THE CHARLOTTE NEWS

And Evening Chronicle

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● W. C. Dowd, 1865-1927 ●

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 20, 1943

An Old Tune

City Planning Commission Could Make Bottlenecks Obsolete

It must be apparent to any and all onlookers that the City of Charlotte has met the challenge of passing years with an appalling lack of foresight in regard to its physical well-being. The blessings of sound fiscal management and the occassional passage of an aggressive administration have not entirely offset the curse of planlessness by which we drift. The popular doctrine of too-little-too-late might well have been first expounded within the corporate limits.

We refer, and we admit to more than a touch of impatience, to the now-revived discussion of traffic bottlenecks in the business district. Time and time again for many years any number of voices, official and otherwise, have been raised on the question: Streets must be widened. Charlotte must make a master plan of development, and plan for growth coming with tomorrow. The result has always been wide discussion, narrow streets.

More is involved, of course, than the width of downtown thoroughfares. Codes and regulations governing all city property must be in a continuing state of revision to meet the ever-expanding needs of the community. And because no organization may efficiently meet such conditions haphazardly, the City suffers greatly from the lack of a Planning Commission, an agency we have long insisted to be a vital necessity.

The new search for a proper control of traffic flow, and the offering of a bill to the General Assembly making possible such Commissions for local governments should bring home to the community once more the wisdom of providing for future planning. Otherwise, the burden of gearing the city to meet new demands will always rest upon some public-spirited volunteer of the future. And such volunteers, in the past, have maintained an unusual record of absence or tardiness.

Groundwork

Supreme Court Decision Paves Way for Socialized Medicine

The Supreme Court, ruling in favor of a Washington co-operative health plan group and against the American Medical Association in an anti-trust case, has opened the way for the coming of socialized medicine to the United States. The Medical Association, speaking for the nation's physicians (for almost 100 years), has steadfastly resisted the growing movement. This time, says the highest tribunal, it hath protested too much.

Charged with conspiring with the District of Columbia Medical Society to restrain trade by attempting to have physicians and hospitals boycott Health Group Association, Inc. (an organization of Government employees providing medical and hospital care on a risk-sharing, prepayment basis), AMA appealed, to no avail.

It was ordered to pay a fine of $2,500, but that was trifling in view of the probable effect of the decision upon the future course of the medical profession in the United States. The position of the profession has long been that socialized medicine would kill initiative, and that standardization would tend to hamper medical progress. It was also noted, in the Court decision, that health plan groups were "contrary to the code of ethics" of AMA.

But by the fateful decision, the breakdown of that ethical code is indicated. It is perhaps significant that the milestone was passed under the present Administration, in Washington, by Government workers headed by a Labor Department employee. We do not think the lady president of the victorious health group was exaggerating at all when she said: "The decision will be advantageous to all groups . . . that are planning for medical care."

The times change, and the medical profession is on the way to becoming a public property. That's socializing.

From a mighty colossus, the Duce has been shrunk to midget size. And, at that, the wonders of dehydration have scarcely begun.

Secretary Wickard insists there will be more than enough cereals for each and everyone. Now to discover what we can get with all the box tops.

Fifth Freedom

Appalachian Students Join in World Move; They Wanta Dance

Appalachian State Teachers College, long regarded as one of our outstanding State educational institutions, is presently vexed with an ailment of the times, the strike. At six in the morning, a particularly brisk hour at any season in high Watauga, the student body struck. That seems a mite early for several hundred youngsters to open a jurisdictional dispute, but they would have it no other way.

The students, with precedent dating back to the Magna Charta and beyond, were striking for independence. They wanted, among other items, a strong self-government, and their bold protest over existing conditions might well have been stimulated by the speeches of Henry Wallace. They saw, perhaps, demands for a free new world, and were moved to demand their share.

They demanded improved dormitory life, better cafeteria service, and a relaxation of social restrictions—with permission to dance. The latter, though not mentioned in the Four Freedoms of the Atlantic Charter, has apparently become one of the vital necessities, after danceless years.

The farmer wants higher prices, Labor wants higher wages, Fannie Perkins wants higher Social Security, India wants high freedom, and Appalachian wants the high old life, with dancing. We make progress in our time. But, if we recall correctly the outlook of the outraged undergraduate, all will be peace and forgetfulness at Appalachian within a month, and the youngsters will have succumbed to appeasement. The strike lasted less than a day, even without interference by the War Labor Board.

First Stand

House Democrats Turn Down a Leftist, and Set a Course

The 78th Congress, however the nation expects it to discharge its responsibility in making war and preparing for peace, is already about the business of setting its own course. It intends to show a mind of its own, and the division between war necessity and political expediency is to be drawn according to Congressional lights. If that was not clear before, it became so yesterday in a bit of byplay as the House prepared for action.

In Democratic caucus, New York's Representative Marcantonio was the subject of a free-for-all fight which brought into sharp focus a rising national resentment against New Deal domestic policy in wartime and its old boundless enthusiasm for the cause of Organized Labor. Marcantonio, representing both the left-walking New Dealers and the American-Labor Party, was seeking membership on the House Judiciary Committee, and he fell quickly before a determined assault.

It was the Southern delegation which led the charge, and the impassioned protests it raised were proof enough that the farm states, regardless of any consideration, are determined to halt the march of Labor to new gains. Marcantonio, an able Representative, likely deserved to be seated on the important committee without objection, but he was advanced at a moment when his background was all-important.

The House was not, in the true sense, rebellious. Its firm will to resist new Labor demands and to do battle with the radical wing of the Administration was born of the elections, and the fact that it was thus demonstrated in caucus of the majority party, and followed by a peace-making scene indicates that everything passing through the legislative mill, from whatever source, is destined to receive sharp-eyed attention.

That Representative Marcantonio did not win his place, though only a move in the jockeying for administrative action, is significant. It amounts to a preliminary move in the making of a new kind of government in Washington.

Putting it baldly, loss of the initiative means that the Fuehrer has to play with the other fellow's deck of cards.

We are an incurably trusting people, and to date no one has brought out a refrigerator with a combination on the door.

Small Business Aid

A Time Of Concentration

By Raymond Clapper

WASHINGTON

BEFORE long we shall be hearing much more about concentration of civilian production. As the output of most civilian industries is going to be reduced more sharply, to save materials, manpower and transportation, marked readjustments will be necessary in many businesses. Frequently they will close.

If, in a civilian-goods industry—the War Production Board people explain—production is cut to 25 per cent of normal, it is impracticable to permit all the firms of the industry to continue to operate. The owner might be willing to take a loss by running three days a week, say—but that would waste plant facilities, power and labor. The idea is to concentrate production, have a few plants running full, and hope to use the others in war work.

A start already has been made. Bicycle production, for instance, was concentrated from twelve firms down to two, and trademarks were eliminated. The ten other factories are largely engaged in war work.

In selecting the plants to be continued in production, WPB officials say it is their policy to give preference to small plants. But production will be concentrated only when it is likely to aid war production or to assure essential civilian supplies.

Not much of this was done last year. But every other industrial belligerent has had to go into a drastic program of concentration, and WPB expectations are that the practice will expand here because of the strong pressure to reduce civilian production.

Concentration already has been put into effect in manufacture of bicycles, typewriters, stoves and farm machinery. How much more of this will come is a question, because some think that changes coming about in the natural course will take care of the situation.

More progress is being made in feeding out war orders to small business. That relieves the shock of loss of civilian production. Lou Holland, with his small-war-plants activity authorized by Congress as an arm of WPB, says the Army, Navy and Maritime Commission are giving more attention now to the scattering of orders to save small plants from disappearing.

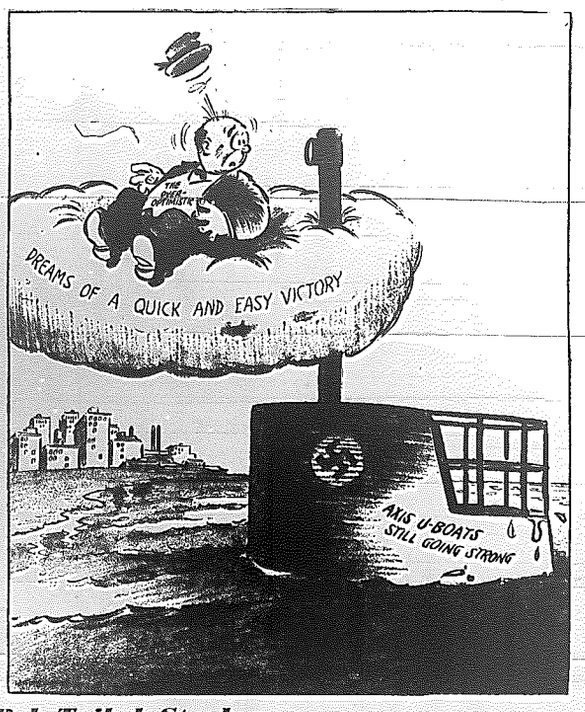
Lieutenant General Somervell, Chief of the Services of Supply, has co-operated with Holland's small-war-plants men, and in November and December the Army placed 43,000 supply contracts with plants employing five to 500 wage earners—contracts, amounting to $846,000,000. Holland's organization has directly cleared, into 3,684 distressed small plants, prime and subcontracts of a total value of $233,000,000. In many cases these are small orders that mean not only a bit added to war production, but the saving of some man's business—which may not be important in the war but is of vast importance to a healthy country after the war.

Early in the war most of the contracts went to big industry. Army and Navy procurement officials were accustomed to dealing with large, established concerns. Anyway we needed rapid expansion in the largest possible volume. There was little time to go into bits and pieces. The small plants were neglected, although for a while many of them were able to run along on civilian work.

That day is ending, and the war effort will be better off if they are out of civilian work and in war work.

Surprise!

—By Herblock



Bob-Tailed Staple

Cotton At The Crossroads

From The Christian Science Monitor

WHAT does the cutting of three inches from the tails of all shirts manufactured after last Dec. 15 portend for the future of cotton after the war? This is one of the questions the thinking element of the 20-odd million people of the Cotton South is asking today, for it was only a generation or so ago that they were trying to get shirt tails lengthened to help use up surplus cotton.

Indeed, one enterprising economist figured out during that drive that by adding only one inch to the shirt tails of the four hundred million Chinese, the South, which then grew two-thirds of the world's cotton, would be transformed from abject poverty to riches.

Other exigencies of war besides the shortening of shirt tails are bringing into sharp focus the question of cotton's future in other fields. This was perhaps best dramatized by William Jeffers when he ordered the use of rayon instead of cotton for the cord in heavy-duty military tires. Cotton States Senators became vociferous for the benefit of the folks back home. But the folks back home, for the most part, considered this a dis-service—this putting them in the light of opposing something that the Army said was urgently necessary for the war effort. Today they realize that cotton cannot be saved in Congress—that it must prove its worth in competition with synthetic fibers.

Cotton is probably used by more people and for a greater variety of purposes than any other fiber. But the rayon interests have found various ways in recent years to compete successfully against cotton. They started after the silk market a few years ago by furnishing garment manufacturers with fabrics that felt and looked like silk. They cut somewhat into silk's market. People who were never before able to afford silk could enjoy the luxury of garments made of this material.

The Hercules Powder Company now announces that it has found a way to adapt wood pulp to the manufacture of smokeless powder—a field heretofore cotton's exclusively. This has the advantage of freeing Canada and Australia from dependence on cotton, which they cannot grow; it is cheaper than cotton, and it is said to increase production by about 25 per cent.

To recapture some of these markets, Representative Fulmer of South Carolina, according to the Associated Press, wants Congress to pass a law requiring the use of five to fifteen pounds of lint cotton with every 85 to 95 pounds of wood pulp used in making rayon, paper, etc. Some rayon formulas already use large quantities of cotton linters, a mixture of fuzz and "dogtail" fibers left over from cotton ginnings. But Representative Fulmer wants them to use the real thing.

There is grave doubt as to the constitutionality of his proposal; and it is revolutionary, to say the least. If enacted into law, a precedent would be set which the Atlanta Journal, editorially, says might see a New England bloc "requiring us Southerners to serve two codfish balls with every ten oysters, and Senator McCarran's bloc . . . making mandatory the installation of sterling silver plumbing fixtures in every home."

Since the first eight bags of cotton were sent from Savannah to Liverpool in 1784, cotton has meant both riches and poverty to many people in England and America. Two million textile-working Britons were hungry during the "cotton famine" of the Civil War. Normally, the livelihood of at least 13,500,000 Americans is tied up one way or another with cotton.

Cotton is at the crossroads. It must compete with synthetics which have seized Government war subsidies for expansion and research, enabling them to reduce costs substantially. No longer can its price go to $1.01 1-2 a pound, as in 1863, or even to 40 cents, as in 1910. Today it is 20 cents a pound, and isn't likely to be allowed to go much higher.

To meet the challenge, cotton interests have instituted research designed to retain present markets and open new ones. A year or so ago the Cotton Textile Institute set up research laboratories, which are making some progress. A little earlier the Federal Government established a laboratory at New Orleans for cotton research. Some Southern technical schools are beginning now to give cotton specialized study.

Perhaps there will yet arise one who will do for cotton what the late great Negro chemist, Dr. George Washington Carver, did for the lowly peanut, and Dr. Charles Herty did for Southern slash pine.

Side Glances

"I don't care much for dance music, but I always turn it on when the girls start airing their opinions of the war!"

The Reich Smells

A Breakdown?

By Samuel Grafton

NEW YORK.

WE now learn that a certain number of Germans ride railroad trains just for pleasure trips. They loll about in resorts. They also spread rumors and complain they are not allowed to dance. (This information comes to us from Herr Goebbels, who has had to write a special article for the magazine, Das Reich, denouncing these practices.)

We learned, some months ago, from Howard E. Smith, that there has been an amazing rise in the circulation of pornographic picture magazines in Germany. The man of blood and soil, the streamlined believer in the leadership principle, the archtype of the master race, seems to spend considerable time studying photographs of undressed ladies. Why the wave of the future should leer so has not been adequately explained.

From a special Berlin broadcast to German soldiers near Stalingrad, we learn that some of the German troops are muttering that they "see no sense in holding on." There must be at least a number of such, or the German propaganda office would not have spent so much time denouncing them, while the world listened in. Merely to try to imagine such an insulting broadcasting emanating from our own General Headquarters to our American soldiers is to strain the imagination very severely indeed.

If we add this item to the trends listed above, we find it increasingly difficult to continue to picture Germany as a kind of perpetual Ride of the Valkyrie, which is the way German propaganda wants us to picture the Dritte Reich. (Mr. Smith has also told us of the tremendous increase of sale in Germany of various drugs used for sexual stimulation, and we have the problem of equating that, too, with the Niebelungen legend.)

From William Ebenstein's new book, "The Nazi State," a factual survey—taken almost entirely from official Nazi press sources—we learn that this new state, devoted to "order," has recently had to establish the death penalty for thirteen crimes punished by lesser penalties before. One is kidnapping. Heavens! Can it be true that people still kidnap people in Germany? Must be.

There also seem to be a certain number of German profiteers, who grab up "the butter and sausages of the peasants," for Herr Goebbels has recently been denouncing these, too. I don't understand here in an atmosphere so filled with Wagnerian music, people can go around looking at "fleshy" pictures, stealing the peasant's sausages, and wishing to dance to jazz music.

I know whose peace of mind these items will disturb. There are certain American (like certain French) neurotics who have come to look upon all departures from strict efficiency and order as "typically democratic"; and a corresponding legend has been built up these last ten years. Thus anything, from kidnapping, to the spectacle of one man eating more than his share, to the sight of people enjoying themselves innocently at a theater during war, to difficulty in collecting rubber scrap is "typically democratic," with the unspoken (or sometimes spoken) footnote: "That wouldn't happen in Germany."

Yah! But the Nazis have (see Ebenstein) thoroughly racketized the sale of, for example, children's school-books, so that when a Nazi-owned firm publishes a new text it is quite likely that the Nazi school authorities will obligingly help out by ordering every child in the country to buy a copy.

To those peewee minds which cannot stand variations from the norm, or violations of order, without turning to the easy way of fascist conceptions, as to drink, for the cure, I recommend close study of all literature emanating from Germany. These bruised intellects among us have swallowed, to an appalling extent, the Goebbels version of the super-clean, super-ordinary, pastel-tinted, you-can-eat-off-the-sidewalk Germany, where everything is in its place, and where one never hears a foreign accent or anything else to disturb the delicate balance of one's resolute mediocrity. But, consult Smith on how the Berlin subways smell.

It would be good moral preparation for the coming attack to route whatever remains of the legend of the Streamlined super-duper German state from our minds. The Russians have taught us how one shouts: "Whoa!" to the Ride of the Valkyrie. And the Valkyrie halt, and the riders turn out to be quite ordinary horsemen, and their steeds to have saddle boils, even as elsewhere, and the legend dies.

Just In Jest

So And So

Louisville Courier-Journal

Samuel Goldwyn addressed a motion picture producers' meeting in this fashion: "Gentlemen, for your information I would like to ask a question."

English statesmen are just as good as their American brothers when it comes to running down the opposition. Winston Churchill once said of Stanley Baldwin: "Stanley occasionally stumbles over the truth, but he always hastily picks himself up and hurries on as if nothing had happened." And Lord Birkenhead cracked about Sir Stanley Hoare that "the trouble with Sam is that he is descended from a long line of maiden aunts."

Here is a statement by G. K. Chesterton which is worth plenty of reflection: "Among all the strange things that men have forgotten, the most universal lapse of memory is that by which they have forgotten they are living on a star."

Just how big cargo planes will become, no one knows for sure but there seems to be no limit. Raymond Loewy asked a manufacturer how big a cargo plane could be built and was answered with: "Just tell me how much land or water is available to take off from or land in."

The New Yorker asked one of its writers, A. J. Liebling, to do one of the magazine's famous "Profiles" on a certain British general. Liebling got the necessary military permission and was admitted to the general's office in London. Asked the general: "Where do you want me to sit?"

Visitin' Around

Stamping Time

The rural route mail carriers have much larger mails to handle now. The war has increased letter writing enormously. Patrons of rural routes can help their carriers get along with the mail in a very simple way. That is, to buy their stamps in advance and stamp their letters before they put them in the box. Picking up coins from the boxes, stamping the letters and making change will sometimes delay a carrier as much as an hour on his round. This keeps the other patrons waiting and also causes the mail to come in late. Patrons should buy a few stamps in advance and always have a few on hand.