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Mecklenburg: A Country Boy Grew Up

THE growing pains of Mecklenburg County's government can be softened no longer. The time has come for the county to rid itself of the guise, and even something of the outlook, of a somnolent rural community. Mecklenburg's officialdom has been aware of the inadequacy of courthouse facilities for years. But it remained for the members of the 26th Judicial Bar Association (formerly Mecklenburg Bar Association) to present the most thoughtful, comprehensive plan to correct the situation. Their proposal for the erection of a carefully planned office building designed to house the activities of Mecklenburg County and other related municipal or state governmental functions deserves careful consideration. Inadequate, outdated quarters wastes the taxpayers' money. It accomplishes this simply by cutting down on the efficiency of government and by making every governmental function a painful and, at times, excessively lengthy process. The bar association's arguments against piecemeal enlargements of the present courthouse have a reasonable ring, too. For one thing, the design of the old building does not lend itself to expansion. The erection of a modern, functional office building apart from the main structure would not mean that the present courthouse would be abandoned. On the contrary, it would still be used for certain traditional county functions, such as Clerk of Court, Register of Deeds, tax office, Sheriff's Department and County Police. But, as the lawyers pointed out to commissioners yesterday, the present courthouse was erected some 30 years ago when Mecklenburg's governmental operations were still in the "rural county courthouse" era. The structure was built in keeping with that era and designed for more care of limited governmental operations of the times. Since then there has been a swift, steady expansion of governmental functions—municipal, county, state and federal. There is every reason to believe that this expansion will continue. Government agencies located in the courthouse are already severely handicapped. The crowding will get worse not better, unless action is taken soon. A separate, modern office building should be designed not only to serve the county's needs but the foreseeable needs of an era of more closely coordinated government as well. Specifically, we are referring to consolidation of city and county government—a goal which need not be fitting too far in Mecklenburg's future. The bar association should be commended for the thoroughness and thoughtfulness of its survey, the result of several years of study. Its offer of assistance in evolving further plans to remedy Mecklenburg's governmental growing pains should be accepted.

Surpluses: A Presidential Challenge

THERE was a faint chinking noise in the background yesterday as Mr. Eisenhower's farm message went to the Congress. The gurgling came from signers of the 1952 Republican platform which condemned as a "fraud on both the farmer and the consumer the Brannan plan scheme to pay direct subsidies from the federal treasury to the farm producers." Yet here was the Republican President elected on that platform proposing that the government pay farmers to take land out of production, to pay them in lieu of prices they would receive by planting the acreage. Even to the platform-makers, however, Mr. Eisenhower's proposals must have sounded considerably more like salvation than fraud. The message committed the administration to a contest with the Democrats for the pivotal farm vote. While it restated GOP rejection of rigid price supports, it armed Republican campaigners with something more substantial—politically speaking in the eyes of the voters—than the "no price supports" which as yet have not had time to prove their value. Fortunately, the proposals offer real, as well as political, values to formulation of a sensible farm program. They are designed to supplement the existing supports in whittling down the mountainous food-and-fiber surplus, created by rigid price supports, that stand between the farmer and an open market governed by supply and demand. The more the surplus can be reduced and production can find a place on the open market, the more the cost of price supports can be reduced. Fertility would be stored in the soil taken out of production. The farmers, cooperating, would receive financial help to tide them over the adjustment period. The reduction of the surplus would compensate partially for the payments to the cooperating farmers. The President's plan has its danger points, too. It requires the participation in the program by retiring poor land and stepping up production on more fertile acres. The payments—the President proposed no concrete figures—might not be enough to compensate farmers for cutting production. Administration of the plan would create new bureaucracy. However the proposals plan out under the rigorous examination they will receive in Congress, the intention behind them must be preserved. That intention, as was the case with the administration's support of flexible supports, is to try to solve the basic problem of farm surpluses. The cry of some Democrats that a return to rigid supports is a solution is so much campaign oratory. Rigid supports, justified when enacted to stimulate war-time production, created the surplus problem in the first place. The President's flexible plan is a challenge to objectors, and these include both Democrats and Republicans, to come up with a plan of their own that will attack the problem of surpluses, rather than pay them higher and higher at the taxpayers' expense.

Medical Opinion By Popular Vote

U. S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT carried the inquiring reporter routine beyond the bounds of good taste and decent medical manners when it sent questionnaires to 444 heart specialists asking whether President Eisenhower is able to serve a second term. To the credit of the doctors, it must be noted that only 275 responded—and quite a few of these did not answer directly the questions presented. To begin with, it was a meddlesome project. Medical ethics being what they are, it was impertinent of physicians to comment publicly on the questionnaires that they are not directly concerned. But discounting these rather brazen overtones and the possibility of political motives, one might logically question the value of such "horseback opinions" when the doctors polled have not examined the patient nor been supplied with detailed clinical information about the case. As some particularly conscientious physicians pointed out, the question of a coronary attack, in terms of functional capacity, depends on many factors and varies in each individual case. But one doctor who properly declined to take part in the poll summed up our feelings exactly. It would be the height of presumption for me, as my physician, to give an opinion unless I had been in attendance. The President is in excellent hands and all the personal physicians have every right to express an opinion. Generalizations about the results of coronary artery disease are both unwise and unwarranted. In my opinion, your questionnaire is also unwise and unwarranted. No matter what the "poll" shows it could not possibly have any bearing on any individual case.

GOOD FRENCH, FORBEARE

IT IS so like an old tale to hear that Shakespeare wasn't the author of his works that the news is not so far. The Bard would be among the first to say the play's the thing, and the supporters of Christopher Marlowe believe they have what may be a palpable hit. It is as strange a story as was ever dreamt of by Will's philosophy; the key to it is the hope that, though gilded tombs do worms infold, there might also be some Marlowe evidence found in the ancient resting place of Sir Thomas Walsingham. A descendant of Walsingham, Major Thomas Marsham-Townsend, has received permission to open the Walsingham tomb in St. Nicholas Church at Chislehurst, Kent, to search for documentation proving that Marlowe was Shakespeare. Walsingham was a patron of Marlowe, and history says that on the eve of his arrest for treason and heresy, Marlowe was murdered in a tavern brawl. But others agree with the theory of Calvin Hoffman, an American author, that another man was murdered in a plot to rescue Marlowe, that Marlowe, then went on to write Shakespeare's plays. Walsingham's tomb may be found some unpublished plays. The plot is a good one, but 'tis ten to one the play can never please all that are here; there are many people who believe that the Earl of Oxford or Sir Francis Bacon and not Marlowe was Shakespeare, and there are quite a few who believe Shakespeare was himself. There are some others who think taking the measure of an ancient grave to prove the Bard's identity is but the fierce vexation of a dream and that such a method is "like a madman's tomb." The method will be after Walsingham's. Old Will himself may have thought all this out. For on his own tomb is an inscription: "Blest be ye man yf spares this stone and curst be he yf moves my bones." That should give them pause.

Disgrace Abounding

The Loyalty Of Mr. Taylor

By JOSEPH & STEWART ALSOP

WASHINGTON THE Japanese internment camp in Bolling was a fairly disagreeable place in which public spirit was less common than the spirit of "good will" toward the moon. A small minority did the rest played the black market, or made a hobby of envy, or simply lost faith and abandoned hope. In these circumstances, the small, determined, few who were in, who was to be seen busily trotting about on every conspicuous figure, was a not inconsiderable figure. He appeared to be, as indeed he was, dedicated to the public service. He was one of the real workers among the three hundred old-Americans who were locked up in Stanley Camp along with more than three thousand Britishers—the human refuse of a collapsed colonial society. NEW DEAL VIEW At the dreary little internment camp discussion group (which met in a patch of scrub, under the shelter of the low pines, to evade Japanese eyes) this little man spoke up for a rather simple New Deal view of the world. He also showed far more sympathy for the problems of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek than the British colonial officials. And it was understandable, since he was an expert on the staff of the Generalissimo's Chinese Stabilization Board, an honor loan from the U.S. Treasury. Such was William Henry Taylor when one of these reporters first encountered him in the grim winter of 1942. In Stanley Camp we had had our Communist agents—little, black-visaged, Lizzie Epstein of the Sorge ring and his tall, blonde English mistress, Elsie Chomondeley, who might have been very beautiful if she had ever washed. But they had escaped very early and with great bravery, one had to admit. PAR DEBECTION Furthermore, Epstein had taken two or three more rather irrelevant people with him hence it was a fair deduction that if our camp harbored another really important member of the world Communist conspiracy, he would have been included in their well-detailed escape. But poor Taylor, who stayed with the work detail until the Americans were expelled. So when Taylor re-entered the reporter's life several years ago, telephoning to ask for a letter to a loyalty board, it was easy to comply with his request. The reporter wrote that so far as he knew Mr. Taylor the proceeding against him was a disgrace, not to Taylor, but to the government of the United States. BAD LUCK It had been Taylor's bad luck to work in Harry Dexter White's Department of the Treasury. For this reason he had been denounced by Miss Elizabeth Bentley as a Communist agent. Originally, in answer to a question about the persons who passed Treasury documents to her, Miss Bentley declared that sometimes it was William Taylor. Later, she revised, or at least diluted, her testimony to read that she had merely heard from Nathan Gregory Silvermaster that Taylor was a member of the Communist underground in the U. S. government. Because of Miss Bentley Taylor was first visited by the FBI in 1947. Thereafter, he was called before four successive grand jur-



"Everyone is a little subversive but all and me, and sometimes I think even they are."

conscientious Communist spy, the same international organization's loyalty board has held that there "is no reasonable doubt" as to the loyalty of William Henry Taylor. The courage and fairness of the loyalty board, in this admitting its own hideous error, cannot be overpraised, but what about the testimony of Miss Bentley, who started the whole business? What about the government's preparation of the case against Taylor, which was a mass of misers and poison pen letters, by the loyalty board's own final verdict? And what about Attorney General Herbert Brownell, who had the responsibility for the preparation of the government case? Brownell publicly denounced Taylor as a spy on the basis, apparently, of the loyalty board's stuff that the loyalty board has now decisively thrown out of court. What has he to say now? These are questions that have to be answered, if American justice means anything at all.

People's Platform Interest In Consumer's Gas Bill Is Misdirected

Charlotte Editors: The News SINCE witnessing an illustrated presentation of the facts regarding federal control of natural gas producers, I am more than a little skeptical of statements recently made by two bears of local utility companies here in the Carolinas. The chairman of Piedmont Natural Gas Company and the Public Service Company, which operate gas distribution systems in the Carolinas, were quoted in your article of Dec. 20 as saying that removal of federal controls from natural gas producers would save consumers 10 percent. I cannot see why they fear returning producers to their former status would suddenly cause them to abandon the pricing policies which so far have worked to the advantage of the consumer. Perhaps the local utilities companies are more interested in having the government perpetuate for them an artificial price advantage which they have enjoyed in competing with other fuels for big industrial accounts. LIONS SHARE There are additional reasons to suspect the sincerity of the distributors' position. The fact, which our utility executives ignore, is that on a national average the producer gets only about a dime of the householders' gas bill dollar. The rest goes to the pipelines which transport it and to the local gas company for the services they perform with the local gas company getting the lion's share. BREAKDOWN The Piedmont Natural Gas Company enjoys an exceptionally favorable position. In 1954 the average Piedmont household gas consumer paid \$1.88 for one thousand cubic feet of natural gas having a heat content of about 1,000 BTU's per cubic foot. This amount, Piedmont received \$1.59 for its local delivery services, the pipelines 21 cents for its interstate transportation service and the balance of about 8 cents went to pay the producers for their gas. Thus out of each dollar Piedmont customers paid for natural gas, the producers received less than 10 percent.

MISDIRECTED The same article in your newspaper indicated the North Carolina Utilities Commission shares the views of the local distributing companies. While it shifts the responsibility of the commission to keep an eye on all factors which determine the consumer's gas bill I wonder if the commission's interest in the consumer isn't misdirected when it seemingly concentrates its efforts on the producer's four cents? Is the commission perfectly satisfied with the factors which make up the remaining 96 per cent of the bill? I cannot help but feel that the role of public watch dog, like the clarity, should be at home. FRANK J. WHITEHURST, State Chairman, Natural Gas & Oil Resources Committee. Angry Letters Cancel Out Mature Comment Charlotte Editors: The News YOU perform an invaluable service when you print a restrained, reasonable editorial such as "The Case Against Interposition." Mature individual accounts the inevitable. Even though he may feel that this inevitable has hurried a bit unreasonably, and by men perhaps blinded to practical considerations by idealism. Since, however, every group has its share of immaturity, it becomes the duty of a responsible newspaper to inject a note of calm logic in order not to disturb the seeds of rebellion which lie fallow (and shallow) among the lunatic qualifying for payment of the tribute in its editorial, and then nullified completely by printing



'We Play Hot And Sweet'

Drew Pearson's Merry-Go-Round

WASHINGTON ONE letter which the Eisenhower administration would certainly like to forget is in the files of the Agriculture Department in which Secretary Benson's department takes vigorous exception to the soil bank plan that President Eisenhower is now proposing to Congress. Flatly Opposed On July 27, Acting Secretary of Agriculture True D. Morse sent a letter to Congressman Harold Cooley of North Carolina, chairman of the House Agriculture Committee. Flatly opposing the bill introduced by Congressman Fred Marshall, Democrat of New York City, which provided exactly the same plan that Eisenhower is now proposing. Again on Sept. 30 the Agriculture Department sent the same letter to Sen. Elender of Louisiana, who is chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee. Though Secretary Benson didn't sign the letter, his acting secretary, Marsden stated that a committee of all affected agencies in the Agriculture Department had studied the proposed soil bank plan. Their recommendation was negative. Here are pertinent quotes from the letter of July 27 in which the Agriculture Department vetoed the soil bank plan. "This is in response to your request for the Department's views on H. R. 2420. The Department recommends against the enactment of this bill. What It Is "H. R. 2420 authorizes and directs the Secretary to establish policies and programs for the use of acreage diverted because of the establishment of acreage allotments on basic commodities. The declaration is made that acreage diverted from allotment crops increases the planting of other crops not under acreage allotments and will tend to increase the surplus of non-basic commodities. In addition, the bill points out the need for increasing soil fertility. "The program would be very costly. Estimated payments based on 25 per cent average yields, assuming full participation,

on the same page a perfect example of literary brio so typical of said fringe—a letter stating that the Supreme Court should be jailed for an un-Christian, unethical, criminal act." If this letter were the first of its kind, it would be unwise to lend it the dignity of a reply. It is not the first of its kind nor is it the 100th. Scarcely a day goes by that doesn't give another sample, each parrotting the last, each containing the same merely telephoned ranting which, by the process of slow poisoning, can precipitate an ugly means for its interdicted retaliation, of course, have a tendency to increase newspaper circulation. It appears to the writer that the prime duty of an editor is that of editing, which function should include the weeding out of irresponsible authors who supply only heat, no light. Of course, the immediate reaction to this proposition is a cry of "Censorship!" But isn't it strange that the loudest critics come from those who refuse to grant even the most basic rights to their fellow man? DONALD KOITY Reserve Choices Well Summed Up Charlotte Editors: The News YOUR editorial in the Charlotte News of Tuesday, December 20, 1955, is an excellent presentation in condensed form of the provisions of the Reserve Forces Act of 1953. This editorial gives a greater understanding of the problems facing us and of the opportunities for payment to men who would benefit from this act. LESLIE L. WITT Captain, U. S. Army Recruiting Office. Holiday Greetings From A Fat Man CARACAS, Venezuela Editors: The News I AM writing this letter to wish you all the workers of The News a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I used to carry a news route when I was in school. Now I am a Fat Man in the circus and I am a long way from home so I send holiday greetings to you all. JACK CONNER Quote, Unquote An old maid is a girl who regrets she had so much sense when she was young. Sparks (Ga.) Eagle.

Letter To A Tar Heel Congressman

WASHINGTON would be about \$480,000,000. Administrative costs and cost-sharing conservation payments are not included in this total. Too Much Work "Since the bill requires that approved practices be carried out on the acreage qualifying for payment, the job of determining the acreage locating them, measuring and checking practices would require a great deal of administrative supervision and effort, resulting in difficult and expensive administration. A committee composed of representatives of the different agencies in the department were asked to study H. R. 2420 and report the probable effects of the bill. Liquor By Air A taxcheep liquor pipeline is operating secretly out of Bolling Field here, fed by a prosperous Washington liquor merchant named Harry Slavitt. With tax-free liquor now hauled from sale on U. S. military bases due to congressional action, Air Force brass hates this beating high liquor taxes in the 43 states by ordering their booze from the nation's capital, where such taxes are much lower. Air Force crews stopping at Bolling Field on official flights do the rum-running. They merely telephone Harry Slavitt at Metropolitan 85000 and within an hour a truck rolls into Bolling Field—each case of booze carefully disguised in plain paper. Slavitt is clearing up—two weeks ago, for example, he sold \$5,920 on a single sale to troops at army from Maxwell Field in dry Alabama. The brand Green's No. 1. Perfectly Legal Slavitt's part in the bootleg operation is probably perfectly legal, since it's the Air Force that admits his trucks to Bolling Field and also the Air Force that flies the liquor across state lines. Naturally state revenue officers don't have airplanes and no facilities to challenge the plane as it enters the state.