



Thomas L. Robinson - President and Publisher
Brodie S. Griffith - General Manager
Cecil Prince - Associate Editor
R. L. Young Jr. - Managing Editor
Huey Stinson - Circulation Manager

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Two Mercantile Giants Join Hands

THE BELK-EFIRD consolidation writes a glittering new chapter in the history of southern retailing. It brings together two giants who separately have engineered mercantile revolutions in a vast and growing region. Their past successes have represented a triumph of applied techniques in management and merchandising. Further, these successes have been affected by powerful ethical principles built into their respective business philosophies. Both organizations have contributed handsomely to Charlotte's growth and importance as the principal shopping center of the two Carolinas. This is not to say that they alone have shaped mercantile history. It takes over 2,300 retail business establishments in metropolitan Charlotte to accommodate the Queen City's customers. There are other large and enterprising firms which are also in the forefront of our progress. But the Belk and Efird names have nevertheless been representative of the kind of mercantile integrity and dependability that attracts thousands to Charlotte's retail community daily.

Each of the two groups traces its history to great pioneering merchants. It is a temptation to speak of the huge organizations they built as empires and of their founders as empire builders. But, as LeGette Blythe once wrote of the late William Henry Belk, "the word empire is completely inappropriate and Mr. Belk is about as imperial as Benjamin Franklin." As a matter of fact, both the Belks and the Efirds have spread over the face of the nation stores which reflect strongly local personalities and the needs of the individual communities. There are 350 department stores in the Belk organization and 60 in the Efird group. The transaction which brought the Efird stores under Belk management was important to many a town and city across the country. Each community can be sure of one thing: Both organizations have made names for themselves as highly respected retail institutions in the past. Together, their names will undoubtedly glow even brighter in the future.

School Needs: The Shock That Alerts

THE ENGLHART report on Charlotte's school building needs is a thoroughly convincing and alarming study of the continuing crisis in public education here. It poses a stern challenge to the community's energies and vision. It places the responsibility for action firmly on the thousands of individual citizens who are stockholders of the community's educational corporation and custodians of its educational heritage. Charlotte and Mecklenburg County have been told flatly that \$23 million worth of new schools will be needed to meet rising enrollments during the next five years. It is a shocking figure. In fact the Englhardt report is filled with shocking statistics. But the firm that compiled them has been remarkably accurate in predicting Charlotte's growth and educational needs in the past. The latest figures cannot conscientiously be brushed aside as visionary nonsense. The trends are clearly apparent—even to the untrained eye. Migration and rising birthrates are established

facts. They spell trouble, but they remain for Dr. N. L. Englhardt and his associates to measure the trouble and translate their findings into dollars and cents. The need has its immediate as well as long-range aspects. Classroom shortages will not vanish while we debate the issue. Some buildings must be built quickly if the community is to meet today's minimum educational requirements. Meanwhile, plans will have to be unhampered to meet long-range needs. We do not know where all of the money is coming from. A \$5 million bond issue is already in the works. That will place the county uncomfortably near its legal debt limit. Undoubtedly, the community must face the prospect of some belt-tightening expedients. But these would be palliatives, not cures. What is needed now is a firm resolve on the part of the community to meet the problem honestly and courageously. Above all, we cannot hide our heads, ostrich-like, in the sands of indifference.

Adaptable Joke About Political Rascals

NOMINATION of a senator to succeed Georgia's Walter George didn't produce much of a contest. As expected, the popularity of Herman E. Talmadge buried opponent M. E. Thompson in an avalanche of votes. "Well," the judge replied, "that may be true, but there's lots of them in Georgia and I think that they are entitled to be represented in the Senate."

A Thompson campaigner complaining to an old Talmadge to the Senate said: "Why, judge, Herman's an out and out rascal." "Well," the judge replied, "that may be true, but there's lots of them in Georgia and I think that they are entitled to be represented in the Senate."

Editorial Book Review

'Public Arts' Belong To The People

THE PUBLIC ARTS. By Gilbert Selides. Simon & Schuster, 303 pp. \$3.95. IN THE PUBLIC ARTS, critic Gilbert Selides places America's multi-million dollar movie, radio and television industries on the analyst's couch for a long, searching examination of their collective psyche. What he discovers are three great and bewildering creatures with notable neurotic tendencies. Furthermore, they possess a "power so great that they impose on us the positive obligation to control and direct them." Anyone who remembers Mr. Selides' earlier books on popular culture is aware of his perception, wit and wisdom. More than 30 years ago, in THIRTEEN LAYERS ARTS, he altered the tastes of an entire generation with a flank attack on the genteel tradition. Mr. Selides is a lively writer but he is also a wholly serious critic. Here he is dealing with matters of more importance than the great American audience may realize. The central issue is this: How can we control the public arts before they control us? Mr. Selides raises more questions than he answers. But along the way he paints a highly interesting picture of the inner workings of the movie, radio and television industries. He discusses the key personalities—lavishing praise on Jimmy Durante, Edward R. Murrow, Bing Crosby, Jack Benny; heaping scorn on Milton Berle, Jackie Gleason and the give-away shows. But, more important, he discusses the place of the mass media in our daily life. His message is that the people have valid rights over those cultural institutions which can be properly called the public arts. Furthermore, those rights should be respected. "One aspect of our common genius," says Mr. Selides, "is our capacity to organize for action when the necessity becomes clear. It is clear now because the moment we see that the public arts are bringing about social change, the right and the duty to direct this change is in our hands. Between those who are not aware of the effect these changes can have on their inalienable rights and those who do not know that they have

the right to control the changes, the managers of the public arts have almost unlimited freedom. They are not entitled to it." If the people speak out, if they tell the managers what they like and what they want, then the managers will have no alternative. They are in business to sell entertainment and to sell soap. They are contrary to popular impression, pathologically eager to find out what people on the outside looking in have to say. The public gets what it deserves. If it sits staring at the great cyclops of the living room and says nothing when there is nothing but twaddle to be seen, then it deserves a bit of twaddle. As Mr. Selides says, as long as the means of communications are not available for criticism of themselves, as long as we are prevented from thinking about the process by which we are hypnotized into not thinking, we remain at the mercy of our simplest appetites, our immediate and most childish sensations, and these can be exploited—for the arts most useful to the people are essentially turned against the public good. "Lost: 'Light blue dress night of Share-the-Fun Contest.' From classified ad in a Nebraska weekly paper. There are a number of unwellish and energetic people who are always willing to do more than their share."—JACKSON (MISS.) STATE TIMES. "Step on your starter and see the world," says an auto ad. Before you step on the gas, though, you'd better decide which world you want to see.—CHARLOTTE NEWS AND COURIER. Finding enough space to drip-dry all the drip-dry fabric clothing in the family can get to be a real problem. Bet the house of tomorrow will include a drip-dry line with a drain trough running out of the house.—TALLAHASSEE DEMOCRAT. Fortunately, most marriages are not what they are wise-cracked up to be.—ELLSVILLE (GA.) SUN.

Nixon Elevates Campaign Tactics To Wood Democrats

BY MARQUIS CHILDS AN extremely effective campaigner. But he is carefully and deliberately setting his appeal above partisan Republican politics to try to hold the independents and the Democrats who voted for President Eisenhower four years ago. NEW NIXON? The opposition would have it that this is a "new Nixon." There is, however, nothing new about the skill of the technician. When the vice president talks as he does about "selling" the Eisenhower administration, he demonstrates what he means.

When asked about Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt's charge on "Meet the Press" that in his race for the Senate in California in 1950 he had called Hebe Gahagan Douglas a Communist, he replied first by warmly praising Mrs. Roosevelt for her efforts to spread good will for America around the world. And that it should be noted, in the presence of Indiana's Sen. William E. Jenner for whom the New Deal and World War II, with Roosevelt the architect of both, were a monstrous conspiracy to betray America to the Russian Communists.

Jenner gave no slightest sign of how shocked he must have been by Nixon's praise for the Douglas of the conspirator-in-chief. Having uttered his praise, the vice president then said gently that Mrs. Roosevelt must have been misinformed because he had not called Mrs. Douglas a Communist. That, according to his severest critics who have thorough knowledge of the record, is true.

What he did in 1950 was to compare her voting record with that of Vito Marcantonio of the Communist American Labor Party, lumping in the total to prove his point roll calls in which both Mrs. Douglas and Marcantonio voted with the majority in the House, thereby implying that a vote for her would be a vote for pro-Communism.

The impression he conveys today is that both the Republican and the Democratic or Democratic party desire good for the country. Both of the presidential candidates are men of integrity and character. And this is the point at which the attack is sharpened—there is a vast difference. The Democrats start with governing and work down. The Republicans start with the individual and work up.

'It's Terrible How The Big Money Guys Run Politics'



People's Platform

Charlotte: The One-TV Town

Charlotte, N.C. A BOUT a year ago you graciously published a letter that I wrote to you in regards to the one-TV station situation that we have to put up with here in the great city of Charlotte. You also followed up with letters sent to you by Bill Freeman and a Francis Mitchell in connection with the same unexplained and unexplainable condition. These two letters following my letter said that I should have carried my letter farther — now I say that none of us carried our letters far enough.

Yes, I must confess that I am learning things in my old age, for I know things now that I did not know before I read the lady's letter. —H. O. SMITH

Church Attendance Alone Won't Save Charlotte Editors, The News: I THINK that all places that are not clean and decent should be closed on Sunday, but I do think that the crowds that go to the shows are not going to church anyway and the only people who are going to church are Christians.

A Platform Reader Meets New Ideas

Editors, The News: A FEW days ago I was looking over The Charlotte News and I came across a letter titled "Blue Wall of Hate" and the stars are brighter. You can understand why they outshine themselves over Bethlehem 1956 years ago. Out under the stars, as you look across the city of Jerusalem, if the wall of the Old City, cutting Jerusalem in two parts—one Arab, one Jewish—two parts that hate each other. Behind that wall are mosques and churches. The Lutheran church, in Arab territory, is near the Holy Sepulchre where Christ was buried. The Garden of Gethsemane and the Mount of Olives are just beyond. You can see them, vague and shadowy under the moonlight, and the Arab guards pace the wall. Machine guns look down into the city of Jerusalem to make sure no man approaches, to keep the iron curtain between the new and the old, between Jew and Arab. Just alongside the Mount of Olives

Drew Pearson's Merry-Go-Round

JERUSALEM THE stars seem closer to the earth over the Holy Land than anywhere else in the world. The palm trees and the poplar trees that the Moslems say "talk with God" reach up until they seem to touch the sky.

Hate Keeps Modern Hospital Empty

Mount Scopus is the beautiful Hadassah Hospital, also the medical school of Hebrew University. The nurses home all empty. New, modern, they represent the best in medical science that money can buy. But no patients are in their beds, no nurses walk their halls, no medical students study in their classrooms. Only a handful of janitors live in the building, replaced every two weeks by a United Nations truce team which passes Arab sentries to bring supplies and replacements. The reason: The buildings, though still in Israel, are cut off by a little strip of Arab territory—part of the 215,267 border which wanders back and forth between Israel and Jordan. Beyond that little strip the Arabs will let no one

Sharp Political Notes Tinkle In Time Payments' Burden

ACCORDING to WASHINGTON reports, politicians savored the eloquence of Adlai Stevenson and the serenely persuasive arguments of President Eisenhower. But what they are really watching for is a coldly factual document which neither rain nor snow nor gloom of night prevents appearing monthly, no matter what the exigencies of politics. It is the monthly cost of living index and it conceivably could be a part of the reason for some of the curious aspects or recent elections. For it has been creeping up since the first of the year and in July rose a substantial seventeen cents per cent.

Quote, Unquote

An easterner was interviewing an old-timer for a book about life in the Kentucky mountains. "How often do you shoot a man back here?" "Just once," the hillbilly said.—LEXINGTON LEADER. Scientists say mass H-bomb attacks would make major genetic changes in human beings. But would anyone be around to care? "I would like to see a Leader-Call apply the medicine and the doctors run it for the Arabs as our contribution to peace." The Chief Rabbi is a Jewish spokesman who used to be Chief Rabbi of Dublin.

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It is another new economic phenomenon that the time-payment system today covers not just hard-goods, a state to which the country has long been accustomed—President Eisenhower's automobiles, machines, permanent improvements to housing. But it also covers such "soft" items as vacations and dining clubs. A series of articles in the Wall Street Journal revealed the further interesting fact that it was not just the relatively low-salaried worker who was laden with monthly payments but executives in brackets over \$5,000. In some cases the instances cited were astonishing.

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This interlarding of the economy in the 1950s in all walks of life, forced to have fixed amounts of money ready each first of the month means that any increase in daily expenditures—transportation, food, clothing, not to mention the unexpected medical expense—is a matter of great concern. The pinch is felt very fast, indeed. REAL LIFE CONCEALED Ironically, the Eisenhower administration's adoption of measures to put money in the farmer's pocket—the soil bank and the farm plan for wool—helps to show up the HCL rise. Formerly, the drop in farm-income held down the average, thus concealing the real rise in the index as it reflected urban and fixed-income problems. Now money is flowing into farm areas from these programs. It will perhaps warm the President's welcome in Iowa, but it has a price tag attached in the form of the "cost-of-living" index.

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