

The Reluctant Highway Commission

THE State Highway and Public Works Commission has had a bad winter. The approach of Spring, and the drying up of those muddy backcountry roads, which have pleased the Commissioners in such ill repute with North Carolina's farmers, should give promise of relief, but thus far it hasn't. One of the Commission's own members last week publicly damned his fellows, charging that the secondary road program, which is supposed to be getting the Commission's primary attention, is still an orphan.

There are, of course, good excuses for past inaction. And there are valid promises of future road building that will finally get Tar Heel farmers out of the mud. But somehow the impression obtains all over the State that the Commission doesn't really have its heart in the secondary road program, that it is still dreaming dreams of primary highway improvement instead of sweating over the plight of the mud-bound.

The tendency of the Commission to avoid public discussion of these matters can only heighten that impression. If it is, in fact, doing all it can to carry out its stated intention of giving secondary roads priority over all other construction it should have ready answers for its critics. It should not, as it did last week, have to evict the press the moment a pertinent question is asked.

It embarrasses the Commission to discuss secondary roads in public, it strikes us as high time for Governor Cherry to take a hand. He has, thus far, escaped the mud-balls that are being tossed around so freely, but when his appointees beat a hasty retreat, they leave him directly in the line of fire.

The suspicion that something peculiar is going on behind the Commission's closed doors is common all over North Carolina. If the gentleman in the Governor's Mansion doesn't share it, it might be well for him to explain why.

It was Charlotte's Commissioner Ben Douglas who cut off the street money by moving that the Commission go into executive session. For this hasty cover-up, he is spanked by The Greensboro News, which says he "ought to know better about public relations and responsibilities." Well, Mr. Douglas' action was only a minor incident, but it is not to be dismissed as the work of a general charge. The Highway Commission's public relations have been worse.

Wishing Won't Make It So

OUR debate with The Hendersonville Times-News on the matter of the Southern Democratic-Republican coalition in Congress keeps spilling over the bounds of the topic. It spilled over, as a matter of fact, for about two columns in our distinguished contemporary's Thursday edition.

The Times-News is dead set against the New Deal and all its works (President Truman's wistfully liberal Administration is termed "the national socialist regime in power in Washington") which is, of course, a respectable and popular position. We are afraid, however, that The Times-News alone is not strong enough to lead it into a familiar error: the question of the evil or the virtue of the New Deal has nothing to do with the insistence that the disaffected Democrats are pursuing a strange and dangerous course in Congress.

We have never questioned the right of the Southern Democrats to oppose the program set forth by the Truman Administration. We have, in fact, conceded that they are, in all probability, acting in good faith, representing the views of their constituents, and occasionally playing the role of statesmen. We have insisted, however, that they should work within Party bounds, or, if that is not possible, leave the Party. The Times-News argues that the New Deal of Franklin Roosevelt "seized the name, organization and machinery of the Democratic Party," which strikes us as some of the fanciest reasoning we have yet encountered. Four times Franklin

Roosevelt received the nomination of the Democratic Party in convention assembled. Four times he appeared before the people of the United States and received their overwhelming endorsement. At the end of four years the outlines of New Deal policy were clear in three succeeding elections. Democratic politicians and Democratic voters accepted them. Not once in that period did the conservative Democrats make any effort to repudiate their party's leadership; in 1944, as The Times-News points out, the North Carolina Democratic Convention praised Mr. Roosevelt and endorsed his New Deal. Does The Times-News believe the honest hardbasher who succeeded FDR has introduced some strange, new, radical doctrine since that election?

Our primary objective—to obtain a workable two-party system in North Carolina—should meet with the wholehearted approval of The Times-News if we believe in a conservative North Carolina would go Republican if it ever had an honest chance to do so. Yet The Times-News even attacks our statement that "there is something gravely wrong with a political system that forces the voter to support a conservative Congressman and a liberal Administration on one and the same ballot," countering with this astounding statement: "No compulsion exercised on the voter can achieve this end without the consent of the voter." Lack of opportunity to vote otherwise has achieved this end in four straight national elections.

There's nothing new about the conservative-liberal argument; it's as old as American politics and is, in fact, the basis of the party system. It is bound to be the basic issue in any national election. Win, lose, or draw, we'd like to see North Carolinians have a chance to vote on it. Does The Times-News have any objection?

An Accent Makes A Difference

LADY ASTOR had some things to say to the South Carolina Legislature, some rather critical things. But Lady Nancy Astor doesn't want to hurt any tender feelings or stir up any trouble. She went, therefore, to her girlhood in Virginia for an anecdote to begin her address.

"I have always thanked God I was born in Virginia," said Nancy Astor. "Even now I would prefer Dixie to My Country 'Tis of Thee, even though I know I'm wrong." The applause was deafening, and through it sounded the keening of Rebel yells. Lady Astor was in; she could say anything she pleased.

It pleased her to say, in the course of her discourse on Great Britain in war and peace: "Democracy means free speech, free thought, a secret ballot—and remember that, gentlemen of South Carolina—and no secret police."

The British form of Government is more democratic than the American form of Government, because we can turn out

our government any time we please, and because no member of Parliament can filibuster.

"I want to say this, too, to you South Carolinians: the colored troops in England behaved extraordinarily well."

These could have been fitting words in the South Carolina Legislature if they had been delivered by, say, Henry Agard Wallace, Henry Wallace, you see, hadn't their hearer Dixie than My Country 'Tis of Thee. He doesn't pronounce "house" as though it rhymed with "moose." He is, therefore, more of a foreigner than Lady Nancy Astor, the loyal subject of King George.

We will not, however, quibble over the difference. If it takes an aristocratic Virginian, arriving by way of the British Parliament, to successfully admonish Savannah to wash her face, and South Carolina to clean up her electoral system, we say send them on.

On a matter of fact, we prefer Dixie ourselves.

Another Voice

A Reflection On The South

WHILE there are many excellent and brilliant men in Congress, none can deny that there is considerable room for improvement, and oftand we cannot think of anything that would contribute more to the betterment of that august body than the defeat of Senator Bilbo and Representative Franklin, both of Mississippi.

The appalling demerit of that pair often becomes nauseating, and now that two veterans of World War II have announced their candidacy for the seats held by these notorious legislators, perhaps the voters of Mississippi will rise up and

consign them to the garbage heap.

It has been said that when the gentleman from Mississippi starts Franklin, even the self-respecting Representative who sits on the floor of the House, Bilbo has a pet bill which would send every colored person to Africa, and both of them never pass up an opportunity to stir up racial prejudice.

Their presence in Congress is a reflection on the entire South, and Mississippians can do this section the greatest service by handing them a crushing defeat at the coming elections.—Statesville Daily.



People's Platform More Harvard Reaction

CAMBRIDGE, MASS. I AM glad to learn, from Mr. H. H. Curtis' letter, the further facts in the "Peeping Tom" case. They serve to make the situation even more disturbing. Of course, I think that the Rozella's Ferry Road residents should have adequate police protection against "Peeping Tom." But, see my essential difference between a private citizen's shooting down a "Peeping Tom" in cold blood and a lynch mob's dragging an accused rapist from jail and murdering him. Both are cases of private citizens taking the law into their own hands, and both display a shocking indifference to human life.

It may be argued that in shooting the "peeper," Mr. Holmes was defending the home. But it seems very doubtful that he would take five shots to drive away a "peeper" if it seems pretty clear, on the other hand, that Mr. Holmes thought he had the right to punish the "peeper" with death. And Mr. Curtis says that he would murder any "peeper" on sight, and thanks Mr. Holmes for trying to do just that. Is this representative of a city that prides itself on its Christianity? Do Charlotte's many churches stand for anything? Or am I wrong in supposing that there is a moral issue involved here?

And I wonder if the police department is in the habit of telling people to "Just shoot and call an ambulance and don't call us." Mr. Curtis reports that he told a woman in the neighborhood to do. Police ineptitude is particularly inexcusable where there are those racial tensions which sometimes flare into unprovoked and senseless violence. The extraordinary indifference to human life on the part of private citizens, the police department, and even in this case, the State.

"If Thou shalt not kill" and "Love thy neighbor" are damnable Yankee notions, then Charlotte's Sabbath schools have been putting out Northern propaganda for a good long time, because that's what I picked them up. I'm sure a good many other people did, too.—CHARLES SELLERS JR.

(NOTE: We confess that we are baffled by this strange interest in a routine shooting. Any Mecklenburg court docket offers far better examples of the common and casual nature of such crimes. We can understand Mr. Sellers' repeated effort to inject a racial issue into it from such a distance. We point out again: (1) There is a tremendous difference between shooting at a trespasser in one's own yard, and shooting at a trespasser in an innocent act and lynching. (2) There is no evidence that Mr. Holmes knew at the time of the shooting whether the intruder was white, black, yellow, or even crimson. (3) There is no evidence of police brutality, only of an appalling lack of official interest of any kind.—Eds. The News.)

Reflections En Route

SALISBURY & KNOXVILLE RPO I HAVING lived in this world for over half century and having read a good many newspapers, published in other great cities, I would like to tell you editorial gentlemen of The Charlotte News, I do

Drew Pearson's Small Diplomatic Deeds Start Wars

WASHINGTON TODAY, the greatest idea springing from the late war council that nations give their differences without resort to bloodshed—receives its greatest test. The outcome of this test will decide whether 12,000,000 men who fought for a warless world shall see in vain.

This reporter, who has occupied a shingle seat at some of the great diplomatic battles of our time, remembers with pride the other great test of the United States which was fought for a warless world that has been left down. Those defeats have been like erosion. One tiny rivulet in flood-gates which have opened a small hole. Another defeat opens another hole, and soon a torrent of frank has flooded the world.

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STIMSON gets Slapped STIMSON, however, rallying support from other countries, wrote a tough note to the Kellogg Pact and received a reply one of the most caustic of diplomatic messages. It concluded: "The Soviet Government cannot forer express its amazement that the Government of the United States, which, by its own will, has no official relations with the

concluded "you all" have the best paper I have ever spent my money for.

One of the things I have in mind about your paper was the recent letters to you, reference to your neighbor and my neighbor, "John Barley Corn."

Of course you understand what I mean by "John Barley Corn," lifted down I mean the one word, whiskey.

I am not a very heavy drinker of alcoholic drinks as I believe in the one word "moderation."

To me I think the word "moderation" is a very good word.

I also think if the "Expounders of the Gospel" would preach "moderation" and not so much "damnation," our world, our U. S. A., which includes Mecklenburg County, of which Charlotte is the county seat, certainly would be more peaceable and Christian-like.

I am not a reformer, but I still say and believe, "moderation" is a grand word and if folks did to moderate with the use of alcoholic drinks, there would be less death, hell and destruction.

I make a pleasure trip to Charlotte two or three times a year, just to loaf, window shop and relax. Sober, but before leaving Charlotte coming back home, have a quart of tax paid whiskey to bring back home for home use.

I say why go to Fort Mill? Let's have tax paid whiskey stores in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County and the users of alcohol, use alcohol in a moderate and Christian-like manner.

P. S. I heard a man say, we have a new bread toaster at home.

Yes, we take a slice of bread put between two pages of "Forever Amber."

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WASHINGTON In the aftermath of every war, it happens. It is happening here in Washington today. A determined effort is being made to strip the power of the Federal Government back to about the General Grant era.

So much is happening in the world that this is going on all people are busy trying to place their lives together again after the vast uprooting that began in the 1930's lines reflecting the threat of a new war are distracting.

It is not out to cut back the powers of the Government are backing an old familiar device. It is a device for attempting to strip the powers of the Government back to the days of the Grant era.

Several bills which are before Congress with powerful support would strip the powers of the Government back to the days of the Grant era.

That would be the effect of a bill already passed by the House. The pages of this bill drip with legal language that is about as intelligible to the ordinary citizen as Chinese. Those who have studied it from a disinterested point of view believe it would change the laws of evidence in such a way that the authority of the administrative agencies would be reduced to the vanishing point.

When S. 7, the judicial review bill, was before the Senate, it was at the time and time controversy statements were made about it.

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