THE CHARLOTTE NEWS

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SATURDAY, JUNE 15, 1946.

Congress Gambles Against The Odds

IT now appears certain that price controls, except on rents and a few basic commodities, will be abandoned at the end of this month. The Senate's attack on the already battered OPA extension bill has reduced it to impotence. By the time a compromise is reached with the House (the only real difference now is one of method—a lingering death or a quick one) the President's veto, even if he decides to use it, will be meaningless.

Thus the great debate ends, as it began, in confusion. When the issue was presented, fairly and squarely, the Senate voted 52 to 21 against formally abandoning price controls. But that vote was reversed on a series of amendments that every Senator knew meant, in the aggregate, the same thing.

There were a few with courage enough to stand up and face the issue. Joe Ball of Minnesota said he voted for every amendment "in the hope of crippling OPA" because he believes price controls should be ended at once. And we can take melancholy pride in the fact that the three Carolinians present, Senators Hoey, Maybank and Johnston, had courage enough to record a flat vote against OPA while their colleagues were dodging behind the amendments.

But, however disreputable their method of expressing their conviction, it is clear that a bi-partisan majority of Congress have accepted the argument that price controls are unworkable. They agree with the lobbyist's thesis that removal of Federal restrictions will guarantee full production, which will serve to keep prices in line. Even if there is a brief period of runaway inflation, the argument goes, consumers will finally refuse to pay unreasonable prices and a buyers' strike will bring the price level back to normal.

The theory is sound enough, as far as it goes, but it overlooks the historical evidence that a buyers' strike not only ends an inflationary period but initiates a period of deflation. In the transition from boom to bust, if the pattern of the 20's is repeated, hundreds of thousands of small businessmen will be wiped out. That begins the nightmare of the downward spiral—lost savings, unemployment, foreclosures, vast political unrest.

Whatever Chester Bowles' faults as an administrator, he deserves a hearing. He estimates, at the inside, an immediate 25 per cent increase in the overall cost of living, and his calculations do not take into consideration the effect of inevitable union demands for higher wages, followed always by higher prices. Mr. Bowles' figure of speech is graphic. "You are exchanging a headache for a cancer," he warned Congress.

There is no evidence that anybody has really suffered under OPA. Losses, except in rare cases, were the difference between the small profit that could be made and the big profit that might be made, and we can recall no single instance of bankruptcy, large or small. It is true that in the end, when producers began withholding goods in anticipation of the death of OPA, price controls served to keep goods off the market. It is also true that OPA restrictions made black markets possible. But we have an idea these nine months of great irritation and little suffering will be remembered fondly as the good old days.

The death of OPA is part of the stampede back to normalcy, and the pattern is painfully familiar. With it comes, as the Senate indicated yesterday, a wholesale abandonment of our responsibility in the world. The Congress has elected to gamble—if it can be called a gamble in the light of history—with a rare opportunity for a long period of peace and plenty. If the Congress has guessed wrong it has insured another great depression, and a return to the bitter isolation that has already produced two World Wars.

The Haberdashers Admit Defeat

ONE of the most interesting newspictures we have seen in some time was published this week by our morning contemporary. It had no special merit as a composition, lighting, or tone; it simply depicted five pleasant gentlemen in conventional pose, three seated, two standing, all but one ringed individualist looking straight into the camera. What lifted this picture out of the ordinary was the fact that the five men were the new officers of the Apparel Club of the Carolinas, an organization of men's clothing retailers, and none wore a coat.

The decision of these five haberdashers to appear coatless before the camera was not undertaken lightly, we are certain. This was no quick snap taken unawares during the convention's more relaxed moments. It was a formal photograph, designed for posterity and the morning paper, and it can only be regarded as an admission of the defeat of a group of influential citizens who have long been dedicated to keeping mankind as completely dressed as possible.

We can find three possible explanations for their coatless condition. (1) They, like their customers, no longer own a coat fit to wear in public. (2) They are understandably proud of their rare white shirts, and were anxious to display as much of them as possible. (3) Charlotte's heat wave had taken all the fight out of them.

We hope guess (3) is the correct one. Reasons (1) and (2) would only reflect what we hope is a temporary condition, but (3) would give us new hope for a better day. This is the season when the Ivory Tower becomes a Turkish bath, and we contemplate, and never undertake, a revolt against the unreasonable convention that dictates man's choice of clothing. If the clothing retailers themselves, those final arbiters of taste, are willing to grace the public prints in shirtsleeves then there may be reason to hope that the Summer coat will soon join the celluloid collar in limbo.

An American Mother Comes Home

NEGROES have attached a great importance to the selection of Mrs. Emma Clarissa Clement as American Mother of 1945. She, the first Negro to be so honored, has become a symbol of her race's gradual emancipation. And certainly no more fitting a symbol could have been chosen.

Mrs. Clement has never been directly concerned with the delicate subject of inter-racial relations. She has been, first and last, a housewife, busy with the rearing of seven children, and the furtherance of the career of her husband, the late Bishop Clement of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. A college graduate, she saw to it that all her children were educated. Their success, as for any mother, has been her greatest success. One is a university president, one wife of the director of the Inter-American Foundation in Haiti, one a Red Cross Recreation Director, one an Army chaplain, one a physicist, one an English professor, and the other secretary of the A. M. Zion Church's mission society.

Mrs. Clement and her children have managed to live busy, useful, and, we suspect, happy lives within the framework of their limited heritage. And, whether they did so consciously or not, they have added to the stature of their race as a whole, contributing more to the cause of racial amity than many, white and colored, who have made it a life work. They have demonstrated that racial origin, for the exceptionally endowed at least, can be irrelevant.

Charlotte's Negroes, welcoming Mrs. Clement to a home-coming rally at the Armory Auditorium tomorrow afternoon, take a great vicarious pride in the recognition that has come to the 71-year-old housewife who once lived among them. It's a pride, we think, that we all may quite properly share.

Another Voice

Note On Political Cleanliness

SAYS Lynn Nisbet, correspondent of afternoon newspapers from Raleigh: "A state official from one of the western counties who keeps in close touch with affairs back home was asked the other day about the newly-nominated representative from his county. 'He's a fine fellow. One of the cleanest men I know in his personal habits. In fact, he may be almost too clean to do us much good.'"

We shall not attempt to guess the "fine fellow's" county. It could be any of a half-dozen; indeed, it could be any one of those mountain counties in which the leadership so often paramounts party regularity as against civic and personal decency.

There are counties in North Carolina—most but not all of them west of the Blue Ridge—in which the chief end of political man would appear to be to vote the Democratic ticket and enjoy it forever. This makes for powerful hard feelings enduring of and adjacent to elections, but at no time does it make sense.

They're all the same sort of folks—none of them really approves of the New Deal in any of its manifestations, and few would willingly accept any contribution from a Federal agency which calls for the slightest bit of supervision from the outside—but they get all het up at election time. We've never been able to understand it; but the state official quoted by Nisbet as saying that his representative is "almost too clean" raises the question of whether he himself is clean enough to represent a people who really would rather be right than incumbent in political positions.—*Greensboro Daily News.*

Tired of it all, the office cynic notes that a newly-discovered acid derived from yeast will give man a longer life unless he is careful.

A grandchild of ours, hearing us allude to these as the good old days, has our permission to denounce us on the spot, like any faker.

A just-completed analysis of the 1,791 articles entitled "Truman's first year" reveals none that actually asked "what holds him up?"

Christmas In July

People's Platform

Is The Tenth Doubtful?

CHARLOTTE

Editors, THE NEWS:

YOUR editorial of June 12th, "The Democratic Choice Is Final" gives an incorrect picture of the Republican strength in the Tenth District and needs revision.

In off year elections, like this, the vote in the Tenth has been close enough to make this a doubtful district. Here are the figures:

	Republican		Democrat	
1934 ----	23,120	46.9%	26,173	53.1%
1938 ----	25,792	45.5%	30,815	54.5%
1942 ----	19,702	40 %	25,066	60 %

In other words, a switch of 3.2% in 1934, of 4.6% in 1938, or of 10.1% in 1942 would have elected a Republican to Congress. Your headline is wrong.

The remarkable thing about the Republican vote is that it comes out by itself without the expenditure of the tremendous and unlawful amounts of money which seem to be necessary to bring out the Democratic vote. Stop these illegal expenditures and Burkholder will go to Congress without the shadow of a doubt.

It is common knowledge that Democratic machine candidates far exceed legal spending in all elections. The limit in primaries is $6,000 and in finals is $2,500. Does anyone pretend that any Democratic candidate for Congress has ever won an election in this area in the past ten years without spending many times that much in a contested election? Let's look at the record in the Jones-Dunaway primary just passed.

We have 64 precincts in Mecklenburg alone. Mecklenburg is only one of six counties in the district. Here is a preliminary report by our workers on the Jones-Mecklenburg expenses.

The machine had at least two poll workers in each precinct. They got a minimum of $10 for their work. That is $1,280. Workers who used their automobiles to haul voters to the polls started at $25 and there were at least two at every box. That's $3,200. Key men in wards and districts got down into three figures . . . probably as much as the other two classes of workers combined. In Chadwick-Hoskins alone, ten active Jones workers were counted.

These figures fail to include any of the other necessary expenses . . . radio, newspaper, clerical help, sound trucks and so on. If the proper authorities would investigate just how much really was spent to elect Jones in this Tenth District they would get a figure of not less than $25,000 and probably around $50,000. These are primary expenses. Final election expenses are generally on the same level. With such a flouting of the law, the Republican vote is amazing, and the small Democratic majorities are probably bringing dismay to their machine leaders.

In the face of such conditions, why do we not hear of more investigations into campaign expenditures? Probably because the officials who should bring such investigations were elected by the same sort of campaigns.

In the Chatham-Folger Fifth District mess, Surry County officials, the State Board of Elections and the SBI is reported to be most active. Could their sudden interest be brought about because the machine candidate was defeated? In the 1942 Davidson County vote frauds, action was slow and reluctant and proven fraud was completely ignored. Our election machinery is in a low condition.

You comment on the silence in the Burkholder-Jones campaign. Frankly, we do not have the money for a long campaign. We have few industrialists in our ranks. Our money comes in $1, $5 and $10 lots from farmers, workers and small business men. If we spent money like our opponents spend it you would see the biggest upset ever recorded. Keep our opponents from buying elections and you will get the same results.

We will probably win anyway, despite illegal spending by the machine. People are getting disgusted with conditions.

—ERV PRESSER
Mecklenburg Republican Chairman.

(NOTE: We don't know where Mr. Presser got his election figures. Ours, which came from the official North Carolina Manual, read like this:

	Republican	Democratic
1934	37,899	43,483
1938	37,380	48,590
1942	21,535	26,785

We made the point that the Democratic effort in the General Election is not directed against the Republican Party, but toward getting out the considerable Democratic majority. A better indication of actual Republican and Democratic strength in the district is provided by elections in Presidential years, when there is more interest and the total vote is heavier. For instance:

	Republican	Democratic
1936	42,680	81,059
1940	37,736	87,156
1944	26,787	50,605

Mr. Presser's figures on Mr. Jones' expenditures in the recent Democratic primary are a matter of personal political opinion, and are unchecked. Mr. Jones reported campaign expenditures of $1,865, and insists that the figure represents his total outlay. The mildness of the campaign would seem to bear him out in this instance.

For our opinions of heavy campaign expenditures in general, see the editorial, "Cash Money and Free Elections" in THE NEWS of 8 June 1946 in which we said: "We are convinced that something can and must be done to limit campaign expenditures so that cash invested by any candidate, or his friends, can have no decisive bearing on the outcome of any election."—EDS., THE NEWS).

Welcome, Dotty

CHARLOTTE

Editors, THE NEWS:

We are so glad to have Dorothy Knox again in your paper. She was missed during the past months. Hope she is quite well again.

—MRS. GEORGE D. WHITE.

(NOTE: Miss Knox is fine, thanks. And we too are delighted to have her back.—EDS., THE NEWS).

The People's Platform is available to any reader who cares to mount it. Communications should be less than 300 words, typewritten if possible, and on only one side of the paper. Libel and obscenity will be excised, otherwise anything goes. Each letter must be signed, although, in exceptional cases and upon request, we will withhold the writer's name.—Editors, THE NEWS.

Drew Pearson's Merry-Go-Round

Argentine Meeting Staged In Washington

WASHINGTON

OBSCURED by news of strikes, hotel fires and Supreme Court bickering, the most important conversation of the Western Hemisphere quietly took place in Washington. It was between the Argentine Chief of Staff, Lt. Gen. Carlos von der Becke, and U. S. officials, especially Gen. Eisenhower.

The conversation was important for the following reasons:

1. This is the first time in recent history that the U. S. Army has taken foreign policy away from the State Department and has virtually attempted to dictate its own policy for Latin America.

2. The U. S. Army is now forcing close military co-operation with the chief dictatorship in Latin America which, up until a short time ago, we were officially denouncing as pro-Nazi.

Here is the inside story of what happened.

For some weeks, Gen. Eisenhower, worried about Russian penetration of Latin America, has been pushing the idea of standardizing weapons and equipment among the Americas, so their armies can co-operate with the United States.

The State Department, while sympathetic to this general idea, has argued that we should not put the cart before the horse. In other words, the arming of Latin American armies by the USA must not start until we have signed an international defense pact and arranged for the control of arms. Otherwise, the State Department argues, the arms we send Latin America will be used by military juntas to promote revolution, build up dictators and foment wars.

Impatient Eisenhower

HOWEVER, Gen. Eisenhower, without waiting for the State Department, jumped the gun and began asking Congress to okay standardized arms for Latin America.

Meanwhile, Dictator Peron, sitting isolated in Argentine, worried over the Brazilian Army's modern Lend-Lease equipment, rose to U. S. Army bait, and decided to go over the State Department's head.

This he did first by a personal letter to Eisenhower, later by having his Chief of Staff, Gen. von der Becke, resign and go to Washington as a private citizen.

The Argentine General, who is pure German and once openly stated that the German Army could not lose the last war, called on Eisenhower last week. When he walked into his office, he did not know that only two hours before the U. S. Chief of Staff had received a phone call from Assistant Secretary Spruille Braden seeking to put a damper on Ike's cordiality. Braden informed him that reports on Peron's inauguration were disquieting and the American Ambassador had been roundly booed.

Eisenhower said thanks, he'd keep it in mind.

Ambassador Messersmith in Buenos Aires also had cabled Washington that the impression prevalent in Argentine Government circles was that Braden was all washed up as Assistant Secretary of State in charge of Latin American affairs, and that was why Argentina was now trying to deal direct with "realists" in the U. S. Army.

Braden pointed this cable out to his chief, Secretary Byrnes, and protested that Eisenhower's actions were undermining the State Department. As a result, Eisenhower promised to make it clear to Von der Becke that final Army decisions must come from the State Department.

Tribute To U. S. Military Might

ALL this had taken place before the Von der Becke interview. When the interview finally occurred, only five men were present. Eisenhower was flanked by Gen. Hoyt Vandenberg, new Chief of Combined U. S. Intelligence and nephew of Senator Vandenberg. Gen. Von der Becke was accompanied by Col. Auturo Bertolio, Argentine Military Attache, and the fifth man was Lt. Col. Gregorio Marquez, a Puerto Rican officer who acted as interpreter.

Von der Becke began by telling Eisenhower that both he and Peron now regard U. S. military genius as the world's greatest. (Eisenhower was courteous enough not to remind him that two days before D-Day he had also predicted that "Europe never could be invaded.")

Stumbling-Block Braden

AT this point, Von der Becke really turned on the man-to-man stuff and spoke bluntly. Assistant Secretary of State Braden, he confided, was the only stumbling block to the establishment of the best relations ever enjoyed between the United States and Argentina.

Thereupon, he handed Eisenhower an English translation of a secret memorandum prepared by Peron and his advisers, including, of course, Von der Becke himself. The paper contained complete specifications for the equipment and training facilities which Argentina hopes to secure through the military co-operation plan.

Present Argentine material is entirely obsolete, Von der Becke went on to explain, and must be replaced from one source or another. Brazil now has a modern, streamlined army; and Argentina, as the most "advanced" nation in South America cannot afford to be outclassed. It is the earnest desire of Peron and his Army chiefs to obtain their new arms in the United States, he said; but they must be obtained promptly, at all costs. (Von der Becke did not mention Russia by name, but the implication was strong that the only other source of extensive armament supplies was Soviet Russia).

Braden Hits Ceiling

EISENHOWER, however, played ball with the State Department by telling the Argentine Chief of Staff that this matter would have to be referred to the Secretary of State. He said the War Department had no power to act.

Next day, Spruille Braden in the State Department wrote a scorching memo pointing to the unusual length of time given Von der Becke—one hour and twenty minutes. This is unprecedented in the mere exchange of formalities between Army chiefs, who are not supposed to discuss policy, especially when one of them is officially on his way to Johns Hopkins for a health check-up. Eisenhower's lengthy conference, Braden complained, had compromised the State Department's entire position.

Marquis Childs

More GI Bill Abuses

(Editor's Note:—This is the second of two columns dealing with serious abuses in veterans training.)

WASHINGTON

THE on-the-job training provided in the GI Bill of Rights can help both the nation and the individual. It can help to supply the deficit of skilled craftsmen—carpenters, plumbers, tailors—which we need if we are to maintain a high national income in this country.

But it is open to serious abuses. The evidence is mounting that unscrupulous employers are taking advantage of the subsistence allowance granted veterans in training to employ young men at less than a living wage.

An AFL publication recently pointed out some of these abuses. Employers were getting filling station attendants, car greasers, clerks, newsstand attendants and so on at a cost to them of only twenty cents an hour. The Veterans Administration made up the balance of a living wage by granting a subsistence allowance on the claim that the employee was "in training" for another job.

MINORITY CHISELERS

The majority of employers are, of course, too conscientious to enter into such schemes. But there is apparently a growing minority of chiselers. In one state the AFL found a garage had four journeymen mechanics employed. Under Federal-State Apprentice Commission Standards these journeymen could properly train two apprentices. The company now has the services of nineteen on-the-job veteran trainees. In another instance trainees on a construction job were paid $10 a week.

"It is obvious with only the limited number of teachers available," said the AFL report, "that these nineteen on-the-job trainees either were placed at sweeping floors, washing cars or at other duties which would not enable them to obtain the training they were entitled to receive. How could these trainees be properly trained under these conditions? How could they expect to meet the standards of competition with which they will be faced when they are turned loose?"

On the farm the intention of Congress in passing the GI Bill of Rights is also being circumvented. The Vocational rehabilitation and education program of the Veterans' Administration is actually promoting a program whereby farmers who are veterans qualify for subsistence allowance. They go to school for four hours a week and take two additional hours of "personal counselling" from a vocational agricultural teacher.

LIVING BONUS

As the law is now being administered, this entitles them to a subsistence allowance of $65 a month if unmarried and $90 if married. The veteran is, of course, either the son of a farmer and therefore lives with his own family, or he lives with his wife on his own farm. So the subsistence allowance is in reality a bonus.

The intention of Congress in passing the law was to make it possible for young men returning from war to resume their education and not have to earn a living during that time. It was certainly not to give a bonus of $65 to $90 a month for three and a half to four years—the time that the average veteran can claim eligibility—while the veteran went on earning his living in the same way he had earned it before he went to war.

I tried to find out from the VA what the proportion of veterans receiving allowances for this so-called institutional - on - farm training was in relation to the total. The answer was that the figures have not been broken down and therefore no estimate can be made.

With promotion by the VA and by state agricultural training centers the number getting this so-called training is rapidly increasing. This is particularly true in the Southern states. It doesn't matter, of course, how much the farmer-veteran is making through his own efforts on his farm.

ANOTHER ABUSE

He may already have received the allowance granted self-employed veterans for a year after their discharge. He can claim up to $100 a month for a year if his income from any single month falls below that level. This privilege, too, is being abused, according to reports to Washington. A Florida fruit grower received a $450 orange crop one month and proceeded the following month to claim his $100.

The generous benefits provided by Congress will break down unless these abuses are stopped. If they are not stopped, a minority of the 12,000,000 veterans will get what will be in reality a bonus that Congress never intended.

Samuel Grafton

Political Apathy

LOS ANGELES

I WOULD like to noodle along today on the subject of political apathy, of which there are so many signs. Just to walk through any of the overpowering food markets, here in this lush corner of the land, is to see political apathy on display. for, in a starving world, this show of food is a kind of provocation, but few are provoked. Shoppers do not even seem annoyed by bakeries which have no bread, yet show enormous mounds of pastry, in every tortured and ravished form. it is almost as if the customers, with their own thoughts turning inward in this apathetic time, respect the right of the baker too, to think of himself first.

VETS COMPETITIVE

There seemed to be no warm political sentiment of any kind at the Rodger Young Village, a temporary settlement of Quonset huts for veterans and their families, which I visited the other day. There is an enormous sense of competition, centering about getting space in a hut, and prettying the front of it with flowers, etc.; but any sense of group need seemed slight indeed. The postwar period is one of such bitter and harsh competition, in so many ways, that it leaves little room for political activity, which is, by definition, cooperative. When there are too few houses, the first impulse is not to work with the other fellow, but to out-run him and get what is available, and we are at present in that stage of the reconversion.

It is a kind of rat-race; and it almost seems merely individualist activity upon the mass of the people. Whether to sell one's house, and make a great profit, or to keep it, and change making a great profit, or whether to hold on to an ordinary job, or try for a better one during what may be the last fling before an economic dip; whether to go back to school or to go into business at once and catch the tremendous boom, these are individualistic questions which vex the American spirit today, and they are personal questions, not political ones.

LOOKING FOR BONANZA

Through it all there runs the feeling, very natural at the beginning of a business rise, that one can solve one's problems by one's own efforts, by a lucky stroke, by a smart deal, by getting a better job, and this feeling militates against political action.

It is perhaps to be expected that conservative opinion would be more effective than liberal opinion during such a period, that conservatives, aware of the unexpressed discontent, the strikes and yearnings about them, would huddle more closely together, and some think like this seems to be happening. Attorney General Kenny of California may have had this in mind when he said of Governor Warren's victory in the primary that perhaps the people had voted Republican, because, in a time like this, they want "safe government."

CONSERVATIVES UNITED

It was a curious, awkward tribute for a Democrat to pay to a Republican; but it may be true that only have been trying to express the feeling I have mentioned, that conservative opinion is hardening defensively in a dynamic time. The same tensions which are pulverizing liberalism are organizing conservatism, along a simple, defensive line, which does not permit of creative thinking. As to whether this is a permanent swing to the right I shall leave it to others to say; there is a drive there that is significant; and our affairs may halt the atomization of the liberals, and begin a slow, molecular unbuilding of a new political regime. This is only the beginning of an act, and nobody knows the curtain line.