easily. They seem, in fact, to be almost unaware of racial differences. One teacher reports that one day a little Negro girl was chosen by her classmates to be Goldilocks in a classroom play. Her classmates, too, have made their adjustments.

Perhaps the most important and widespread criticism of the new Negro teacher for 500 Negroes. (This has one such teacher for 490 New Jersey one in about 420. The South has one Negro in five inhabitants; New England has only one in 65.)

regard program is that it has been operated with too little regard for particular conditions that are peculiar to certain neighborhoods. In its zeal to do away with its barriers, the Board of Education voted at first to keep no record of a student's race. This rule has been temporarily eliminated so that there can be some record of the progress that is being made.

It is a complete disregard of the racial factor has resulted in situations in which one or two white children were dropped into an all-Negro school, and vice versa. A bi-racial "review" committee set up by the Superintendent of Education to hear complaints was expressly instructed to refuse requests for transfers from one school to another made by members of the Board of Education, wondering if this isn't turning a sound principle into a catch.

Is the environment of the so-called fringe school, in which one Negro child is placed, any better than the other, a healthy or necessary part of racial equality? So far the Washington experiment has shown no adjustments but no definite answer.

The review committee, however, has heard more than seventy requests for transfers. It has been able to comply with a minority of them. Miss Margaret Pepper, a superintendent's executive assistant, feels that in this way the real cause of maladjustments have been taken care of adequately.

HOW THEY GOT READY In assessing the factors that have made the program a success, its sponsors point primarily to their foresight. Two years ago, School Superintendent Corning, at the direction of the Board of Education, requested interested citizens' groups to suggest ways and means to knock down the racial barriers if ordered to by the Superintendent. Seminars were held with outside experts to guide teachers and administrators. A handbook "Intergroup Education" was prepared. Two days after the Su-

preme Court handed down its decision on May 17, the Board of Education set up a special committee to draft guiding principles for the change-over. Less than a week later, the Commission issued a sweeping mandate for merging both students and teachers. Superintendent Corning outlined a plan of action. Briefly, Dr. Corning's plan establishes new school boundaries without regard to race that will apply to successively broader categories of students until the program is completed in September, 1955.

In late June, Dr. Corning announced the list of schools that would be affected in the fall. There was none of the uncertainty and indecisiveness that aggravated the situation in Milford, Delaware. Families unwilling to make arrangements for private schooling or to move elsewhere, Walter N. Taberner, a member of the Board of Education who was chairman of the special committee to draft the desegregation plan, argued as follows: "People adjust better to a situation in which they find themselves than toward a situation lying before them."

TEACHERS COOPERATED

Perhaps the most important factor of all, however, has been the unreserved cooperation of the teachers. One teacher reported a single instance in which a teacher's behavior has undermined stability. When the teachers experienced qualms, as many of them undoubtedly did at times, they kept it to themselves.

When the program by those in responsible positions applied all the way up to the President, who on the day after the Supreme Court decision expressed his hope that Washington would move swiftly to carry out the Supreme Court's mandate for the rest of the nation. Since then, he has publicly announced his pleasure at the way the program has succeeded.

TELEVISION IS CHANGING WAYS OF PLAYING POLITICS By DORIS FLEESON

WASHINGTON TELEVISION IS GOING to be not only an educational but a reforming medium, at least in the world of politics.

John F. Kennedy's election as President, the downfall of Sen. McCarthy by the opinion of professional politicians is that it has not only changed the way in which politics is accomplished in a disorderly television hearing before the Mundt committee. This lesson is now being learned in the national committee of both parties.

Both national chairman are for the first time making an early and rational start on the arrangements for their 1956 conventions. So far they are acting speedily about the impression around both headquarters is that the all-around economy and efficiency which would result from holding both conventions in the same city will compel a bipartisan cooperation in this field.

Democrats listened to their TV experts at their recent New Orleans meeting and got started on a 1956 set of rules. Significantly, Sen. Mike Mansfield, who was chairman to work for Adlai Stevenson's nomination for President, retained the chairmanship of the rules committee.

GOP National Chairman Leonard Hall similarly retained the chairmanship of the convention site committee named from the national committee ranks. He has called a meeting for Jan. 8 to discuss convention preliminaries and problems.

Hall anticipates a call of the national committee a month or so later to discuss the site committee's recommendations. He naturally does not say so but the probability is that the meeting will afford a stage for a good deal of "draft Eisenhower" drumbeating. The politicians are clerical with the President at a rapid accelerating rate, since prac-

tically all of them but the exception are going to be as naturally most negotiable asset. It will be interesting to see what effect the inexorable flow of television news production on the uniquely American spectacle of the Presidential nomination. Like the parties which hold them, they just grew and were not contemplated by the founders of the republic. Some experts view them as the only national franchise the present major parties enjoy, in that they exceed the area the parties are loose coalitions expressing special and sectional interests.

As the country has grown, the great quadrennial spectacles of democracy in action have grown larger and harder to handle. The odd fact is that no one city today possesses truly ample and comfortable accommodations in which convention participants can live and work.

TROUBLE IN '52 Democrats admit that in the first real TV convention—1952—they took a licking. For example, their battle over the loyalty oath was an unexcused spectacle in which some of the most distinguished names in the party appeared like petulant children.

Perhaps they could not have been averted, considering the emotional climate of the occasion, but one absurd anti-climax certainly could have. This was the eloquent Adlai Stevenson delivering his acceptance speech at a 3 a. m. hour.

Eisenhower and Vice-President Nixon put on a fine show at the time of the convention, but the Republicans simply handled their show better.

Politics is not an efficient business. But, at least, next time an effort will be made to improve the technical arrangements for playing the great game.

'That's The Kind We Want—You Can See Just What He's Not Thinking'



Drew Pearson's Merry-Go-Round

TWO series of backstage conferences have been taking place in Washington since the election of the President—run-and-is elected—for a second term.

The most important conference was with the White House with Ike's closest friends and advisers. The other conferences have been held by the Democrats over the question of whether they should make the President himself their main target for attack.

There reports have come out of the White House regarding the recent stag dinner which put the heat on Ike to run again. One report emanating from the office of Vice President Nixon stated that Eisenhower had agreed to run and that Nixon had been picked to run with him.

This was wrong on both counts. First, Eisenhower did not agree to run; second, not a word was mentioned about Nixon being his running mate. In fact, Nixon sat on the sidelines during the dinner discussion and barely opened his mouth. The story which his office later fed to the United Press was a carefully laid plan.

Eisenhower Hasn't Agreed to Run Again

Those at the dinner included GOP Chief of Staff, Attorney General Brownell, U.N. Delegate Cabot Lodge, William E. Robinson of the Robinson-Tompanon public relations firm, Tracy Voorhees, assistant secretary of war under Truman, now a victorious Ike voter, and many of the original pre-Chicago "I Like Ike" home of others, chief

Each one took his turn urging the President to run, telling him one or else could win, appealing to his sense of duty, (he remarked, "We can do that you're in magnificent health." Another remarked, "Your popularity is as high as ever.")

Attorney General Brownell finally produced a clipping quoting Adlai Stevenson to the effect that he couldn't beat Ike as of today. The President perked up at this, asked to keep the clipping.

It was after this barrage that the President remarked his friends were making it tough on him. While Eisenhower definitely did not agree to run, he did agree to make no announcement regarding his intentions until the various reliable sources were in response to a suggestion that he could control Congress better if he kept Congress guessing and if GOP diehards thought he would run.

Switch Open On The Road To Progress

IT ARRIVED 9 days after Christmas. But it was still the season's finest present for Charlotte. We're speaking of the state's formal pledge of half a million dollars, to be used in this city's grade crossing elimination program.

The Southern Railway has agreed to put up \$400,000, and the city \$700,000, for a total of \$1.6 million to construct a crossline south of the city. When it is completed through the trains will go through the city. Seventeen crossings on the east side of the business district will be freed from regular railroad traffic, for which thousands of suffering motorists will be grateful.

The crossline project is but the first phase of the grade crossing elimination program which will cost about \$5 million. The Southern has agreed to put up an additional \$850,000, thus paying in all one-fourth of the estimated \$5 million total cost. This means that more than \$2 1/2 million not yet needed will be needed to complete the program. This money is expected to come from federal, state and local governments.

Second phase of the program will involve raising the Southern's main line tracks on the west side of the city. The district by 12 to 14 feet at W. Trade St., improving the present underpass at W. 6th St. and construction of underpasses at W. Trade St., W. 4th St., W. Stone wall St. and Park Ave.

The obvious next step will be the decision of the Southern to relocate its freight terminal at the fringe of the city. For as soon as the crossing is completed there will be no particular need to have a terminal in the city. If the terminal, destroyed by fire last summer, is rebuilt outside the fringe area, the

city's midtown area could be wonderfully improved.

Ten and 3rd streets, now dead-ended, could be opened. E. 2nd, recently congested, could be used regularly. All of these streets could be widened.

And the opening of this area would offer solutions to other pressing city problems. There is the Chamber of Commerce's revolutionary plan to use the railroad's right-of-way for the construction of a north-south thoroughway. Much of the area alongside the tracks could be used for industrial development. Because of its potential accessibility a fine new commercial area could be developed in what is now Brooklyn, if setback ordinances were adopted for Broadway, Lexington, Alexander, and Myers streets. And there is the possibility of building elevated public parking facilities in the old terminal area.

The crossline program opens the switch on the road to real progress for the city. Now over, Atlanta, here comes Charlotte.

There's nothing like a nice white snowfall to lift the spirits, bend the back—and let a man know how old he is. His rusty spirit will remind him of it for hours after the walk has been cleared.—PORTSMOUTH STAR.

The trouble with the electronic computers and mechanical devices that are going to figure out the taxes of big companies is that they won't help them pay them.—LEXINGTON HERALD.

A bricklayer in England says he has been sending his home his wife by carrier pigeon for years. Figuring we suppose, that it is going to take wing sooner or later.—ASHEVILLE CITIZEN.