THE CHARLOTTE NEWS

And Evening Chronicle

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● W. C. Dowd, 1856-1937 ●

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SATURDAY, JULY 19, 1941

Too Easy

Can Germany Fight Without South African Diamonds?

One of Charlotte's jewelers, Mr. Duffy Bruns, says that if Germany were cut off from her supply of South African diamonds, Hitler would be forced to abandon the war. The stones, he says are indispensable in making borers for cleaning anti-aircraft guns. They are used to make important munitions tools.

The answer to this is obvious: why doesn't South Africa, as a part of the United Kingdom, stop the flow of all diamonds into Germany?

If the war can be won by such a simple economic blockade it is strange that the British never thought of it before.

Or is the diamond trade with Germany one of those unexplainable things? There is good evidence that during the last war, German industrialists continued to trade in strategic materials with interests across the enemy lines. This unholy traffic between the Allies and the Central Powers has been cited upon during the past decade by pacifists as a major argument against war. If Britain is mixed up in this kind of thing again, it would justify the worst cynicism.

But we suspect that there is a catch somewhere in Mr. Bruns' contention. For no other reason, our suspicion is based on the feeling that a diamond drought through lack of diamonds—well, it sounds just too easy.

Mystery

Why Fix Tax Rates Higher Than They Have To Be?

What, we'd like to know, is the sense of fixing a tax rate that will produce substantially more revenue than is needed to run the City Government? To do just that seems to be the intention of the City Council, following out a precedent set some time ago by the County Commissioners in setting their fiscal sights for the year ahead.

As a rule, governing bodies adore to reduce tax rates so that they may have something at which to point with pride. And as a matter of fact, the County board, and the City is represented as being about to fix a tax rate which ostensibly would produce about the amount of revenue needed, with only a moderate margin for safety's sake. But the tax rate is not the only controlling factor.

An equally important factor is the estimate of tax collections. In making up its budget, the County figured that it would collect during the year ahead 81 per cent of taxes levied. Last year it collected better than 87 per cent. Plainly, the County budget as adopted was calculated to produce a sizeable surplus.

Last year the City collected better than 90 per cent of current taxes due. Yet the talk is of basing this year's budget on an expectancy of only 85 per cent, and that is equivalent to fixing a tax rate which will surely produce a surplus of some $75,000. Put it this way: it is equivalent to fixing a tax rate four or five cents higher than need be.

Local tax rates are not at all onerous, both governments are frugally operated, money is plentiful, and what's left over next July will be available for the following year. In fine, nothing in the premises justifies any charges of extravagance or mismanagement.

But what, to come down to it, is the sense of compelling the taxpayers to pay over more than is necessary to run our local governments? If somebody will explain it to us, we'll be greatly obliged.

Liability

An Ick'sian Attack On Lindbergh Boomerangs

Lindbergh has every right to demand that Secretary Harold Ickes apologize for implying that the ex-Colonel is connected with "interest of a foreign power." Mr. Ickes specifically criticized Lindbergh for accepting that now-infamous German medal way back in 1938. Lindbergh's reply, air-tight and documented, was that to have refused the Nazi decoration would have been to insult Germany in the name of the American Ambassador who was on-hand at the presentation.

It is nothing new for Ickes to make wild, wooly and unsubstantiated attack on any person who happens to cross his path. He is a man who breathes hatred, who apparently is unable to exercise the self-control that should qualify a Cabinet member. He is a man who possesses such a lack of restraint that he is dangerous not only to his enemies, but also to his friends.

This newspaper sees no merit in the political views of Lindbergh. We disagree with virtually everything he says; we deplore his attitude in this world crisis. It is because of this position that we and all who disagree with Lindbergh would regret seeing him martyrized.

Yet the blundering, extremist Mr. Ickes has done more to help Lindbergh than all of the Nazi sympathizers in America. By shooting off his mouth, Mr. Ickes has given Lindbergh the opportunity to demand an apology. The fair-minded American public will see justification in these demands.

If Mr. Ickes were a baseball player instead of a cabinet member, his manager would have sent him back to the bush leagues long ago.

No Brakes

Japanese Cabinet Loses Last Remnant of Cautious Men

Prince Konoye of Japan has announced the names of his new cabinet ministers. While it is rash to attempt to plumb the Prince's oriental and therefore inscrutable mind, several conclusions are now rather obvious.

Yosuke Matsuoka and four other cabinet members have been squeezed out. With them goes the last trace of political party, constitutional government in the Japanese regime. They have been replaced by men like Tanabe and Sakonji—ardent militarists, men who have turned their back on the West. The new regime is completely totalitarian. It is a concentration of power, dedicated to military conquest at any cost.

Matsuoka, the clever statesman who engineered the Axis pact and on top of that the non-aggression treaty with Russia, understands at least something of America's determination not to be cut off from the East Indies. His successor Admiral Toyoda, is one of the men who has consistently threatened the United States and our Navy. He is a source of blood-and-thunder newspaper stories about how war between Japan and the United States is inevitable. Admiral Toyoda is a danger spot in the new cabinet.

Another ominous sign is the promotion of Baron Hiranuma from minister-without-portfolio in the old cabinet to Vice-Premier of the new one. The Baron is perhaps the most powerful and ruthless man in Japan. He hates Britain and the United States. He is one of the founders of the present militarist clique that has Japan by the throat.

All of this means that the last feeble brakes that attempted to slow down the Nipponese cabinet in its rush toward war with the democracies have been removed. It means that the last chance for a peaceful understanding between Japan and the United States has vanished. No matter what the United States proposed, there is no one in the Japanese cabinet who would listen. The break is as absolute as if suddenly there were no more Japanese who understood English.

Japan now may be expected to provoke a war with the United States. And this brings us to another question: Would actual war stop deliveries of American petroleum products to Japan? Or what would it take to stop this outrageous traffic?

Always, there is a feeling of something wrong in the Stalin portrait. Either the pipe isn't lit or that mustache is asbestos.

A Missouri city council threatens action against the high collars on local beers. This, it says in substance, is no time for half-way measures.

A mathematical wizard believes the sum of the parts may be greater than the whole, as when repacking a vacation trunk.

Now that Shaw has spoken, we await a further word from H. G. Wells on the future civilization. However dark, just a future would be something.

In re the Morgenthau plea for less non-defense spending, Congress' position is as usual: It will go for any reduction diet that doesn't interfere with regular meals.

Honest Way Out

By Hugh S. Johnson

THE MESS created by the provisions for only one year's service by selectees and others unless Congress shall declare the national interest imperilled, is thicker than you think. General Marshall is absolutely right. Neither these lads, nor the National Guard and the Reserve officers on active duty, can be permitted to go home in shoals without making our army and our country the laughing stock of the world and worse—perhaps the football of the world. The idea of assembling a vast army of 1,500,000 men, only ten per cent trained and fifteen per cent equipped, and then permitting it to melt in a month like a snowball on a hot stove is too great a folly to be even debated outside a lunatic asylum.

This column called attention to the absurdity of that one-year provision while the act was being debated. Several times since, it has accurately pointed to the certain development of this situation.

THREE WAYS TO KEEP DRAFTEES IN SERVICE

What to do? There are three alternatives. Shall we amend these laws by putting into them arbitrary provisions permitting the President to extend their terms of service, when we well know that if such provisions had been proposed when the bills were up in Congress, they would have failed of enactment? Shall we take a proper advantage of a clear provision in most of these statutes requiring indefinite service when Congress shall declare that the "national interest is imperilled," and have Congress so declare? Shall we urge these people voluntarily to agree to indefinite extensions of service?

Those people who urge the first course say that there was no contractual obligation to these men and that therefore there is no reason why the Government shouldn't simply change the law. It is true that the obligation to military service is not contractual, legally, this course could be followed. But there is a very good reason why it shouldn't be. There is an element of sharp practice in this kind of abracadabra that would be rotten for morale both in the Army and in the country among the families and friends of the men.

It is highly important to preserve popular confidence in the promises or representations of our own Government at least. It is about the last government toward which that confidence exists.

RESULT OF AN APPEAL FOR VOLUNTEERS IS UNCERTAIN

Up to today, I felt that an appeal to these men by the President, setting forth frankly the terrible dilemma presented by gross errors in legislation, would result in such an avalanche of voluntary consents to service for the duration of the emergency that the whole predicament could be avoided. Now I am not so sure. If we tried it and it failed, we would stand shamed before the world. I don't know whether it would fail or not, but that is a very great gamble and I have very recently learned that there are some circumstances that raise grave doubts of its success.

No sufficient effort, such as confidential polls of commanders, have been made to explore this possibility thoroughly, but I have no doubt that General Marshall has good reasons for his reluctance to try it, even if he hesitates to state them.

If that is so and the volunteer alternative is out, why not use the blunt method and in faithful compliance with the terms of the original statutes have Congress frankly declare that the "national interest is imperilled" which would automatically make extended service not only legal but fair and just.

IF OUR INTERESTS ARE NOT IMPERILLED, WHAT IS?

If Congress doesn't think our interest is imperilled, why are we spending all these billions and why did we pass the Lease-Lend Bill? Of course, the answer is that Congress is afraid that such an action would invoke other totalitarian powers in the President which it is not yet ready to grant. That is all pappy bugaboo. Congress by the words of its text, could limit the effects of its declaration in any way it chose.

However you look at it, this is a hell of a mess from which we must escape, but why can't we escape in the only frank, courageous and honest way that seems open.

Fortune Smiles On Fred Fleming

Billy Arthur in
The Onslow County News & Views

"Boy, I'm lucky," Fred Fleming exclaimed the other day. "I've got a cigarette lighter and a wife, and they both work."

A Subsidized Weekly Press?

Greensboro News

The last thing we expected to hear came out of the meeting last week of the Northwestern North Carolina Weekly Newspaper Association when Carroll E. Wilson, a publisher as well as member of the highway and public works commission, is reported to have advocated some sort of system of Federal aid to weekly newspapers.

Behind the pro argument, which we understand involves a sharp decrease in national advertising lineage as a result of the national defense program, the fact that Uncle Sam is now aiding the farmer and other types of business and a lot of other things that a publisher could think up between issues.

We have watched tobacco plowed under at the direction of Washington, little pigs killed, wheat mown down, independence of one sort or another sacrificed in the name of immediate needs. But touch the freedom of the press! That is what we have all been shouting about with the weekly publishers on the front end of the bandwagon. Printers have taken turnips and cordwood in on account and everybody counted it honorable, but somehow or another we can't picture one of these stalwart defenders of democracy with a "please, sir" on his lips and a Washington voucher in his hand.

The Horse That Talked

Pete Ivey in the
Winston-Salem Sentinel.

Once there was a man walking through a pasture where horses were grazing. He saw an old broken down plug, and as he passed near the horse, the horse said, "I won the Kentucky Derby."

The man stopped and walked slowly over to the horse.

"I won the Kentucky Derby," said the horse.

"Is it actually you talking?" said the man.

"Sure, I can talk," said the horse.

The man went to the owner of the horse, a farmer. He had high hopes of putting the horse in a circus, or going on the stage with him. A talking horse would be the greatest thing since the Siamese Twins.

"I'll pay you $1,000 dollars for that horse," he said to the farmer.

"Oh I'll sell him much cheaper than that," said the farmer.

"No, I'll pay you the thousand," said the man. "I don't want to cheat you."

"You'll be making a mistake if you buy that horse," said the farmer.

"Why?" said the man.

"I'll bet he told you he won the Kentucky Derby, didn't he?"

"Yes," said the man.

"He tells that to everybody," said the farmer. "He's the biggest liar in these parts."

Being Honest About War News

The Oglethorpe (Ga.) Echo

We are asked why it is that The Echo does not give any war news. In the first place if there was any really reliable news to give it would be old and perhaps all changed before The Echo could reach most of its readers. And secondly it is not our policy to keep our readers unduly stirred up on any subject.

Long, Long Ago

When, in these mad times, can we remember when an "imperial crisis" signified that Gandhi and his boys were lying down in the car tracks?

TODAY'S BIBLE THOUGHT

I have prayer for thee that thy faith fail not.—Luke 22:32.

And Hot Ones Besides

—By Herblock

"Vengeance Is Mine . . ."

Christian Science Monitor

Those who have not been bombed may have difficulty in fully understanding the cheers evoked by Mr. Churchill's terrible promise:

"We will mete out to the Germans the measure and more than the measure they have meted out to us."

More than the Mosaic eye-for-an-eye, tooth-for-a-tooth is involved here. More than the human impulse to strike back lies behind this demand, more than hate answering hate. Many of the British people are convinced that the best hope of ending the war is to convince the German people that they will suffer increasingly as it is prolonged.

There is also a growing conviction that merely destroying the Nazi power will only do what the destruction of the Hohenzollern dynasty did last time—bring after a time a revival of Prussian militarism in some new form. Many Germans themselves have said that the German people—who have not felt the foot of an invader since Napoleon's day—must be cured of dreams of national glory based on their remarkable military efficiency.

This view is reflected in Mr. Churchill's statement:

"It is time that the Germans should be made to suffer in their own homeland and cities something of the torments they have let loose upon their neighbors and upon the world."

Human punishment is still based on experience which teaches that mortals change slowly and after many lessons in suffering. Those who have not been bombed are not in the best position to oppose British demands that the German people must be made to suffer. Yet they may hope that the lesson will be learned without the "month after month, year after year," Mr. Churchill promised. They may suggest that some alternative, some hope of post-war forgiveness and a better "new order" should be offered the German people."

They must urge that even those who have been bombed try to keep the purpose of ending the war above the desire for revenge. For otherwise the result of this war will be no better than that of the last. Hate is the real maker of war, the real enemy of all mankind. And Christians must find some way to displace the Mosaic law of war with the higher law which says, "Love your enemies.... pray for them which despitefully use you."

German Morale

By Raymond Clapper

THE Russians are putting up a harder fight than some military men here expected, but nothing has developed to change their judgement that Germany will win the campaign.

The Germans are close to the Dnieper River. The crossing will be difficult and probably very costly. Once over that the German forces will be able to pinch off Russian lines of supply and carry out their large encircling movements.

So that here it is expected there will be severe fighting for several days more, to be followed by more rapid movement.

The Russian Government is moving a considerable number of commissariats out of Moscow, those not essential to the defense of the city and the west. Some Government offices are being moved east of the Urals, and some to points on the Volga west of the Urals. The Government is still at Moscow and the American Embassy remains there, except that the staff has moved to a country place about twenty miles out of the city. That occurred when the German attack began, previous arrangements having been made by Ambassador Steinhardt.

NAZIS ALMOST READY TO THROW OUT PINCERS

The line of the German advance is now placed roughly along Kiev, Gomel, Rogachev, Mogilev, Vitebsk, Ostrov, Novgorod and the Luga River, which lies across the path to Leningrad. From the directions of the German, it is judged that the Germans hope to throw one arm around Leningrad, another around Kiev to cut off the Ukraine, and move up both sides of the Moscow-Smolensk railroad with the intention of closing in and pinching off the strong Russian center.

Those are the main outlines as seen here by military men. They discount minor advances and successful counter-attacks as inevitable fluctuations in a steadily advancing German march.

The chief hope is that Hitler will pay dearly for his victories. Usually it is assumed that as long as an army is winning, morale is unbreakable. Yet there is another rule that an outfit cannot stand losses above 10 per cent. This is the accepted rule on both sides in air warfare now.

NAPOLEON WAS WINNING WHEN FRENCH WEAKENED

Napoleon was winning campaigns when the French people grew war-weary. In fact French morale was so low that Napoleon used only 25 per cent French troops in his Russian campaign.

If the Russian campaign can be made costly enough, Hitler may suffer damage that will compel him to move with more restraint hereafter. It is certain to drive him into a new peace offensive, not with any idea of it succeeding but to strengthen the morale of his own people. A Hitler peace proposal after the Russian campaign will be evidence, not of strength but of weakness, despite the fact that a Russian victory would leave him with vastly stronger material resources.

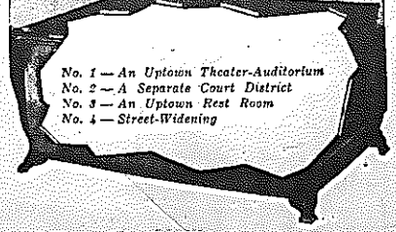
Not only will the Russian campaign give Hitler greater raw-material resources. It will mark the smashing of the last big army left outside of Germany. Once Russia is out of the way, there is no army nor any combination of armies that could remotely approach the strength of Hitler's 260 war-seasoned divisions.

LIGHTER SHIPPING LOSSES ARE ENCOURAGING

He would face the possibility of enervating war-weariness within Germany, although we should not count too much upon this wishful thinking. A more tangible source of encouragement lies in the new figures on shipping losses, which the British Government says were lower in June than in any month since January. The rate of loss in June equals about 4,000,000 tons a year, which still is more than combined British and American replacement. But the trend is favorable and may be partly accounted for by the patrol assistance from the United States. Sustained bombing of Germany is another source of encouragement, although it is doubtful whether the British are yet inflicting really severe damage.

So far as the interests of the United States are concerned, the Atlantic still is the decisive area. The Atlantic appears stronger now than at any time during the war. Coming months should make it steadily stronger. So long as the Atlantic is held, Hitler cannot win.

The QUEEN CITY'S HOPE CHEST



No. 1 — An Uptown Theater-Auditorium
No. 2 — A Separate Court District
No. 3 — An Uptown Rest Room
No. 4 — Street-Widening

Side Glances

"Yes, dear, I'm glad you're bridge champion of the resort, and you'll be glad to know you won't have to worry further about breaking your grandmother's old soup tureen—I dropped it last week."

Visitin' Around

Incidental Intelligence
(North Wilkesboro Hustler)

Mr. Harold Parks of Roaring River and employee of a manufacturing establishment in Elkin, was here Saturday afternoon. His father, Mr. Felix L. Parks, rural route mail carrier formerly, has been until recently making a trip each week to Statesville to a hospital there for treatment.