THE CHARLOTTE NEWS

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SATURDAY, JUNE 29, 1946.

The Death Of The OPA

PRESIDENT TRUMAN has made his difficult decision and barring a miracle OPA will die at midnight tomorrow. The veto required a great deal of courage: it would have been easier, and perhaps politically wiser, to have drifted along the course charted by the Congress, to have maintained the fiction of Federal price control even after the machinery for maintaining it had been destroyed. Mr. Truman saw the issue, correctly we think, as a choice "between inflation with a statute and inflation without it" and felt obliged to so present it to the people.

Many of those close to the President urged him to accept the emasculated bill, insisting that, bad as it was, it was a good deal better than nothing. They pointed out that it would at least centralize rent controls, and perhaps delay for a few months the first sharp increase in the overall cost of living. But the President listened instead to Chester Bowles and the economists who have administered OPA for so long; they told him as they have tried to tell the Congress, that the price control structure cannot be partially dismantled and remain effective. The price of one commodity has a direct bearing upon the price of all commodities; if the ceiling is taken off tobacco and cotton and meat and wheat and coal and oil it cannot long be maintained on rents, statute or no statute.

Moreover, the Congressional compromise established an impossible administrative organization to administer its "decontrol" provisions. It piled authority upon authority; it was, as we have noted before, a clear vote of no confidence in the Administration. It placed upon the President the responsibility for curbing inflation, but took away from him the authority to do so.

There are some economists who believe that the abandonment of price controls is inevitable and necessary. They hold that inflation will be checked by natural economic forces before the damage is too severe. These are the optimists, and it might be well to join in a prayer that they are right. If they are wrong July 1, 1946, marks the beginning of a period of boom and bust, leading directly to the worst depression in our national history.

If this is the beginning of a debacle, whose fault is it? Only the historians, we suppose, can accurately apportion the blame. The President will certainly deserve a share; he has fought for price controls, certainly, but he did not understand that the national economy cannot be controlled piecemeal. His series of compromises with the unions marked the beginning of the end: when wages climbed prices were bound to follow and the OPA began to crumble under the pressures, real and artificial, that mounted against it. The Congress, caught up in a great stampede to normalcy, rode with the herd, speeding the process of dissolution.

But the failures of both Administration and Congress were negative. Mr. Truman, writing OPA's epitaph, remarked that inflation had been held in check for five years, or as long as there was a will to fight it. He spoke of course, of the will of the people, the national willingness to accept today's minor sacrifices as insurance for a golden tomorrow. That spirit could be maintained only by the sort of inspired leadership that is conspicuously missing in Washington today. Fate, we suspect, is largely to blame for its absence.

Taking The Curse Off Caste

THERE will doubtless be a good deal of harrumphing in far corners of the Army & Navy Club now that Secretary of War Patterson has approved and is placing in effect twelve of the fourteen recommendations of the Doolittle Board. They are designed, Judge Patterson says, to foster "the dignity and decency of the individual" regardless of rank or rating, a consideration that has never influenced too many of our brass hats.

But most officers of the regular establishment, particularly those who earned their present rank in combat, will accept the change in good spirit. The recommendations deal largely with surface manifestations of the caste system, relatively minor aspects of the relationship between officers and enlisted personnel. These things are, however, a great source of irritation to soldiers conditioned by the democratic processes of civilian life, and they have an adverse effect upon morale. We have an idea most commanders will soon conclude that they are well rid of the artificial social barriers that tend to degrade the rank and file and create delusions of grandeur among commissioned personnel.

No one should get the idea, however, that the War Department is setting out to abolish the caste system itself. General Eisenhower has frequently remarked that there is no such thing as a democratic army. Some will always be called upon to command and some to serve, blindly if need be; no hill was ever taken as the result of a secret ballot; rank of necessity must have some privilege.

Nevertheless, there is a great deal that can be done to take the curse off what is essentially an aristocratic organization. The direct approach, as the Doolittle Board pointed out, is to elevate the standards of the officer corps. But Judge Patterson answered this section of the report by outlining the elaborate system now being employed to select permanent officers from the thousands of AUS, Reserve and National Guard officers who have applied for regular commissions. The system, devised by the country's leading personnel experts, appears to be a good one, but it only meets the needs of the peace-time army and would hardly be applicable to one of those vast, overnight expansions that follow in the wake of a declaration of war.

It seems to us the Army should re-examine the system of Officer Candidate Schools which produced the majority of its officer personnel in World War II. By and large the graduates of these forced-draft institutions were successful in combat, having been adequately instructed in the arts and sciences of mass killing. But the OCS could hardly be blamed for lack of time, instruct them in the psychology of command, and there was nothing in the rather haphazard method of their selection to insure that they were fit, by virtue of temperament and civilian background, to assume the grave responsibility that was theirs. As a result many of them were failures off the battlefield.

In the terrible haste of preparation for combat the Army can never work out an acceptable method of selecting and training officers. This is the time to develop a system that will (1) place in positions of responsibility the most able men the nation affords and (2) insure that every man who wears his country's uniform will progress as far upward in the ranks as his ability will take him. If that is done, insofar as it is humanly possible to do it, there will be no problem of "caste" and the necessary distinction between commissioned and non-commissioned personnel will be of no account.

Senator Bilbo And The Record

THEODORE GILMORE BILBO of Mississippi has many enemies, but none more implacable than young Hodding Carter, Pulitzer Prize-winning editor-publisher of *The Delta Democrat-Times* of Greenville. Mr. Carter learned the editorial trade in Louisiana, sharpening his adjectives in a long battle with the tyrannical Huey Long, and he didn't depart until the Kingfish was safely dead and buried. He has lately replied to Senator Bilbo's invitation to leave Mississippi with the announcement that he will do so only under similar conditions.

We would not hazard a guess as to whether Hedding Carter will succeed in his effort to turn Bilbo out of office. But if The Man goes back to Washington he will be returned by an informed electorate, for *The Democrat-Times*, and most of the other newspapers of the state, have omitted nothing in their review of Bilbo's unsavory record. Hodding Carter has lately reminded the voters that the State Senate once found Bilbo "unfit to sit with honest men," that he has been formally accused of accepting bribes, that he all but wrecked Mississippi colleges during his term as Governor, that he pardoned 5,000 convicted criminals, that he has publicly displayed contempt not only for Negroes, Jews and Catholics but for Jesus Christ, and that his divorced wife accused him of "abandoning her and taking up with bad women."

These charges, of course, are not normally a proper part of a political campaign. But, as Hodding Carter has recognized, it is impossible to fight the dirty-mouthed Bilbo except on his own level. And, unpleasant though the details may be, *The Democrat-Times* has no choice but to document Bilbo's moral corruption.

And, win, lose, or draw, all Mississippians can take a great pride in the editor's ringing defiance of Bilbo's latest threat to "skin him alive and run him out of the state." Hodding Carter was serving the highest tradition of American journalism when he wrote:

> We solace ourselves with a comforting contempt for a jaundiced old man who makes his living and extends his public career with hate and slander as his tools. That contempt is a lasting thing. It will endure to and beyond that hoped-for and not too distant day when, through the providential laws of nature, Hell shall have gained a noisome adornment and Satan a concenial ally.
>
> And, God willing, we'll still be living when that time comes, where we damned well please.

The specter of famine haunts a battered world, and particularly Europe, where everything is reported growing short except Mr. Churchill's inexhaustible cigar.

A-k us "who is Assistant Secretary-General of the U. N.?" And we'll tell you, "Hoo." A thing like this can lead to a perfect misunderstanding in the Abbott and Costello manner.

How can Uncle Sam miss? With the greatest of ease he will get in wrong with other nations by (a) lending them the dough, or (b) not lending same.

Though peace, in general, reigns, the Chinese chum continues to live dangerously. Not only did he invent gunpowder but one never knows when he will haul off with a truce.

People's Platform

For The Jalopy - Minded

BURLINGTON

Editors, THE NEWS:

AT every opportunity I read Burke Davis' articles, but not every day do I get The Charlotte News and I have just begun to realize that a Charlotte paper can be had in most any corner of the Old North State. The article Wednesday about the jalopy was okey, very good, but Mr. Davis should have directed jalopy to words. The jalopy minds of certain jalopy-minded, nutty, don't give a —D— people. Regardless what model car they drive, there is no sense or pity about a man driving a car, regardless what model, to smash or wreck.

Pardon me for boasting but there are very few people who travel North Carolina as I do. I go to all the cities and villages, spots in the road, and have been driving since the year of our Lord 1909. I have had many close calls but no serious wreck so far. I have dodged the crazy drivers. I even run in the ditch to avoid 'em, drive on the shoulders of the road if they want the whole road. I like to ride on a dirt road, reminds me of the good old days when people were respectable while driving and it didn't make any difference if any one had an old car. That is no reason he should wreck himself or wreck someone else.

But as Mr. Davis mentioned in his article, all cars should be inspected by the State every 30 or 60 days for brakes, tires and mechanical defects. It is a big thing with defective brakes, etc., fine him $10 and double it for every offense, like Phil Baker doubles his Eversharp program. To catch a person so careless, inconsiderate and mean as to drive with beer or liquor under his or her shirt, make an automatic law, 30 days in the jug, double this for every offense. Better be in jail after than in their grave dead.

Take all these people that are yelping about their freedom and their personal rights, especially the ones that want to have a fox race with a pack of different breed of dogs and give them a one-way ticket to Russia. There is too much freedom for some bellyachers in this country that are taking human lives for personal greed, lust and passion. We have the greatest and freest country with more to eat and with less work than God has given man since he fed the people manna in Moses' time and yet these low-livers complain, cheat, steal, and violate our laws.

If only we had law enforcement with what we have we would save many lives. All State and City officers should be under civil service and then no cheap politician could have them fired. I think certain politicians are as guilty as some drivers of recklessness.

The people are back of any good move made by our law makers and if some of the politicians will contact people as I have they will learn plenty and it will be that many people are bitter because nothing is being done, absolutely nothing.

—B. M. TAYLOR.

Across The Bar

DAYTON, OHIO

Editors, THE NEWS:

SEVENTY- years ago the writer was a seven-year-old boy down in the sticks. In those years we had no place to go in Winter except to school or ice skating, and in Summer to Sunday School or the swimming pool.

On Sunday we were told that a great character said: "In my father's house are many mansions" and "Seek and ye shall find, knock and it will be opened unto you."

Through intuition and auto-suggestion anyone can cross the bar and return. I met all my friends and relatives who had preceded me. They welcomed me as they thought the stork had arrived. I told them I was only a visitor and had to return, as the world was at war and I was needed for another decade. They regretted that I could not stay and I strolled away. Wherever I went I saw happy groups and they all told me that the stork had come with a friend.

In my stroll I saw in the distance a majestic building marked "Hell's Headquarters." As I had heard and read so much about that place, I walked in. No one was friendly or even courteous. They all acted as though very much disillusioned.

No one knew the way out and I looked for a railroad worker, as they always are telling people how to get places. I went up to the recording office and I was told that they did not have a railroad worker in hell. The temperature was so high that had anyone taken his gold with him it would have melted. I did not get out until I awoke next morning.

My advice: When the stork arrives and takes you across, stay away from that place.

—F. M. KIKENDALL.

The Full Measure

Editors, THE NEWS:

DURING a recent meeting of our officers, it was suggested that I write and thank you on behalf of the officers and members of Independence Post for your encouraging editorial of Monday, June 24th.

I wish to assure you that both the officers and the individual members of the Post appreciate the way The Charlotte News has extended a helping hand throughout our recent organization period. We also appreciate fully your co-operation and valuable assistance in our current housing project.

Fully aware of the faith which you have so generously bestowed on our organization, we assure you of our continual endeavor to merit the full measure of that faith.

—O. G. ALLEN JR., Adjutant,
Independence Post,
American Legion.

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 deleted—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.

Quote, Unquote

NOW that we are at peace, never forget that you "soldiers" are not in the Army to keep a lot of brass hats in their jobs back in Washington. You are in the Army because the United States has taken on the job in Germany and Japan to insure that we paid an awful lot of American lives to win.—General Eisenhower.

THE long-run sound way to fight inflation is to stop deficit financing—Sen. C. Douglas Buck (R) of Delaware.

Drew Pearson's Merry-Go-Round

How OPA Congressional Deadlock Broken

WASHINGTON

THE secret session of Senate and House conferees on extension of price control were highlighted by the voting acrobatics of two Senators—Radcliffe of Maryland and Tobey of New Hampshire.

Chief acrobat was namby-pamby Democrat George L. Radcliffe, FDR's old banking partner who has been drifting further and further from New Deal policies ever since Roosevelt's death. He prolonged the conferences two days and almost caused a hopeless deadlock by bolting his Democratic colleagues and voting with the Republicans to remove price controls on meat, poultry, and dairy products.

It was New Hampshire's usually liberal Senator Charles W. Tobey, a Republican, who finally broke the deadlock and saved whatever was left of OPA by voting to continue meat-poultry-dairy price ceilings. Originally he had voted to abolish them.

Tobey's switch-vote at the last minute made the score of the Senate conferees 4-2 in favor of OPA extension. For, by that time, Radcliffe was absent in Maryland, listening to primary election tellers announce the end of his twelve-year career in the Senate.

One big stumbling block to OPA continuation was the proposed three-man board, with power to lift or remove price ceilings. Inside fact is that the House conferees were bitterly opposed to this board.

However, with both sides deadlocked, Democratic Representative William B. Barry of New York, a strong battler for price control, moved that his House breathren back down and agree to the de-control board, provided the Senate conferees, in turn, backed down on their demands for abolishing ceilings on meat, poultry, and dairy products.

Barkley Gets Mad

THE House members voted overwhelmingly for this compromise, but the Senators split 3-3. Radcliffe, who was absent, was then summoned by phone to cast the deciding vote. It was assumed the Marylander would go along with his fellow Democrats and vote "yes" on the Barry motion. However, when he rushed into the meeting room at the last minute, he threw the conference into a turmoil by voting "no."

The Democrats gasped and moaned. Radcliffe's vote signaled an almost certain deadlock, with no OPA bill at all being reported. For the three Republicans who voted "no" with Radcliffe—Tobey, Robert Taft of Ohio, and Eugene Millikin of Colorado—showed no signs of yielding.

"What's bothering you?" pleaded Barry, looking squarely at the Senator from Maryland. "If you are worried about price ceilings being retained on Maryland tobacco or petroleum, we should be able to reach an understanding on that. I am informed that petroleum and its products will be decontrolled soon by OPA."

Radcliffe mumbled something about the "black market" in beef. He added that meat would be kept from consumers as long as price ceilings were retained on it.

"Your vote surprises me very much," snapped usually mild-mannered Senator Barkley of Kentucky. "You're not following your party. It's the first time something like this has happened here and it makes things rather difficult."

The Marylander flushed under the jab, but stuck doggedly to his stand against meat controls. Actually, Radcliffe's main target was beef ceilings. This happened also to be the main concern of Ohio's Taft, who, however, fought right down the line to scuttle OPA.

NOTE: Word that Radcliffe, a Democrat, was voting with the Republicans leaked out to Maryland voters and contributed to his defeat.

Republicans' Secret Caucus

SENATOR TAFT received the overwhelming approval of most Republican colleagues at the secret GOP caucus next day, though he also got some advice he didn't like from California's outspoken Senator William F. Knowland.

"You're going too far in your fight against OPA," the Senator from the Golden Gate bluntly warned Taft. "It seems to me that the Republican conferees are thinking too much about the producers. I am against the drastic de-controls you want and I think it is unwise from a political standpoint for us to be sticking our necks out so far."

Nebraska's Wherry also got in some hot licks about the de-control board proposal, but on the other side of the fence. He contended the Senate itself should decide what price ceilings should be lifted and not leave it up to a board which, he said, would do the bidding of President Truman.

Later, Millikin of Colorado echoed Wherry's argument in an impassioned plea against the board plan when the Senate and House conferees met in their final session. However, when the Barry compromise motion on OPA extension was again put to a vote, this time it was Republicans Taft and Millikin, not the Democrats, who gasped and moaned.

For New Hampshire's Tobey, after wrestling with his convictions for two days, bolted to the Democrats and voted for the de-control board as well as to retain ceilings on meat, poultry, and dairy products.

"I do not like to desert my Republican colleagues," Tobey declared, "but on the other hand I am not ashamed of changing my position. I think I am doing the right thing, because the welfare of my country comes first with me. I want you all to know that I have done a lot of praying on this issue in the last two days."

Tobey spoke with intense feelings, but he wasn't able to convert canvas-skinned Taft and Millikin. Both angrily refused to sign the report on the compromise bill, giving no reason except that it was against their principles.

This was how legislation affecting every housewife and consumer in the USA was horse-traded into final form.

Marquis Childs

Stubborn Management

WASHINGTON

SO FAST is the pace of events in these times that the dramatic week-end on which President Truman called on Congress to draft striking railroad workers into the Army seems like ancient history. Yet it was only a month ago.

Politically speaking, of course, the President's actions over that week-end will continue for a long time to be a live issue. Most people have forgotten that, in the course of that dramatic week-end, President Truman made a pledge in connection with another labor situation.

He said that, unless management bargains in good faith in the farm-equipment plants operated by the J. I. Case and Allis-Chalmers companies, the Government would take those plants over. In other words, he was making a special point of his impartiality. If management was stubborn and refused to come to terms, then he would treat management just as he was treating labor.

But in the month since the President made his pledge, there has been very little change in that situation. In the Allis-Chalmers plants scattered around the country, negotiations were resumed shortly after the President made his seizure threat. At the Labor Department, they say these negotiations are proceeding at the plant level. But they apparently are proceeding at a rate that makes progress almost imperceptible.

MANY ON STRIKE

In the seven Allis-Chalmers plants, more than 18,000 workers are on strike. Not all of these plants, however, are directly engaged in the manufacture of farm equipment.

At the Case company plants—two at Racine, Wis., one at Rockford, Ill.—there is no change whatsoever. In the Racine plants, 4,000 workers have been out since June 26; and at Rockford, 1,200 have been out since the same date.

L. R. Clausen, head of the Case company, is an unreconstructed Old Dealer. He has repeatedly refused to talk with negotiators for the United Automobile Workers Union, which represents the men in his plants. His theory is that, when the men get hungry enough, they'll come back to work.

To Clausen, government is anathema. He has very positive ideas of the rights of management. During the war, when his company was operating entirely on highly profitable war orders from the Government, he refused admission to his plants to Robert F. Patterson, then Undersecretary of War.

What makes Clausen's attitude more glaring is the fact that the UAW local with which he must deal in Racine could hardly have taken a more reasonable stand. This strong local is not afflicted with the left-wing political bickering which has plagued the UAW. It is a straight-forward trade union with an economic objective.

ORDER ON DESK

For at least two weeks, the Department of Labor has had an order on President Truman's desk calling for the seizure of the Case plants. Several times the Department has sent along gentle hints suggesting that it was time for action. Pointed inquiries have come from members of Congress concerned over both the Case and the Allis-Chalmers strikes.

But nothing has happened. In the Case situation, there is a complete deadlock. No negotiations are going on.

What makes this so serious is the desperate need for farm machinery. There is the justification the President would have for taking over the plants and operating them under Government supervision.

Throughout the war, the farmers limped along with machinery that was going to pieces. They patched and mended as best they could. But now new machinery is absolutely imperative. As Mark Sullivan pointed out in a recent column from his Pennsylvania farm, hay balers are essential if farmers are to get the most out of their hay crop.

This is directly related to the need for all-out food production in a hungry world. Europe is in desperate need not merely of food but of machines to plant and harvest crops.

UNIONS' CONCERN

Still another phase is of concern to labor leaders. Implement dealers and the companies put the blame for lack of machinery on the strikers. Naturally they say nothing about the stubbornness of management. In small towns and on farms, this helps to feed a growing resentment against labor organizations as such. And that is a political factor the unions sooner or later must cope with.

Pressure on the President to act is growing. He may be compelled to take over the plants, although obviously he is most reluctant to do so. Already precious time that can never be recovered has been lost.

Samuel Grafton

San Diego Vs. World

SAN DIEGO

A MEXICAN hotel clerk, south of the border, said to us: "I am for Padilla for President. Only the poor people are for Aleman, and so I am for Padilla." It struck us that hardly any American would make such a remark; even if he felt the same sentiment, he would find a softer way of putting it. Another Mexican said: "Yes, the butcher stores are full of meat, but the people are too poor to buy much of it. It is the inflation. When there is inflation, the stores are full of meat, but it stays in the stores." The ordinary Mexican talks about politics in a way in which only professional political people talk in the United States; with a direct, passionate attack which makes American political conversations seem discursive and oblique.

BORDER RECROSSED

We recrossed the border, after being given directions on how to reach it by a man who could have been a refugee; he told us with a kind of flat, toneless certainty, which road led directly to the United States. We drove to San Diego, marveling at how everything on the American side of the border seemed different, including the air. We saw almost the first sight we saw in San Diego was a Mexican band, playing in a hotel lobby with a determined sentimental loyalty, as if he knew what was expected of it, though Mexicans certainly do not show the same sort of concern on their home ground.

We talked politics in San Diego, and a man of affairs said to us that he believed the middle class was going conservative out of sheer bewilderment. It was a frightened middle class, he felt, and it wanted something familiar to clutch, that it knew, to hang on to. San Diego has some reason to be concerned, for while it has held on to most of its wartime swelling of population, and still has above 360,000 people, it is holding on to these as if it were holding its breath. There are plans for a manufacturer of "Bobby Cars," little $600 automobiles, to go into production here, and almost every second one meets in the street will explain how the Bobby Cars are going to bring 9,000 jobs to the city.

VIEW SHIFTS

And in San Diego, as in so many other American cities, one senses how the world point of view of a year ago has suddenly shifted to a local point of view; from being San Diego, magnificent part of a world war effort, it has become San Diego against the world, trying to draw industry here from elsewhere, and perhaps a returning Republican press naturally with a returning localism of outlook.

Some of the figures are strange, and there are a few men in San Diego who are bewildered by certain trends. One sharp observer explained, during a brief stroll, that while local department store sales were up 22 per cent last month, as compared with a year ago, there are also 28,000 persons on the unemployment rolls, of whom more than half are receiving relief payments. He did not see how both trends could continue simultaneously for very long, without plunging our economy across the middle into a new rich and a new poor. But he did not sound like a man who was getting emotional listeners.

RESTAURANT OF TOMORROW

We left San Diego, for LaJolla, to put up at the Casa De Manana, where nobody seems frightened of anything, and to dine at a nearby cafe which calls itself the "Restaurant of Tomorrow." The Restaurant of Tomorrow turned out to be a modernistic structure of sheet glass and blonde wood, serving Mexican dishes, but according to American standards of elegance and dispatch; the whole making a picture of tomorrow which is at least as satisfying and persuasive as most others which have been offered for our inspection on this trip.