The Charlotte News

And Evening Chronicle

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FRIDAY, DECEMBER 31, 1937

They Need Missing Practice

We get fearfully tired of commenting ironically about the way our City police officers hit what they aren't shooting at, but, honestly, now, how about these examples:

September 15, 1937:

Patrolman Ritch drew his gun and ordered the Negro to halt, whereupon the Negro started to advance upon him, but as the officer shot, the Negro wheeled . . . and the bullet struck him in the back.

November 13, 1937:

Officer Bowlin took his pistol out and started to shoot in the air, and as he did he stepped in a ditch, and the bullet hit the Negro in the head instead.

December 30, 1937:

Finally Officer Herrin shot at one of the tires to halt the speeding car, and the bullet ricocheted, striking the driver in the arm.

Apparently, our guardians of the law need practice in how to *miss* targets.

Batting About .500'

A. D. 1938, says Roger Babson, is going to be a prosperous year. Things will be pretty bad for the first quarter, but after that there'll be "a substantial revival." And by way of backing up his statement he offers the contention that he called the turn on 1937, prophesying that the general business level would go up eight per cent, whereas it did actually go up eight per cent.

We ardently hope Mr. Babson's right about next year. But in 1928 Mr. Babson ventured into prophesy by saying, "The election of Hoover and a Republican Congress should result in continued prosperity in 1929." On October 22, 1929, he said, "I believe that many who have been caught could recoup . . . . by now buying some good bonds." In 1930 he said, "The corner has been turned in the Middle West." In 1931 he said, "Everything indicates that general business has turned the corner." In 1932-33-34-35 he repeated himself, in each of these last years fairly accurately calling the count; but on December 31, 1936, he said: "Stocks higher but good selection vital."

We trust for Mr. Babson's sake that he selected to get entirely out of the stock market early last fall.

You Said It, Professor

The College Physical Education Association was meeting in New Orleans. In the chairman's seat sat W. J. Livingston of Denison University. Mr. Denison opened his mouth and spoke, and what he said was that football was "becoming quite a problem in some colleges" and that "professionalism was creeping in."

Which seems to us to be about the most marvelous example of understatement we have seen in a long while. Creeping in, Professor? Actually, it's coming in boldly, and with the ratiocination that "it's honorable to do openly that which it is dishonorable to do by subterfuge;" arguments to the contrary notwithstanding. But, boy! they're going to have some pretty teams to watch.

For a Holiweek

There is a calendar-reform association which has a scheme to divide the year into thirteen equal months of four weeks each. The thirteen months would account for [illegible] days, leaving an odd fellow which would be called New Year's Day. It would be a holiday. In leap years, there would be a second day roving [illegible] month. This would be [illegible] Year Day, and it too [illegible] holiday.

[illegible] two holidays, so good. [illegible] better idea. [illegible] the day that is Christmas, and a holiday, and the day that is New Year's, and a holiday, is a whole week which is not, officially, a holiday at all. During that time, trade languishes, to be sure, and many people only go through the motions of working — the lucky stiffs! But those unfortunates with office hours to keep and editorials to write have to perform, however disinclined, almost the same old chores that comprise their lot in life the year 'round. It ain't fair.

So why wouldn't it be a simply swell idea to call the whole thing off between Christmas and New Year's Day, to stop the wheels, to close up the banks (after you'd drawn all your money out), to slack off on production and catch up with consumption, returning to the *fray* at the beginning of a new year with renewed bodies and minds and outlooks, not to say depleted pocketbooks? Do we hear a motion?

Sixty Against the Government

One of the means by which Adolf Hitler restored the insufferable self-esteem of the German nation and strengthened his hold upon it was by inventing an excuse — alibi is the slang term — for Germany's failure to win the war and to come back after the war. The Jews were IT. No matter that they had gone down fighting alongside Aryans or had given all they had to *Der Vaterland*. No matter, least of all, that no more than *one per cent* of Germany's post-war population was Jewish. The whole explanation of Germany's fall was the Jews.

Secretary Ickes has gone handsome Herr Adolf one better. For his alibi he has chosen the "60 American families." They, by conspiring together and acting in hateful concert, brought on this recession. Indeed, they brought on that other depression; but it got out of hand and they had to call on Roosevelt to right things for them. And then Roosevelt "had the business of the country turning over so well" that he thought he could safely take a rest for a while; and what happened? Why, the "60 American families" went on a sit-down strike. They went on a sit-down strike *after they had things going their own way!*

It doesn't make sense. It doesn't make a nickle's worth of sense. It is unbecoming to a Cabinet officer. It is that age-old defense, the alibi, brought out, brushed up and brandished around. It was Johnny's fault, Mama. Johnny made faces at me.

Hypothetical Speech

From Dunn comes a story to the effect that Mayor Taylor has closed up the slot machines in his town, despite the injunction of Federal Judge Meekins against their confiscation, by the simple process of calling in the storekeepers who operate them and "talking to them." The story says that "not once did he speak of indicting them for operating the machines," and that "the business men gladly consented to the Mayor's request . . . ."

That sounds perfectly ducky, and we have no intention of entering any defense for the slot machine. All the same, and all the same, it hath a most curious ring. So curious that we have been guessing as to what the Mayor *might* have said. He might, we thought, have said this:

> "Boys, I can't do a thing, right now. But all of you are in business here and all of you want to stay. And, well, boys, there are a lot of dusty little ordinances on the books that most of you violate because you don't know about them, and too, we have a lot of power as a municipal corporation to levy special license fees and taxes, you know. No: no threats, boys, but we sure wish you'd cooperate."

In short, sirs, as you have heard before now, there are more ways than one to skin a cat. And some of them, we suspect, are more dangerous than to allow the slot machines to stand until the law has had time to determine what should be done about them.

It Was Time

When Congress meets again next week, the House will have before it a bill, which has already been passed by the Senate, to forbid unauthorized sketches, photographs, or maps of "vital military and naval defensive installations and equipment." The bill was urgently requested by President Roosevelt and the Secretaries of War and the Navy.

It seems one of those things which in common sense ought to have been done a long time ago. We are a democratic people, with a violent dislike for "Keep Off the Grass" signs. But even for such a people, we have been extraordinarily lax in this matter. One need not believe in all the spy scares to recognize that spies do actually exist, and that the Japanese, in particular, are very active on the West Coast. And as matters stand there are almost no regulations about the photographs and sketches. More than that, the government itself will furnish to the public maps, profiles, and elevations of our principal fortifications. It is quite true that these maps do not reveal vital military details, such as gun placements, etc. But given them, a little casual photographing and sketching on the part of a spy would serve to produce a very accurate picture of just what the fortifications are like.

OLD HERRING TRICK AGAIN

By HUGH S. JOHNSON

WASHINGTON.—It is becoming quite apparent that the next Administration display of glittering balls kept dancing in the air on the left-hand side of the stage to divert attention from the slump in business on the right-hand side, is to be an assault on "monopoly."

The slogan runs that the recovery "we planned that way" was stopped because "monopolies" jacked up prices so high that consumers could no longer buy and hence production slumped.

At the onset it would be a good idea to find out what a monopoly is. The dictionaries say it is an exclusive power of producing, selling or purchasing a given commodity in a given market. An electric light company in a town where there is no competition is a monopoly. Outside of such public utilities which are regulated as to rates and can't "jack up their prices," there are very few monopolies in the sense of the dictionary definition of "exclusive power." But the definition doesn't cover the ground of the evil feared. What we are really talking about is not an "exclusive" power. We are talking about any power, whether exclusive or not, so to restrict the available supply of any necessity as artificially to fix too high a price to consumers.

Neither Size Nor Price Is A Criterion

And right there is where we get into trouble. What is price-fixing? When is a price too high?

Size of the seller, and high price as such, sometimes isn't the real complaint at all. There is one chain of 16,000 stores that once did more than 20 per cent of the retail grocery business in the United States. Did anybody complain that its prices were too high? Oh no. The complaint was that they were so low that little fellows couldn't stay in business.

I saw some of their figures once. Their bread production was so efficient that—low as their price was—they could have undersold the market by a cent a loaf and still made their normal profit. They didn't dare. It would have put every independent bakery out of business. On what theory is the monopoly drive going to handle this case—to get prices down? To protect consumers? Tommyrot!

Price Fixing Is Universal And Sound

There is no manufacturer who sells to the public who doesn't have to "fix a price." That's what catalogues are for. Business couldn't operate otherwise. Our biggest business—automobiles—is practically controlled by three companies. They fix a standard price at the beginning of each season. Yet they have recently been operating at higher wages and lower prices than ever. On what theory is government going after them?

Coal is big business and it has an industry-wide price-fixing scheme. Yet, except during NRA and one other short period, it has been deep in the red since the war. Lumber is in about the same fix and utterly disorganized. On what theory are they recovery-destroying big business?

Even Steel Is Not Villain Of Stories

The attack seems to center on iron and steel. I think it may be true that some smaller highly efficient producers could have sold some specialties at lower prices since the war. They could not have supplied the demand. The larger companies could not have met those prices without considerable ruin. I believe that the independents held an umbrella over their large competitors to prevent disruption of a whole industry and loss of millions to stockholders. But that this resulted in profiteering prices is not borne out by the statistics. Since 1925 the steel industry has earned less than 4 per cent on its investment.

There are some price abuses, but to accuse all business, or even all big business, of them is the most dangerous and vicious and least brave and honest kind of political demagoguery.

What this situation needs, before wild-eyed political action, is a thorough investigation—but not by a business-baiting Congressional committee—by an impartial commission.

Belles in the Making

(Christopher Billopp, Baltimore Evening Sun)

Two blase young gentlemen, aged 12 years, were comparing notes on their various holiday social engagements. One of them, it seems, had been to a dance which the other had not attended and he was describing it at some detail. "Any dazzlers there?" inquired the other. "Naw!" was the disgusted reply. "They all had braces on their teeth."

Middle Class Should Take Over Country

Group Would Do Well To Learn Class-Conscious Before Other Social Orders.

Dear Sir:

I was never more astounded in my life at the power of the press. I wrote you not two weeks ago on the advancement of civilization. If you remember, I pointed out that the rich people had run this country and the poor people took a whirl at it and one made about as great a mess as the other. My proposal was that the classless middle group be paramounted.

Well sir—it wasn't two days before Big Business saw the sense of the argument. The United States Chamber of Commerce had its speakers here making an earnest appeal that the common people join up with them. They didn't mention my name and, doubtless, will claim they thought of my idea first. However that may be, it just goes to show the force of a good idea.

What we are beginning to realize, we middle-classers, is that if we don't take over the country and run it the upper and lower classes are going to ruin us. In the course of time the pressure will be so great that we will bulge out into fascism or into communism, and we don't want either. Therefore, I suggest again that the middle class, as much as it dislikes the idea, become at least slightly class conscious. America has been middle class from the beginning and when it stops being middle class it won't be America. If Business wants our confidence again it must show us that it no longer has the desire to play tricks on us. If Labor wants our confidence it must demonstrate that it is willing to play the game our way, which is plain old democracy.

L. L. K. HUNTER.

Charlotte.

SOIL EROSION AND FARM AID ARE FOOTBALLS OF POLITICS IN NEW DEAL

Dear Sir:

Do you suppose I am getting cynical, or is it that when a fellow starts down the other side of the hill his vision lowers until he can see the running gear of politics and other necessary evils? Now take this subject of soil erosion, conservation of natural resources, etc. Ain't it a shame that such things which are vital to the life of America should be made the tool of politics?

We used to 'abandon 25 millions of acres a year because it had been exhausted, and move on to new uncultivated lands. But now there ain't no more virgin land to move onto, so the Federal Gov'mint sets out to do something about it with CCCs and a whole string of other alphabetical agencies that your Congressman and postmaster has got to endorse you for, if you get a job, or loan or whatnot.

However it seems that even the Gov'mint has a bottom to its pocket and a limit to its credit, and they are milling and stewing about how they are going to make up the benefit payments to the boys that are good and true. Some want it so a man can't plant but just so much each year. Others want it so that a farmer will be paid for cutting down on his crops and planting soil building cover crops. All the politicians seem agreed that the consumers of farm products should pay the farmer for not growing so much, so it will cost them that eats it more.

What a country this is getting to be. Taxing one class to support another class, or making industry pay for the farmer's shortcomings and lack of foresight.

HENRY HARDCASTLE.

Charlotte.

Remember the Rainy Day

(Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch)

Virginia's old-age pension will average $11.48 a month. Of course, it will be understood that the recipients mustn't spend it all in riotous living.

Visiting Around

Sit Down, Boys, We'll Bring It to You

(Mt. Moriah Item, Monroe Journal)

Some people in this section are so busy working at the sawmill and cutting crossties that they have their dinner carried to them.

Hyr'yah, Jake?

(1915 Item, Davie Record)

Jacob Stewart, who hangs out in the sleepy village of Winston, was in our midst Sunday.

The Stove League Season Opens

(State Port Pilot)

Although it is scarcely the season for sportsmen to turn their minds to fishing, John L. Hammond, Jr., of Philadelphia, has written the civic club asking all about the Southport big game fishing, catches, boats and other accommodations.

Base Is Right

(Transylvania Times)

Close scrutiny of the docket showed one glaring fact—liquor was base reason for majority of the "criminal" cases at the December term.

BELIEVE IT OR NOT

Registered U. S. Patent Office

By Ripley

On request, sent with stamped, addressed envelope, Mr. Ripley will furnish proof of anything depicted by him.

Today's Cartoon Self-Explanatory

ON THE RECORD

By DOROTHY THOMPSON

After-Thoughts on the Panay Incident

THE President and Mr. Hull have handled the Panay incident admirably. The Japanese have fulfilled all the demands of the American note, and fully recognized the justice of those demands. They have apologized, agreed to pay indemnities, and have taken the unprecedented step of recalling Admiral Mitsunami, commander of Japanese naval flying forces in China. They have also given assurances that there will be no more such incidents.

But It Could Happen All Over Again

The tension arising from this incident is dissipated but there will continue to be tension until peace is restored in China. As this column has pointed out before, the Panay incident was certainly not the result of a policy on the part of the Japanese government, but was in the sharpest contradiction to that policy. Neither was it an accident, however, such as might happen to any neutral in any form of war. It was a planned attack by elements in the Japanese armed forces, made for reasons which we can only speculate about. The United States has not accepted the official Japanese point of view that the attack was not deliberately made, but has merely refrained from pressing the point.

And it would be a mistake on the part of the people of the United States to feel complete assurance that there may not be a repetition of this sort of incident, which, coming on top of this would be much more serious than the Panay incident itself.

It's Too Late To Pull Out Of Orient

There are people who believe that we ought to withdraw entirely from China and thus preserve ourselves against any possibility of such incidents. Actually, our moral position would be much better at this moment if we had, before the outbreak of the present hostilities, voluntarily relinquished our own extraterritorial rights in China. For by the maintenance of those rights we ourselves imply an agreement with the Japanese—that the Chinese are incapable of maintaining a stable government able to protect and to deal justly with the rights of foreigners. To retire voluntarily, however, is one thing. To retire by the armed pressure of another foreign government, which is a guarantor with us and other powers of the territorial sovereignty of China, is to repudiate before all the world everything that might ever be the basis of any kind of international law.

It is very important, it seems to me, to keep before our eyes these days what it is that we really care about, and what, if anything, we are willing to take some risks for. The great danger of the Panay incident was that it involved what is called our "national honor." I detest the interpretation usually put upon this word. It implies that one's honor depends, not on one's own behavior, but on the treatment which one receives from others. It is an alluring and ambiguous phrase, used to whip up populations into the temper of violence and revenge. It was effectively used in 1898 around the cry of "Remember the Maine!" to put this country into war with Spain, when Spain had already acceded to every demand made upon it by the United States government.

Our Lack Of Clarity Is Big Peril

We still remain without a foreign policy, because we remain without a clear public opinion. Our interests, material and cultural, are scattered around a dangerous and disturbed world, in which wars may conceivably occur anywhere and at any time. What rights we will insist on maintaining in such a world are entirely unclear. And this is the most dangerous possible condition of affairs. For it encourages adventures against us, in the expectation that they will meet no opposition.

The division in public opinion here, made it impossible for our representatives to take as firm and clear a stand as they might otherwise have taken in Brussels, and the Japanese were openly aware of it. The Panay incident followed.

We would, and must regard any general war as a calamity for us, whether or not we are engaged in it. Yet, though we hate war, we have no positive program for peace. Nobody, not even we ourselves, know what we stand for, although there has been a great propaganda in this country which might easily lead other nations to believe that we will stand for anything short of actual invasion of our shores. If this assumption is not correct—and the way we met the Panay incident would seem to indicate that it is not—then we are contributing, as much as any nation in the world today, to the danger of a general conflagration. For no country contemplating war can disregard the United States, the mightiest single power in the world, nor would disregard it, except under an illusion about our public opinion, which we ourselves may be helping to foster.

We Have But Two Courses Open To Us

In all probability 1938 will be a year of increasing tensions between the nations. To live in this world without any policy at all is the most dangerous of all possible attitudes. It is tragic enough to go into war, whatever the circumstances; it adds folly to tragedy to drift into a war through muddle. We have actually only one of two choices for positive action: Either wholeheartedly to adopt isolation, and begin immediately to reorganize the social and economic life of this country, in order to make an isolationism which will function, no matter what the cost; or to take a positive position, clear to the world, that the United States is prepared to defend her rights in harmony with international law, and with existing treaties, and prepared to extend at the same time the machinery for arbitration and conciliation.

Earlier Days

News of 75 and 100 Years Ago From Files in the State Library at Raleigh

DECEMBER 31, 1862
75 YEARS AGO

YANKEES IN ELIZABETH CITY

The State Journal learns from a gentleman direct from Elizabeth City that on Friday last notice was given to the citizens that they must either take the oath of allegiance to the United States Government or withdraw beyond the lines of the enemy. Tuesday last was the last day allowed the people to determine what course they would adopt. Some of the citizens remonstrated with the commander of the enemy for singling out their town for such a harsh order. He replied that there must be a starting point and that in less than ten days the same order would be extended from Currituck to the Chowan River. We understand that some seven or eight Buffaloes have been killed recently around Elizabeth City. Our informant also states that the Negroes are armed by the Yankees in that section and that he saw about thirty with guns.

—Raleigh Register.

DECEMBER 31, 1837
100 YEARS AGO

Our correspondent at Washington alludes in his letter to the speech delivered by Mr. Clay yesterday upon one of Mr. Calhoun's resolutions. It was our good fortune to be present at the debate and we cannot forbear to communicate to our readers the impression it appeared to leave upon the mind of everyone who heard Mr. Clay's remarks. Mr. Calhoun in all his addresses to the Senate seeks with pertinacity for which we are unable to account, to underrate the value of the Union. Mr. Clay, on the contrary, permits no proper opportunity to pass without inculcating it. In the debate yesterday he did this in a manner which evidently had its effect upon the Senate. For a time we might have hoped that the demon of party had fled the Senate chamber, and that reason and love of country and the Union had again resumed their sway. The Senate was crowded and every true American must have felt that obedience to the solemn admonitions and earnest aspirations of Henry Clay, was the path of duty and of patriotism.

—Fayetteville Observer.

The Happy Season

(Billy Arthur, New Bern Tribune)

Choice comments about the holiday from various persons:

"It was a Merry Christmas all right, but not until late yesterday."

"Santa Claus was good to me—he brought Monday."

(Some soda now, please, John.)

"Nervous? Why, if someone had hung a bell on me, I'd have worn out the clapper in five minutes."

"Two buzzards sat on my doorstep all day, waiting for me to die. But I fooled 'em; I lived."

"It was the excitement watching the kids enjoy Christmas that makes me feel like this."

"It was the celery they served that made me sick."