THE CHARLOTTE NEWS

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Luther Hodges At The Convention Was The Man With Seven-League Boots

LUTHER HODGES' deft political touch has been a thing of wonder in North Carolina ever since he went to Raleigh.

A political career begun in retirement from business has been a succession of rapid-fire, overwhelming successes. Two political races landed him the lieutenant governorship and the governorship. His steady and sure handling of these responsibilities during a period of social unrest, culminating in a legislative ditto without doubt of his school program, have marked him as the state's dominant political figure. "Enemy" politicians talk about opposing him but wind up shaking their heads. They have to wait until he makes a mistake.

* * *

HE COULD have made a big one this week—if he had guessed wrong about Adlai Stevenson. For months Hodges had openly and happily advocated Stevenson's nomination while other southern governors were giving the Illinoisan faint praise or no comment. While he went through the motions of cooperating with a movement for a Dixie ultimatum to the convention Hodges kept hoping for a solution on the civil rights plank that would permit enthusiastic support of Stevenson.

The nominee's statement advocating endorsement of the Supreme Court decision put the governor in a tight spot. Had Stevenson purposefully attempted to dictate that idea into the platform, or had he been forced to do so by tactics of the Harriman camp, Mr. Hodges would have been in trouble. In that circumstance he would have had to make an embarrassing departure from the Stevenson bandwagon, or else risk offending large segments of sentiment back home.

As it turned out, events upheld the governor's hopes. Mr. Stevenson said no more about civil rights. The platform committee, with Sen. Sam Ervin effectively representing the South's views, came up with an acceptable plank.

* * *

WHAT prompts new wonder over Hodges' skill is the fact that he helped to make the events that justified his original position. Normal caution might have suggested that he keep still after Stevenson's civil rights statement. Instead, after a tut-tut or two, he resumed his vigorous support. Working hard to shore up Stevenson sentiment among other southern delegations, and constantly wooing northern liberals to support of the civil rights plank, Hodges had a big hand in preventing a civil rights dogfight that would have made his position untenable.

Gov. Luther Hodges

* * *

THE nominee's request that Hodges second his nomination was a compliment and an earned honor to the governor and to the Tar Heel delegation who gave the appearance all week of knowing what they wanted and how to get it.

Luther Hodges evidently is still wearing his seven-league political boots. And there is more than a hint in the new prominence he has won this week that he might stride from the governorship some day to a larger arena.

At any rate, he has not yet made any mistakes.

The South Was Wise To Stay Put

SOME delegates brought walking sticks to the convention's platform session, but the South wasn't going anywhere.

There was, as the region learned in 1948, no place to go. It was wise to stay, to argue its case and exercise its considerable power in the councils of the party.

The outcome of the tussle over the civil rights plank was a tribute to that decision. Within the full context of pressures at work in a national party, the plank adopted reflects as much or more getting as giving on the South's part.

The provision that "we reject all proposals for the use of force to interfere with the orderly determination of these matters by the courts" is of real importance.

If the words of any platform have any meaning, these mean a blow to the pernicious idea that a political party in power can by taking "action" impose with swift certainty a new pattern of social attitudes and customs on millions of people.

There never has been any possibility that such could happen but there has been political encouragement of the hope that it could.

That encouragement was as natural in the areas from which it came as is the opposition to it in the South.

Political platforms are fashioned to attract votes. Doubtless many would have been attracted in the North and West by a platform pledge to "carry out" the decision of the Supreme Court.

And there probably was more support for such a pledge than was apparent or, the floor of a convention controlled by Sam Rayburn and the party leaders around him.

Their decision was the right one, and it resulted from patient attempts to stick together and to compromise.

It could have been a different decision had the South gone to Chicago in a threatening mood, carrying walking sticks it intended to use if the I's and T's had not been dotted to suit.

GOP Sen. Everett Dirksen has indicated the Republicans at San Francisco will make the vain promises the Democrats didn't.

This would be effective politics for the GOP but poor leadership. A confident party would not make the promises.

From The Raleigh News & Observer

THE DISAPPEARING DEPOTS

WITH increasing frequency the announcements are made that the Utilities Commission has granted such-and-such a railroad the right to discontinue its station in such-and-such a town. The old depots come down or are turned to other uses. The reasons for the change may be entirely valid. All the same something good disappears when the depots do. And their passing calls to mind a lot that has vanished that used to be associated with the old time depot, particularly the small town and village depot. The depot was not merely a pinpoint on the artery of commerce. It was far more. It was a place people gathered to obtain news, not only the news that came in staccato volts on the telegraph, but word of mouth news of the locality, also.

It begot a choice bit of Americanese: The depot stove, about which things are yet compared as to girth and warmth. Around the pot-bellied stove history, fiction, and poetry floated incessantly. The depot was a "public library," without formal volumes, a debating society without rostrum and an "inside" public park.

The comings and goings of the trains were monumental events. The people who got on and off were given scrutiny that even surpassed the comprehension of the "Pinkertons." A man who loved baseball or politics who didn't cling tenaciously to the depot during election and World Series time was like a man trying to get to heaven without one hymn to sing.

On Sundays it threw out its social tentacles like a giant octupus. The whole countryside rode down to the depot after church to watch the trains come and go while humanity with its aspirations and doubts made a temporary home of itchy green felt and the engine proclaimed its might and main amid a raucous symphony of whistle screeches and bell peals, and the hungry wind drank deeply of the acrid smoke.

The town sat comfortably by while the vast, romantic world charged off to Zion on magic rails of steel.

There are two ways for a wife to keep her husband from discovering how unglamorous she is when she gets up in the morning. The first is to stay in bed until he has gotten up, fixed his own breakfast and gone off to the office. And the other way? What woman wants any other way?—KINGSPORT (TENN.) TIMES.

Mr. Jones had observed that when she went sailing with him his wife invariably wore all her diamonds. "Esther," said he at last, "Why do you wear all your jewelry when you go out sailing with me?" "Well," explained Mrs. Jones, "If the boat should capsize, I want to be sure of being saved."—LAMAR (MO.) DEMOCRAT.

Back From The Cliff

The Perils Of Adlai

By MARQUIS CHILDS

CHICAGO

IF IN the frantic, frenetic rush of this convention week Adlai Stevenson had had a moment for calm reflection, he might have thought wryly of the striking contrast between his position and that of President Eisenhower.

By merely saying yes, after his party had for so long made plain their prayerful dependence on him, the President is assured of a nomination for a second term. While it was harder four years ago for Gen. Eisenhower, even then he said his "yes" and his ardent backers led the fight that resulted in his selection over the late Sen. Robert A. Taft.

Stevenson has fought for his second nomination every step of the way. His adventures in recent months have had some resemblance to that early movie serial, "The Perils of Pauline." After his defeat in the Minnesota primary, he was hanging by a narrow rope over the cliff, with his enemies prepared to chop him off.

CLOSE SQUEAK

The Florida primary was a close squeak. Then came the California victory and he was again on top, the object of conspiracy and intrigue, of the rivalries and jealousies that rend a party out of power.

The pace quickened on the eve of the convention. Former President Harry S. Truman undertook to bring the front-runner down. The conspirators around Gov. Averell Harriman made every effort to destroy the leading candidate and break his delegate strength. There were uncertain hours when it seemed they might succeed.

INCREDIBLE PRESSURE

Through these crowded days and nights incredible pressures have been put on him from every direction. To anoint this or that candidate for vice president. To agree to one set of words or another set of words in the civil rights plank. To agree to take a new chairman for the Democratic National Committee. To approve the financing of one political venture or another certified to bring in a harvest of delegates.

All this has been going on in atmosphere something like a football scrimmage, a bargain-basement one-cent sale and Mardi Gras right in New Orleans.

ANY IDEA?

"Do you think," he says, "that the American people can have any idea of what it means to run for President? The pressures that are put on you? The compromises you are asked to make?"

He has the right to speak today with a certain half-humorous awe of the road he has traveled since November, 1952. Carrying only eight states, without any public office or chance of public office to serve as forum in the future, bearing the doubtful honor of titular leader of a party divided by bitter factionalism and deeply in debt, he might well have discounted his political future at about five cents on the dollar.

RELUCTANT DRAGON

As the candidate of his party for a second time, Stevenson will be stronger than he was in '52. One reason is precisely because he has had to fight for the nomination, in sharp contrast to four years ago when he played the reluctant dragon.

It has come hard. It has come after thousands of miles and hundreds of speeches at crossroads, in country towns, in crowded city rallies. It is far more to be prized than it was when it came, in a sense, against his wishes.

And having won it over the persistent opposition of Harry S. Truman, not just here at the convention but in intrigue and plot among the Truman cronies for weeks and months prior to Chicago, he is his own man.

Conspicuous at this convention have been the Perle Mestas, the Trumans, the museum pieces out of the highly colored Truman era. But behind the noisy facade of the past is a party that has been renewed and revivified in state after state. It is this that gives Stevenson his second opportunity.

'Well, They Said I Couldn't Win In '48'

People's Platform

All Symphony Needs Is Sensitive Leader

Charlotte

Editors, The News:

HOW LONG are the people of Charlotte going to remain passive about the music situation? We can just sit and do nothing if we take the attitude of Mr. Pitts that Charlotte isn't big enough for anything better, or a few might even try to improve the situation and bring something worthwhile to those who are content to sit lay and be satisfied with the mediocrity of the present symphony.

The main point, as has been brought out before, is that the same players in the symphony have given such excellent performances under other conductors with the Charlotte Opera Association and the Oratorio Singers of Charlotte. This should be proof enough that the fault lies with the conductor when these other two fine musicians have been able to bring such rewarding sounds from the same group.

All the symphony needs is a sensitive conductor. It is no wonder that the city will not support the orchestra. It is a matter of whether we are willing to sacrifice one-third of the musical efforts of the city to keep Mr. Pfohl or whether we are going to keep the symphony and get a new conductor.

The issue that is involved, as recent letters published in The News indicated, is simply whether Mr. Pfohl is a qualified musician to accept the leadership and responsibility which he has accepted. There is a danger in the blind acceptance of a person who can produce on a large scale without concern for the quality of performance. In this way Mr. Pfohl appeals to the general public. All et us want Charlotte to have more concerts, but some of us are concerned with the calibre of these concerts. Those trained in the field of music, who are capable of judging, notice certain weaknesses in the ability of Mr. Pfohl as a conductor.

It is hard to understand the attitude of the Symphony Board when there is so much dissension between the orchestra members and the conductor.

—MRS. ANNE DAVIS

Purebred Animals Are Superior Types

Charlotte

Editors, The News:

A PLATFORM contributor criticized John Hester's knowledge of natural science and then displayed an even greater ignorance of the subject.

His assertion that purebred dogs are "weaker and stupider" than the "more natural mongrel" is absurd. If he would like to see just how absurd, he can enter a mongrel hunting dog in a field trial with purebreds and see what happens.

The records of the Army's K-9 Corps and of the master eye foundation will offer ample proof as to the superiority of the purebred over the mongrel, even though all dogs belong to one species, canis familiaris.

The color markings on the various wild animals that he mentioned do not constitute breed or race, as they pertain to hair color, not skin color. Also there is no uniform difference in the skeletal structure and bodily proportions of "lions of different fire." These and many other differences, such as the number of sweat glands, body scent, hair texture, facial features, resistance to various diseases, etc., divide Nordics and Negroes into distinct and different races.

—O. E. MUELLER

Civil Rights & Common Ground

The Plane Of Persuasion

By WALTER LIPPMANN

NEW YORK

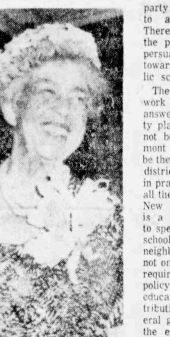
THAT the Democratic convention does about the problem of segregation in the public schools is not merely of party but of national interest. For here is as explosive and divisive an internal problem as the country has had to deal with in this century. At Chicago the political leaders of the South are conferring and negotiating with the political leaders from the northern states, many of whom depend for election on the vote of Negroes in the big cities.

The question is whether these leaders can find a common ground, a substantial common ground and not merely weasel words, on which — though they differ — they are not irreconcilably divided. If the Democrats, who are a national party in all sections of the country, can answer the question successfully, the country will have reason to hope that a dangerous sectional crisis can be avoided. This surely is the primary significance of the rise of Sen. Lyndon Johnson, rather than of Mr. Truman, as the arbiter of the convention. For by temperament, conviction, geography and political experience, he can find that common ground if a common ground exists.

THE TWO POLES

As this was written, the discussion had gone far enough to enable us to see what in this argument words like "extreme" and "moderate" really mean. The two poles, the two extreme positions, are on the one hand a policy of federal enforcement and on the other hand a policy of forcible defiance and nullification. Either policy would certainly split the convention irreconcilably and there is in fact no influential leader asking that the platform endorse either policy.

Once the extremes of enforcement and of forcible nullification are put aside, a great decision has in fact been taken. The decision is that the problem of segregation in the public schools is to be dealt with not on the plane of force but of persuasion.



MRS. ELEANOR ROOSEVELT
A Race's Oldest Friend

This decision, freely and openly negotiated and agreed to by the powerful political leaders from all sections of the country, will be an event of national importance. The Republican Convention cannot negotiate such an agreement because the political leaders of the South are not represented in the Republican Party. The Democrats will have a legitimate right to claim that they have made a big contribution to the internal unity of the country.

But while there seems to be agreement to stand on the common and moderate ground between enforcement and forcible nullification, and thus to rely on persuasion, there remains the question as to what the party as a party should declare it wishes to accomplish by persuasion. There can be no real dispute that the party is bound to stand for persuading the country to work toward desegregation in the public schools.

The crucial question of how to work for it is a difficult one to answer in a few words for a party platform. For the answer cannot be the same answer in Vermont and Mississippi. It cannot be the same answer in every school district in the same state, nor even in practice though not in theory, in all the neighborhoods of a city like New York. Where desegregation is a really difficult question as, to speak plainly, in co-educational schools for teen-agers in mixed neighborhoods, persuasion must not only be slower but it may well require radical changes in school policy, say in the policy of co-education, and big financial contributions from the state or federal government to see to it that the educational level is not reduced.

Considerations of this kind cannot be spelled out in a party platform, and in the last analysis the responsible leaders from the various sections must know that they will have to depend upon the character and the general convictions of the candidate, that the policy of persuasion will be what he, if elected, will make it mean.

It is no accident that Gov. Stevenson who has so much political strength in the South is also the candidate of Sen. Humphrey and of Sen. Lehman and of Mrs. Roosevelt, who is surely the oldest and best friend of the Negro people. Support as wide as that has not come to him because he has some slick formula which means one thing to the South and another to the North. It comes from the knowledge of the responsible leaders that he means to solve the problem without tearing the country to pieces, and that to this complex and explosive problem he brings imagination and insight and deep knowledge and an old-fashioned sincerity.

Drew Pearson's Merry-Go-Round

Gas Lobbyist Leads Johnson's Drive

CHICAGO

BACKSTAGE at the convention, Sen. Lyndon Johnson, the Texas leader, literally thumbed his nose at northern gas-consuming cities by using a Texas natural gas lobbyist as his convention campaign manager.

Wire Pulling

John Connelly, paid by Sid Richardson, the big Texas gas-oil mogul and heavy Eisenhower contributor, worked closely with Elmer Patman pulling wires in Washington during the natural gas bill battle. Patman has since been indicted.

Connelly has since been in Chicago working for Johnson while still on Richardson's payroll . . . Big question raised in delegates' minds: Did some of the money for Lyndon's ornate headquarters here come from Sid Richardson or other gas moguls? . . .

Body Blows

The Democratic system of primary elections designed to keep the party bosses from dominating the U.S. government has received two body blows in the last four years. One was when Adlai Stevenson was put across by Harry Truman and the party bosses in 1953, though he hadn't run in a single state primary. Second is this week when the same Harry Truman pushed Averell Harriman to the front, though Harriman hadn't run in a single primary . . .

Some delegates resent the fact that a wealthy man can come to the convention at the last minute and with the power of the Union Pacific Railroad and Harry Truman behind him, become a major candidate. Other delegates don't see it that way, have had an eye on getting some of the Harriman money to finance state campaigns.

Happy's Loaded

Gov. Happy Chandler of Kentucky is spending as much money here as some of the front-running candidates. It's coming from Col. John Gotlieb, the big trucker who raised a lot of Happy's campaign funds, together with some money from the Philadelphia Wideners who go in for Kentucky horses . . . Randolph Churchill, son of the famed grand old man of England, can't stay away from American political conventions. For this one he got his hair cut, some people don't recognize him . . .

Twelve Ribbons

When Jiggs Donohue, the Kefauver manager, asked for convention tickets from the Democratic National Committee, he received twelve ribbons marked: "Not good for admission to the convention." He asked what good they were and was told "for souvenirs." He sent them back . . . Chip Robert, former treasurer of the Democratic National Committee couldn't get a ticket. He finally bought a box for $1,000. Dick Reynolds, the big tobacco man, couldn't get a ticket, finally bought a box for $1.000 too.

Democratic Scars

It will take time for scars to heal from this convention. Franklin Roosevelt Jr., a Stevenson delegate from the pro-Harriman New York delegation, stopped to greet Sen. Lehman, also from New York, also a Stevenson delegate. Elder statesman Lehman had a seat in the back row.

"You see where they've got me," he said. "They're punishing me for my sins."

Had A Box

"Come and take my seat," said young Roosevelt who had a seat near the front.

"No," replied Lehman, "I've got a box. I'll go and sit there."

Note—Lehman and Roosevelt are being called "displaced persons" by Harriman members of the New York delegation. Roosevelt was opposed by Harriman for governor, and the Roosevelt family hasn't forgiven him since.

Scared Keynoter

"I was scared to death, the whole time," said Gov. Frank Clement of Tennessee, the rootin-tootin Democratic keynoter, after he finished razzing the Republicans for one hour.

"How do you like my socks," he changed the subject.

The young orator had chosen his wardrobe carefully. With an eye to the intense light of television, he wore a dark blue suit, light blue shirt, dark tie, was impeccably dressed. Down around his ankles where the TV cameras couldn't focus was a pair of black socks with huge donkeys on them.

"Isn't that something?" he laughed.

The friends agreed that it was indeed "something."

Most important of the scores of backstage huddles held during this convention was that between Sen. Lyndon Johnson and Adlai Stevenson at which Johnson laid down the terms under which he would switch his delegates to Stevenson. Regardless of what his critics may think of Stevenson, he wouldn't deal. If he had it would have cost him a lot of heartaches.

Stevenson called on Johnson in his private hotel suite. They were supposed to talk about the Suez Canal. Actually Adlai asked: "Why are you doing this?"

Bird Dog

He referred of course to Johnson's sudden decision switch from an inactive favorite son to an active candidate busy as a bird dog rallying southern votes.

Johnson's reply was couched in the pious high-sounding language of party unity. He said he wanted a civil rights platform which would be acceptable "to my people." He said he must have a Democratic national chairman who could unify the party, and he named James Rowe, his own lawyer and chief adviser. He said he wanted to name the vice president and he named Sen. Stuart Symington of Missouri.

Shrewd Reply

Stevenson was shrewd in his reply.

He said he would take any civil rights plank the convention adopted. He said he would have no objection to James Rowe as Democratic chairman. Rowe is an old New Dealer from Montana and has many friends from both the North and South.

On the most crucial point, the vice president, Stevenson flatly refused to deal.