

THE CHARLOTTE NEWS

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Help For Overburdened Courts

JUDGE FRANCIS O. CLARKSON's plan to break the logjam of litigation in Superior Court's civil division is a sensible solution to a problem that has been growing in seriousness for years. He is in an interview with News staff writer Harry Shuford this week that an inferior court be established with specific jurisdiction over tort and contract actions involving up to \$2500.

The move would significantly improve the administration of justice in Mecklenburg County. It would (1) take the pressure off the county's overburdened Superior Court and (2) serve the public by speeding up legal processes.

Present civil dockets of Mecklenburg Superior Court—through which all damage suits involving over \$50 and contract actions involving over \$200 are now channeled—are flooded with litigation. It often takes from 18 months to two years to run a case through the judicial mill. Suits involving fairly small sums clog the Superior Court, displacing and delaying cases of great moment.

And a small suit often takes just as long as a major action to try.

If these cases involving lesser sums could be drained off to an inferior court, it would make for greater efficiency and speed in the administration of justice.

Judge Clarkson has suggested that the matter could be accomplished by merely adding civil jurisdiction to the present County Recorder's Court. At present, the County Recorder's Court is limited to criminal cases, as is the City Recorder's Court.

Under the suggested system, the County Recorder's Court would have countywide jurisdiction in civil matters and a full-time judge. The judge's salary would be sizable enough to attract a topflight man.

Naturally, appeals could still move upward through the Superior Court.

The inferior court system has been tried with notable success and satisfying results elsewhere in North Carolina. It should be established in Mecklenburg.

Continue Nonpartisan City Elections

A TRACE of smog was washed from Charlotte's political air when Jesse W. Page Jr., executive secretary of the Mecklenburg County Republican Executive Committee, reiterated his stand in favor of nonpartisan elections for city government posts. Reports had been circulated that Mr. Page was interested in organizing a GOP slate of candidates for the City Council. The reports said the party leader, are without foundation.

"I do not think city elections should be on a partisan basis," Mr. Page emphasized. However, he added that Charlotte must "make every effort to encourage the leaders of our community, whether they be Republican or Democrat, to take responsibility in seeing that the voters of Charlotte are presented with the best possible slate of candidates in the upcoming municipal election."

Mr. Page's motion now is no time to tangle with the nonpartisan system of municipal elections. The arrangement has served Charlotte well in the past. It has kept the community reasonably free of political knavery. City Hall is not ruled by backroom political bosses. Charlotte has none of the professional hangers-on who are given a free ride into office again and again by a citizenry taught to vote by prejudice

or habit or enticement or in ignorance.

Of course, Mr. Page made it clear that he was speaking for himself alone and he conceded that "there are members of both parties that have an opposite view."

It is indeed Charlotteans who would like to see a party split in the local level. But we firmly believe that if they sit down and conscientiously consider the best interests of the community they will agree that matters are better as they are now.

Party politics on the municipal level tend to deepen prejudices and pressures that induce conformity to group behavior. It encourages loyalty to party banners rather than sober analyses of individual issues and the merits of individual candidates. It encourages the party in power to stabilize its advantage and tighten its grip on City Hall—with public jobs, party rules, local ordinances and election procedures.

A city the size of Charlotte—and with its peculiar political institutions—is best served by nonpartisan elections. Without question, there is great need for an awakening of political interest on the municipal level. But it should be directed toward getting the men of character and ability to run for public office rather than in resurrecting the party system from the city's political graveyard.

Filling A Void On Television Screens

THE IMPACT of television on the American public has been greeted with mixed emotions. Its effect has not been as harmful (a nation of mutes, someone called us) as was predicted by the skeptics, nor has it been particularly good in many respects.

In its eagerness to please, to keep its head above the financial waters and to capture an audience quickly, television has only skirted the field of education. There are some notable exceptions such as *Omnicast* and *The Wizard*, for they have striven for high level entertainment and at the same time have done a good educational job.

This educational void, urged the educators, could be filled on a non-commercial basis. Saturday the state gets its first taste of such a diversion when WUNC-TV goes on the air on Channel 4, Chapel Hill, the station of the Consolidated University of North Carolina.

A story by our Mr. Scheer in *The*

News this week pointed out that WUNC-TV will strive to capture an audience with education via entertainment. He pointed out the program schedule of WUNC-TV offers education "in easy-to-digest doses."

The outlook is bright. It has been just a short while since President Gordon Gray first looked into the matter of educational television. Since that time much work, fund raising and development has gone into an ambitious program.

We note with interest that Charlotte has been allotted a UHF educational channel and we shall keep an eye on a group of local citizens who are interested in a similar station here.

Meanwhile, we send our best to Robert Schenck and his staffs at Chapel Hill. Woman's College in Greensboro and State College in Raleigh.

May their programs win new friends—and may we pick them up soon on our local screens.

From The Richmond News Leader

BUT DID SHE CALL HIM BACK?

ORDINARILY, such is the perversity of mankind, we take no special notice or concern at "wrong number" calls on the telephone. The momentary aggravation these misdials produce is overcome by the pleasant thought that all the ingenuity of the Bell Laboratories, where 10,000 scientists are toiling night and day, has failed to regiment the independent soul who is sure he remembers the number, the wizards have fixed it so a man can dial direct to Fairbanks, Alaska, in 17 seconds, but they can't cure the fellow who intends to dial "88" and dials "84" instead.

There is also a certain perverse delight. It must be confessed, in picking up a conversation in mid-conversation: "Is Aunt Hilda there?" To this, one replies: "No, she's gone to the liquor store for a fifth of gin. Sometimes she takes a bottle after a dead silence, a sort of indignant sputter at the other end, followed by the click of the receiver. But sometimes the voice will ask, with suspicious indignation: 'Who is this?' And to this, one replies: 'This is Uncle George, isn't that you, Charlie?' Where the conversation goes from this point all depends, but you hear a lot of interesting insults this way.

One mauls. We fell to pondering these ships in the electronic night one evening last week, when the telephone rang a little after 10 o'clock. It was a wrong number, and the conversation was only one word long. But it has haunted us ever since.

The caller was a woman, not a girl. We

have seen her since then, in the mind's eye, waiting all evening by her own telephone, and waiting in vain. Eight o'clock, 9 o'clock, 10 o'clock—and the instrument as silent as the pyramids. Finally, the situation—whatever the situation—can be endured no longer. She reaches for the receiver, and the telephone rings. She hears the signal that a bell is ringing at the other end. And when an unfamiliar voice answers, she asks with uncertain hope, "Bill?"

That was all. But her voice broke the single syllable into half a dozen shattered and trembling syllables, and there was a wondrously there, composed of hurt and love and swallowed pride. What courage had gone into the making of that call, what pounding of the heart had caused a finger to dial "53" instead of "54" or "56," one can only speculate. But there was an urgency in the voice, an invitation, a plea for the quarrel ended, the love renewed.

So much electric emotion, packed into four letters, wiped all the familiar gambits of mind. "Sorry," we said lamely, "you have the wrong number." There was a tremulous little "ohhh-hh" at the other end, and she went dead.

These things worry us. Five days now we've been wondering if she ever tried again. Somehow we doubt it. And if somewhere in this city, a stubborn young man named Bill is going his angry way, we would say to him, "Lad, she did try to call you, honest she did, she called, but she got the wrong number."

'Dear Friends'



Red Rulers At Odds

Great Debate In Moscow

By STEWART ALSOP

WASHINGTON—The American and Soviet governments' appeal to have a "great debate" in the neutral zone of the world has not yet been fully decided. The Soviet rulers, apparently, simply have not made up their minds whether such a meeting would serve Soviet purposes, since it is now seemingly impossible for the two sides to agree on a date.

The Soviet government is divided on this question is, as always, transitory and inconclusive. But it is a good deal more than a mere matter of timing. When Ambassador Charles E. Bohlen returned to Moscow recently, he reported back that the Soviet policy had measurably increased there in the few days since he had left. The British ambassador in Moscow, who also returned to Moscow at about the same time, reported back in London precisely the same thing.

The obvious reason for this tension in Moscow was, of course, French voting on the German disarmament issue. But another reason also appeared, when long editorials about the future of the Soviet Union were published just before Christmas in Pravda and Izvestia.

Izvestia is the organ of the Soviet government, and it thus announced the renunciation of Premier Georgi Malenkov. Pravda is the organ of the Soviet Communist party, and it thus announced the renunciation of N. S. Khrushchev, secretary of the party. The two papers took almost diametrically opposite lines.

Izvestia called for a continuation of essentially the present policy, an increased emphasis on production of consumer goods, and a "coexistence" policy abroad. Pravda called in effect for a "hard" line abroad, and a return to all-out priority for heavy industrial production, which means arms production.

The next day Pravda published another long editorial, and the Soviet press fell in line with Izvestia. By knowledgeable Russians as well as foreign observers, this episode was universally taken to mean that there had been a basic disagreement on policy as between Malenkov and Khrushchev, and that this disagreement had been settled in Malenkov's favor.

The episode was further taken to mean that the Russian rulers wished to make known the existence of the disagreement. The purpose was, presumably, partly to remind the West of the split, and partly to adopt a tougher line if they wanted to. But another purpose certainly was to give the West a hint of what was in the air, and to remind the Rus-

sian people that no one had ignored all the powers of the dead Stalin. It is quite genuinely true, in the quote of Bohlen and all other foreign observers, that there is still no single absolute dictator in the Soviet government. No one, in post-Stalin Russia, moreover, the extent to which the Soviet rulers, though not totally the ruled—feel free to disagree with each other is remarkable.

For example, there was a recent meeting between certain "neutrals" and a number of the Russian leaders, including Malenkov, Khrushchev, and Foreign Minister V. M. Molotov. Malenkov and Khrushchev engaged in a bit of free-wheeling about Soviet policy. Molotov quite obviously felt that his special province was being invaded by amateurs, and made no attempt to conceal his irritation from the foreigners. The meeting very nearly became a case of three-cornered argument between the Russians.

There is a good deal to suggest, in short, that a "great debate" of sorts is in progress within the Soviet government. No one, of course, believes that the essential objectives of the Soviet Union, except in the most limited and specific issues. Secretary of State Dulles entertains these doubts—and British Foreign Secretary Eden shares them. This is a kind of global great debate is going on, in Washington, Moscow, in London. No doubt it will be settled one way or another before this year ends.

Malenkov's recent equivocal remarks about the desirability of a "four-power" meeting at the summit level, in the light of the issue has not yet been fully decided. The Soviet rulers, apparently, simply have not made up their minds whether such a meeting would serve Soviet purposes, since it is now seemingly impossible for the two sides to agree on a date.

A great debate is also, of course, in progress within the American government. This debate also concerns whether it is worth trying to negotiate with the Soviet Union. The German disarmament issue is presumably settled and if so whether this policy is sound. The American leaders are those who believe that the Soviets at least share the West's interests in avoiding mutual incineration, and that it is worth trying to agree on a set of ground rules to this end. At least to some extent, President Eisenhower inclines to this view—as does British Prime Minister Sir Winston Churchill.

On the other side are those who have strong doubts about the value of any negotiation with the Russians, except in the most limited and specific issues. Secretary of State Dulles entertains these doubts—and British Foreign Secretary Eden shares them. This is a kind of global great debate is going on, in Washington, Moscow, in London. No doubt it will be settled one way or another before this year ends.

People's Platform

Dogs Menace Scooters In Myers Park Section

Editors, The News: Charlotte Upon reading an article entitled "Dog Poisoning Outbreak Reported," published on Dec. 30, something caught my eye. The Humane Society said that it had received reports of dogs being hit by a motor scooter in the Myers Park area. I don't think that this is true, because if the person on the motor scooter should happen to hit the dog, it would cause the vehicle, in most cases, to go out of control, and I don't think that the rider would do it on purpose.

I ride a scooter in that area at times, because sometimes the congestion by a motor scooter is less than that of a car. However, that I myself have to kick the dog to try and

make him go back and quit running after the scooter.

Then again, there are times when the dog gets over-excited and runs in front of the scooter and almost gets hit. The people of Myers Park should better train their pets against this dangerous practice.

Twice I have been bitten by dogs, while riding slowly in Myers Park—by a collie and some other breed. I couldn't have done it if I hadn't the scooter, because they didn't train their pets not to run after bikes, scooters and cars. Their (the dogs') bad habit of running after scooters can be broken by training their legs are broken by running in front of the vehicle and almost gets hit. The people of Myers Park to stop their dogs from such a practice. It's dangerous to the scooter rider and to the dogs.

—B. G. AUSTIN

Drew Pearson's Merry-Go-Round

A SECRET report is on its way to President Eisenhower's desk urging him to curtail the school lunch program.

The report is written by the Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, formerly headed by Clarence Manion, who was replaced by Clarence Manion, head of Hart, Schaffner and Marx, after Manion resigned over the Brieker amendment battle.

The commission, which is supposed to improve government efficiency, has a strong stand through its subcommittee on education against spending federal money for the school lunch program.

The secret report also recognizes that "years of depression and war have left a grossly inadequate school plant," yet in the same breath, it recommends that "The general conclusion is that federal aid is not necessary for either current operating expenses for public schools or for capital expenditures for new school facilities."

The commission's solution is to let the states and local communities put up the money for school construction in accordance with the will of their citizens.

This would mean unequal educational opportunities for American youngsters, the commission acknowledges, because of "differences in fiscal ability among states."

However, the report observes hopefully: "Those differences have been narrowing considerably in the last two decades, but they are still substantial. Efforts to narrow the gap should aim

at raising the economic level and the capacity of the less wealthy states rather than subsidizing them. Existing disparities have been reduced and will be ameliorated by the prudent use of the progressive federal tax system."

Backstage Fight

These drastic recommendations stirred up such a battle behind the scenes, however, that almost half the presidential commission has been persuaded to sign the report. One member, Atlanta's School Superintendent Paul West, was so sure that he put out a scolding letter to the commission, demanding recommendations as "a futile attempt to reverse the course of American history."

"There is no doubt that the majority report," he writes West, "is a grossly distorted picture of the situation, and that our state and local tax structures need overhauling."

Regardless Of Merger Fate, Labor Will Be Closely Knit

By CONGRESSIONAL QUARTERLY

WASHINGTON—ANTICIPATING a possible marriage in 1955, America's two largest labor organizations are engaged in a mutual courtship which may lead to "unprecedented unity" in lobbying and political action in coming months.

Without fanfare, officials of the Congress of Industrial Organizations and American Federation of Labor are helping to pave the way for official merger by working out informal agreement, early in the 84th Congress, on legislative goals, strategy and techniques.

While public attention concentrates on formal merger meetings, some steps toward creation of a single trade union are being taken behind the scenes, over luncheon and dinner tables, and at impromptu Hill meetings.

Not since 1935, when CIO under John L. Lewis and Philip Murray split off from William Green's AFL, has there been so much accord on unemployment compensation, social security, health insurance, and other features of labor's program.

"The upshot of it all is bound to be a more closely knit labor bloc, regardless of what comes out of the merger meetings," says an AFL spokesman. "With a combined membership of more than 15,000,000 workers and reaching into nearly every congressional district, it will be a bloc for both purposes to watch, and for legislators to heed."

TWO-YEAR BUILDUP

Legislative advisers, political action strategists and lobbyists participating in the informal unity drive say its biggest impetus came when the CIO-AFL non-merger pact was signed two years ago. Since then unity has been promoted by increasing possibility of formal merger, and, conversely, by what unions regard as legislation unfriendly to labor.

As important has been the stimulus provided by new leaders, CIO's Walter Reuther and AFL's George Meany, who succeeded Murray and Green in 1952.

Day-to-day cooperation between AFL-CIO working staffs also has

been facilitated by the growing similarity in legislative policies adopted at annual conventions. This year, both unions are presenting a "package" program to Congress aimed at achieving a full-production, full-employment economy. Specific planks in their programs are parallel.

Last year officials say, the similarity in viewpoints regarding Taft-Hartley Labor Law revision and the "best coordinated labor lobby campaign" to date. That campaign was credited with helping to defeat the Administration's proposed revisions. AFL and CIO lobbyists jointly interviewed congressmen, discussed strategy, behindhand over the phone, and coordinated Hill visits of top union officials.

FRUITS OF COOPERATION

Some experts say that the year's increased union-lobbying cooperation will be formalized by further meetings, or creation of a joint legislative committee. Rather, it will be marked by a growing number of telephone calls between the two unions' legislative departments, headed by Reuther and Meany, and AFL's Oliver, aggressive ex-union organizer from Texas, and AFL's lobbyist, who is directed by W. C. Flushing, former clothing union who has one of the longest terms of service in the labor movement.

Immediate fruits of this activity are expected to be:

More coordination in issuing legislation, business and labor-saving letter-writing campaigns, and in talking to Congressmen.

A wider and more effective coverage of Congress—traditionally, each union has had more influence with certain legislators than has the other.

A more thorough mobilization of grass-roots pressure. Unions are planning to work together in the coming year on local and state legislation. And both AFL and CIO are striving to better their relations with organizations in agriculture, small business, health and other fields.

As one official sums it up: "Whether the unions attain official merger in 1955, it will be a year of increasingly strong and united labor action on a wide number of fronts."

Little Change In Congress; Neuberger, Case Stand Out

By MARQUIS CHILDS

WASHINGTON—IF ANYTHING stands out in the new Congress, it is the fact of how closely it resembles in its basic elements the previous Congress. The new Congress is a conservative of the southern Democrats in key committee and legislative assignments for bolting his party and campaigning against Eisenhower.

Likewise, a year ago, no one would have bet very much on the passage of the McCarran Internal Security Act. A member of the House of Representatives in his bid for the Senate was opposed by a new candidate, right-wing, and in his own party, touched off by a case strongly anti-McCarthy stand. Yet, he won by a squeak in a narrow margin.

Both these freshmen senators, in part, have problems resulting from the fact that they have won the freshman's expected under-Senate tradition to be seen and rarely heard. If he poses his head up too high, he is likely to get it knocked off in the watchful and jealous atmosphere of what is often called the most exclusive club in the world.

CASE, MOVIE QUESTIONED

Yet, both men have at the same time the problem of maintaining their reputations. Case, who was director of the Ford Foundation Fund for the Republic after he left the House, is a civil libertarian who has stood out against many of the excesses of McCarthyism. He announced shortly after his election that he would move to deprive McCarthy of his committee chairmanship involving investigations of the House.

Neuberger says he will concentrate on conservation and public power. He has taken as his model the late Sen. George Norris of Nebraska, who was a conservationist by his singleness of purpose and his capacity to master a complicated issue what one could accurately say often against overwhelming odds.

West was joined in his backstage fight by such distinguished educators as Roy Simpson, California's superintendent of public instruction, the Very Rev. Monsignor E. J. Quigley of Pittsburgh, Oscar Eardard, chairman of the St. Louis school board; and Carl J. Meigs, president of the National Teachers' Association. They frankly considered the majority recommendations as a threat to the nation's educational future.

On the other side, the majority were led by Adam S. Benmion of Salt Lake City and Roger A. Freeman of Olympia, Wash., who was a strong conservative. They also were joined by ex-Gov. Alfred Driessell of New Jersey, President Henry Whitten of Brown University, and Roy Campbell, president of the Mississippi Supply Company and education chair, man for the U. S. Chamber of Commerce.