THE CHARLOTTE NEWS

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Congress Ignores The Odds

THE Treasury Department's annual list of top-paid Americans always reminds us of a scene viewed through the wrong end of a telescope—remote and unreal. We are willing to concede, however, that the services of Movie Producer Leo McCarey could have been worth the $1,113,-035 he received in '44. We are even willing to believe that the miracle worked by one Charles H. Strub, whose salary was $12,000, was worth the $454,537 bonus the Los Angeles Turf Club granted him.

We would, in fact, have passed over this annual chart from never-never land without comment if it had not seemed pertinent to another set of figures dealing with conditions in our own bracket. The Federal Reserve Board was speaking our language when it reported that in this year of plenty two out of every five American families have quick assets (savings bonds, other negotiable securities, bank deposits) of only about $40.

The nation's savings break down this way: 40 per cent of the people own only one per cent of the liquid assets, the next 30 per cent own only 11-1/2 per cent, while 30 per cent own the remaining 87-1/2 per cent. (To break it down even further, the top ten per cent own 60 per cent of the total.)

This means that 70 per cent of the American people, a clear majority let it be noted, are living right up to their incomes at this moment. Now it might be argued, with some justice, that insofar as shortages permit this is a silk-shirt era and they are living higher than they have any right to. But even so is seems doubtful if these good citizens can stand any considerable increase in prices without seriously reducing that standard of living to which we point with pride.

These gloomy figures, it seems to us, should give pause to the Congressmen who are now busy dismantling OPA. There is enough cash on hand in the upper bracket, and installment-plan credit down below, to precipitate a handsome boom when the lid comes off. The most optimistic economists figure the spiral will carry the cost of living upward about 25 per cent before it levels off. What will that do to the 70 per cent of the people who are now living within an inch of their incomes? Will they be able to subsist and keep up the payments on that inflated little dream house, that inflated electric refrigerator, and that inflated auto in the front yard? Even if their incomes rise along with everything else, will they ever be able to close the gap, or will they simply postpone the final collapse and make it worse when it does come?

But Congress, alas, is in no mood for statistics, hard historical lessons, or expert economic advice. The Federal Reserve Board, staid pre-New Deal agency that it is, will receive no more respectful a hearing than did Chester Bowles. The gentlemen who have gone to work on OPA with an axe are in a gambling mood, and they are not at all impressed by the fact that, on paper at least, the odds are a hundred-to-one against them.

Unfortunately, Nobody Likes Taxes

CHARLOTTE'S merchants are indignant. They feel, according to their highly vocal spokesmen, that the City Fathers were dealing off the bottom of the deck when they decided to double their license tax rate, upping it to one dollar per thousand of gross receipts. And the merchants have no intention of sulking in silence; they are going to present their case to Council and demand a new deal.

The merchants, of course, have a case. They contend that they are being asked to bear a disproportionate share of the new tax burden, and perhaps they are. Council, we gather, doesn't think so, for it spent a couple of months puzzling over the distribution of the increased tax load before it reached its decision. Presumably the Fathers were satisfied with their work when they released the somewhat complicated new schedule to the public.

It must be recognized that there would have been complaints even if the Fathers had been possessed of the wisdom of Solomon. We can recall only one citizen who regarded his tax statement with affection. The late Chief Justice Holmes once told his secretary: "Young feller, I *like* to pay taxes. With them I buy civilization." Few of us, unfortunately, attain Mr. Holmes' judicial outlook.

It is significant that nobody has yet seriously questioned the necessity for increasing City taxes. A tax scale established before the war will not serve in these inflated times. There are no grandiose schemes afoot to consume new revenue; the City, like many of the rest of us, simply cannot meet its running expenses under its present budget.

The question, then, is not whether somebody is going to be taxed, but who. The Council, having already answered this once, is likely to be right back where it started if it allows the merchants to persuade it against increasing license tax levies. If the merchants succeed there will be others dragging in their axes—property owners objecting to the increase in the ad valorum tax, others complaining about that 25 per cent increase in the water rate.

We are not attempting to defend the tax scale worked out by the Fathers. It is open to question, and we, as well as the merchants, have already posed a couple. But this seems a good time to remind all concerned that no fair distribution of taxes was ever worked out by exempting those who yell loudest.

How Great Is The Disagreement?

MOST of the recent discussion of the Case Bill has emphasized the area of disagreement between Administration and Congress on labor matters. The division is wide, of course, or the President would not have vetoed the measure. But there is ample evidence that it isn't insurmountable, despite all the partisan argument to the contrary.

The basic disagreement, if the President's veto message is accepted at face value, is over method. The President desires to postpone permanent labor legislation until a more thorough study has been made; the Congress wants to strike while the iron of public opinion is hot. But the President, in his own proposal for a strike-curb bill, certainly gave Congress a green light for temporary legislation as drastic as it may desire.

In passing it might be noted that even Representative Case, the sponsor of the vetoed measure, doesn't appear to consider his brainchild a final answer. Before the bill was sent to the President, Mr. Case sponsored a resolution calling for the establishment of a commission to study the entire labor field and report to Congress. That, of course, is exactly what Mr. Truman recommended.

Even as to permanent legislation, the veto message provided evidence that the President and the Congress are in agreement on one important and highly controversial point. The President took no major exception to Section 7 of the Case Bill, expressing himself in agreement with it. And Section 7 included all the provisions of the Hobbs Anti-Racketeering Bill, which has passed the House and now reposes in a Senate committee, except the provision that nothing in it should be construed to "impair or diminish . . . the rights of labor organizations in lawfully carrying out the legitimate objects thereof." The President thought that section should be reinstated, and it is hard to see any grave objection to it.

The Hobbs Bill was designed to prevent the extortion of money from employers under threat of violence. It passed the House after the Supreme Court ruled in favor of union teamsters who seized incoming trucks in New York, drove them to their destination, and forced payment of "wages" from the recipients of the goods they carried. It would prevent abuses of this character, and many others, and is a much-needed piece of legislation.

Presidential support for the Hobbs Bill, it seems to us, can be taken as a good omen. The willingness of the Administration to admit that there are grave abuses of union power is certainly a long step toward the sweeping labor legislation desired by the majority of the people.

Another Voice

Are We Now Morally Decadent?

WE have heard a great deal in recent years about the incompetence and wastefulness of a bureaucratic government, and to these faults in our political structure we attribute in varying degrees many of the evils of the present postwar period. But the events of the war and postwar era offer much evidence of a moral decadence in our national society which has contributed much to our current economic and social unrest and distress.

Marquis Childs, in a series of column articles on abuses in the veterans' training program indicates that many employees are taking advantage of the payments made by the Government to veterans in the "on the-job" training program to chisel, obtaining valuable labor at a cost to them in some cases of not more than 20 cents an hour.

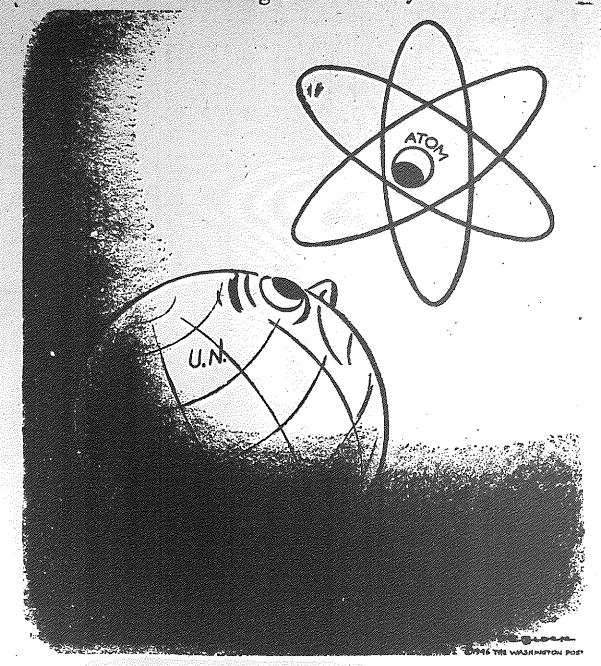
Abuses in connection with the OPA price ceiling regulations have long been notorious. The Black Market system and the extent of its operations constitute a grave reflection upon the honor and integrity of many Americans.

The selfishness of some labor union leaders is no less remarkable than the greed of the hoarders and profiteers who apparently create artificial shortages of essential goods in the face of a national emergency, and pressure group interests which place loyalty to their groups above the common welfare.

If we have a weak, inept, blundering, wasteful government which seemingly is able to solve neither its domestic nor foreign problems, doesn't it occur in view of contemporary events on the home front that the larger blame for this is imbedded in American society itself?

Can we expect purity in government to arise out of social corruption, or political strength to emerge from a society that is morally decadent?—*Twin City Sentinel.*

Looking It In The Eye



Marquis Childs

Baruch Atom Report

WASHINGTON

THE text of the Baruch report on atomic energy is being studied in every capital of the world with the most searching care. As the report so eloquently said, the issue is between the quick and the dead.

On the major outlines of an international Atomic Development Authority, the text is unmistakably clear. But on at least one point within the framework there are likely to be requests for clarification.

Wisely, the report points out that one of the first duties of the international Authority will be to obtain and maintain complete and accurate information on world supplies of uranium and thorium. These supplies must, says the report, be brought "under the domination of the Authority. Presumably, this means ownership. Yet the report goes on to say:

"The precise pattern of control for various types of deposits of such materials will have to depend upon the geological, mining and economic facts involved in different situations."

WASHINGTON MEETING

Behind this particular passage is a controversy that went on with considerable acrimony when the atomic policy of the United States was finally being fixed. Ten days ago, elder statesman Bernard M. Baruch and advisers met with Undersecretary of State Dean Acheson and the members of the committee of experts who drafted the report that first proposed an Atomic Development Authority. They met in Blair Lee House across from the State Department.

Eventually the discussion got down to the question of control over raw materials that could be used to produce atomic energy. Fred Searles, a noted mining engineer who was working with Baruch, raised a serious objection to outright ownership such as had been proposed in the Acheson-David Lilienthal report.

Searles said that in the gold ore taken out of the Rand mines in South Africa there were traces of uranium. Were the Rand mines to be turned over to an Authority that might be dominated by Socialists? The question drew an indignant reply from Acheson. The business and Government experts who drafted the State Department report on atomic energy never intended ownership to go beyond primary sources of uranium and thorium. Asheson said. The exchange was sharp, for a time, on this issue.

In reality, of [redacted] was President Truman who resolved all differences on atomic policy. The directive he issued was the last word.

Because the shadow it casts falls on each and every human being on this earth, there should be no jealousy of authorship or pride of origin in our atomic policy. But unfortunately human nature does not automatically change in response to changed circumstances. There has been feeling between the authors of the two reports.

MAJOR THEME

Happily, they both sound as a major theme the necessity for the Authority to develop into a creative body which will take the leadership in promoting the use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes. The Baruch report underscores the revolution in human life that this new power can work. The great step forward that it proposes—elimination of the veto power in all matters related to atomic energy—is spelled out beyond any equivocation, as it should be.

That will be the test. If the Powers, and especially the Soviet Union, with its intense secretiveness, are willing to participate in such an Authority, then we will be able to see the first light of hope.

While stressing the need for creative leadership by the Authority, the Baruch report speaks also of sanctions, of international law with teeth, of outlawing the bomb and other weapons capable of mass destruction. That, it seems to me, contributes to confusion. The language of sanctions is an outmoded language. It is the lavendar and old lace of the professional peace movement.

Atomic energy cannot be controlled by an international policeman who says no. The battleship and airplane could not be controlled by international law. The need is for positive, creative action by a world body unhampered by any obsolete veto. The major stress in the Baruch report is on such action.

SPEED ESSENTIAL

It should be implemented as quickly as possible. The United States has offered to give up the temporary advantage we derived from atomic power. We would give it up with adequate safeguards to insure the knowledge will not be turned against us. Baruch and his assistants have made sure of that.

This is an offer that the other nations cannot misunderstand unless they want to misunderstand it. Our offer is security and peace, and we have said so in unmistakable terms.

The Second Round

The Drys Try It Again

THE average American citizen realizes neither the vast extent of the dry crusade nor its increasing effectiveness. According to the latest Gallup poll, in December, 1945, 33 per cent of the voters in America would vote for the return of prohibition. There are three states—Kansas, Oklahoma and Mississippi—which are wholly dry as far as wines and hard liquor are concerned, although in some sections the sale of 3.2 per cent beer is permitted.

About one-third of the country's more than 3,000 counties, with a total population of approximately 26,000,000, have voted dry in local option elections. Most of them are in the South, but there are dry counties elsewhere, too: 24 in Minnesota, for example, while Maine is 30 per cent dry and Vermont 38 per cent. And in several states there are dry areas within wet counties. In Illinois, there is but one dry county, but scattered through the state are more than 1,000 dry towns, townships and voting precincts, including 130 in Chicago. In Pennsylvania there are 550 dry towns; in Wisconsin, 350; in New York, 60; and in New Jersey, 59. One-third of Ohio is dry.

Bills to control or eliminate the liquor traffic are pending in at least half of the state legislatures; in New York, for example, there are six or more. Half a dozen such measures have been introduced in Congress. But in dry circles there is little talk, at present, of a Constitutional amendment. Efforts may be made to get one through Congress within the next year or two, but the fight will be in the nature of a diversion; only the most violent prohibitionists think it would have any chance of passage. A large majority of the most important dry leaders believe that it will take at least five years, and possibly ten, to educate the American people to the point where sufficient support could be obtained to insure the enactment of such an amendment.

The strategy of the Drys now is to infiltrate into the states, and into selected Congressional districts, by means of local options in counties and in even smaller governmental units. This year they may go after larger game. Reports from Indiana indicate that they will take a hand in the Congressional elections there next Fall, and will try to defeat any candidate who refuses to come out against liquor.

The Basic Theme

The basic theme of all dry propaganda and of all dry activity is that prohibition was successful and that God wants the American people to bring it back. "Prohibition worked!" cries Brother Sam Morris in one of his lectures. "We did it then! Let's do it again!" During one of the local option campaigns in Kentucky, a full-page ad in a local newspaper gave this dry picture of prohibition:

"We could eat in any restaurant and not be sickened by smelly drunks. We saw no liquor in grocery stores, hot-dog stands or drugstores. No crime-breeding open saloons debauched the community. No window displays—no enticing liquor signs cluttered up the highways to tempt our youth. No liquor forced its way into our homes through alluring pictures and dangerous ads in the magazines and newspapers. No brilliantly colored lights coaxed us into drink. No silly blatant beer radio programs invaded our family circle. Women and children were safe on our streets. Drunks were seldom seen. No beer trucks crowded us off the road. We want prohibition back."

There are millions of people in the United States who regard that as a true picture of prohibition. They simply do not believe, and never have believed, that prohibition was actually compounded of bootlegging, rum running, gang warfare, crime, political corruption and vice. They are convinced that such things never really existed; that accounts of them are simple lies concocted by Satan and spread by his loyal imps, the distillers and the brewers.

And in that conviction can be found the basic reason why the Drys frequently make statements that are fantastically untrue, spread false rumors, denounce liquor dealers as enemies of God, and never hesitate to blast anyone who publicly disagrees with them. When the devout dry fights liquor, he is fighting the devil, and it is unreasonable to expect him not to seize every possible advantage.

The liquor interests aren't doing very much to counteract the propaganda of the Drys, for the simple reason that there is very little they can do. Up to a point, they must help the Drys fight their battle, for the reputable liquor manufacturer or seller would be among the first to admit that excessive drinking is harmful. But on the other hand good business practice makes him try to sell at least enough liquor to earn a profit on his business.

'Cut It's Head Off'

Within the past few years the brewing industry particularly has made great progress in the matter of law observance by instituting a system of state committees, which carry on a threefold program of "cooperation in law enforcement, industry education in law observance, and public education in the values of legal beer." Each of these committees makes periodic checks of taverns and other retail outlets in its territory. If a beer seller gets out of line his supplies are cut off. If he tries to bring in bootleg beer from outside the territory, the committee assists in prosecuting him for violating the law.

Leaders of the liquor traffic have frequently expressed themselves in favor of such regulation as governmental bodies think necessary. But the Drys will have none of it.

"Regulate the liquor traffic!" cries Brother Sam Morris. "Yes! Regulate it like you'd regulate a rattlesnake! Cut its head off! Trample it in the dust!"

—HERBERT ASBURY IN COLLIER'S.

Samuel Grafton

Another View Of Plan

LOS ANGELES

IF this world were a friendly world, the nations of which certain people are citizens would be friendly toward each other. Mr. Baruch's plan for international control of atomic energy would be accepted at once. Bells, whistles, fireworks displays, drinking of toasts and dancing in the streets.

For, viewed in the abstract (and without remembering who distrusts whom) the plan makes complete sense. On paper, and in a world made up of peoples of similar sentiments, what could be better than an international agency to control atomic energy, to monopolise research in atomic bombs, to police the distribution of atomic materials, and to call, without the hindrance of anybody's veto, for the punishment of any nation which attempts to make an atomic explosive or to do other secret or furtive work in this field?

PLAN GOOD

There is nothing wrong with the plan; our trouble is with the world. Ours is not, in fact, a world of nations which trust each other. And if we superimpose the plan as if it were drawn on tracing paper, upon the angular realities of the world for which it is supposed to be a master print, we get a curious, mixed picture, one which tells us a great deal about the difficulties which stand in the way of the adoption of this or any plan.

For if we glimpse the real world through the blueprint, we see at once that this plan includes as nations a number which would be largely controlled by the Western nations which at present have the atomic bomb. To this commission the United States would gradually, but only gradually, turn over its atomic knowledge, control over its atomic installations, until it became convinced that the Commission was functioning successfully.

TROUBLE'S WITH WORLD

It is difficult to suggest a better plan. There is, in fact, nothing wrong with the plan. Mr. Baruch has labored well, and we are led back to the melancholy realization that our troubles do not lie with our plans, but with our world. This is, perhaps, the best plan it is possible in the world as it exists today; the larger question is whether this is the best world that is possible in the world as it exists today. If, for example, the recent sessions of the Security Council had been marked by lesser asperity; if the Russian veto, which now would be kept more in the background, the proposal for an international atomic commission might shine with a greater light. A more entrancing glow. For it is by our style of work, by our day-to-day management of affairs, and not by our atomic plans, that we make the world: and the world that has been in the making lately offers little nourishment for the best of plans.

It seems to me, as an American, aware of the lack of aggressive intent among our people, that Russia would safely accept the Baruch plan, and perhaps by that gesture help to break the circle of fear, anger, and hostility, which leads constantly to more fear, more anger, more hostility. But international affairs are conducted in an atmosphere of a kind of ultimate ragings, and there is little sign of an affirmative step by either side to break the circle of dismay. A world that is at peace can adopt almost any plan, but in a world that is fundamentally not at peace, peace plans themselves become bones of contention; not the answers to problems, but the problems themselves restated in new form.

ANOTHER STONE

Mr. Baruch may find to his own surprise, that this plan may become another stone flung into the already rough waters, or to change the figure, that what the world awaits is the end of the storm, not just another set of rules for navigation within its heavy confines.

Drew Pearson's Merry-Go-Round

FDR Wrote Secret Letter About Germany

WASHINGTON

THIS column is now able to publish for the first time what may prove to be one of the most historic letters Franklin Roosevelt ever wrote. Hitherto it has been secret. The letter was sent to Secretary of War Stimson in the late Summer of 1944, just as the U. S. army was rolling over Normandy and as the War Department was first beginning to worry about governing Germany.

Today, as the Foreign Ministers debate the peace in Paris, much of what Roosevelt warned against has been ignored. The letter was inspired by the Army's "Handbook For Defeated Germany."

"It gives me the impression," Roosevelt wrote Stimson, "that Germany is to be restored just as much as The Netherlands or Belgium, and the people of Germany brought back as quickly as possible to their prewar estate.

"It is of the utmost importance that every person in Germany should realize that this time Germany is a defeated nation. . . . The fact that they are a defeated nation, collectively and individually, must be so impressed upon them that they will hesitate to start any new war.

"There exists a school of thought both in London and here which would, in effect, do for Germany what this Government did for its own citizens in 1933 when they were flat on their backs. I see no reason for starting a WPA, a PWA, or a CCC for Germany when we go in with our army of occupation.

"Too many people here and in England hold to the view that the German people as a whole are not responsible for what has taken place—that only a few Nazi leaders are responsible. That, unfortunately, it not based on fact. The German people as a whole must have it driven home to them that the whole nation has been engaged in a lawless conspiracy against the decencies of modern civilization."

FDR's Warning Ignored

TODAY, one year after the end of the war with Germany, few people realize how drastically FDR's policy has been scuttled. Part of this is due to lack of Russian co-operation; part to the zeal of U. S. commanders to make their zone of Germany function; perhaps part is the result of a deliberate plan, inspired by certain Army men and certain U. S. cartels once operating in Germany.

Two of the most dangerous developments are:

1. Greater and greater use of former Nazis in governing Germany. They now have the job of distributing clothes, running the railroads, teaching schools, even the de-Nazification program, so that former Nazis now have complete responsibility for settling the claims of Jews and non-Nazis whose property was seized by Hitler.

2. U. S. authorities plan to revitalize and strengthen the German currency.

So far, this is a closely guarded secret. However, U. S. occupation authorities propose to replace German marks at the rate of ten old to one new, which would do much to make Germany economically stronger.

These few who know of this plan feel that it is in direct contradiction to Roosevelt's warning against doing "for Germany what this Government did for its own citizens in 1933 when they were flat on their backs."

Murray Threatens Bridges

THE two men chiefly responsible for the settlement of the maritime strike were able John W. Gibson, Assistant Secretary of Labor, who worked night and day, and CIO President Phil Murray, whose two-fisted pleas to maritime union chiefs did more than anything else to avert the strike.

Inside fact is that union leaders had agreed there would be no strike before the negotiations got under way. But Harry Bridges and other leftist leaders reneged on this agreement and up to the very last were demanding a walkout.

Inside fact also is that there is still a deep cleft in maritime labor between factions led by Bridges on the one hand and Joe Curran, president of the National Maritime Union, on the other, despite the joint statement of solidarity just signed by Bridges and Curran.

Solidly behind Curran is CIO President Murray. Murray kept insisting all through the negotiations that a maritime strike would give the CIO a bad name.

"I will not have a maritime strike at this time charged up to the CIO," Murray angrily told Bridges.

"If you succeed in staging a strike I'll disown you publicly, Harry Bridges," Murray warned, "and I'll do my best to throw you out of the CIO."