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Chief Selvey Deserves A Fair Shake

HAVING performed the neatest back-flip of the year in giving Ernest C. Selvey a "permanent" job as chief of police, the City Council ought to unite behind its man and leave no doubt that he enjoys its complete confidence and support.

With this kind of backing, Chief Selvey will have a fair chance of showing Charlotte what he can do with one of the municipality's most difficult single assignments.

Without it, he might as well turn in his badge tomorrow for his official conduct will be so inhibited by doubts and fears that little good can be accomplished.

Obviously, this is one job that ought to be kept out of politics. It also ought to be kept free from any unnecessary and improper meddling from City Hall. If a man is considered good enough and trustworthy enough to merit the job then he deserves to be left alone to do the job as he sees fit—until and unless he proves to the Council that he just can't handle it.

We had hoped that the Council meant what it said when it agreed to delay the appointment of a permanent chief. We had hoped that a thorough and systematic study could be made of all available talent for the post—local and otherwise—before a final selection was made. But the Council's change of heart was certainly justified if it became firmly convinced that the acting chief was, after all, the best available man.

There was some disagreement at City Hall on the appointment. That, too, was perfectly proper. It is our hope, however, that any remaining arguments on the question will be put aside and that both the mayor and the Council will offer Chief Selvey every reasonable opportunity to do his best. Anything less would be a disservice to the chief and a disservice to the city.

Two Tasks For Tar Heel Legislators

THE assorted bleats and cries about North Carolina's highway fatalities at least indicate an awareness of the problem. If this same sense of urgency can be transmitted to the 1959 General Assembly perhaps the state can have two weapons it needs to reduce the slaughter.

The first is a law providing for scientific tests of persons suspected of driving while intoxicated. Specifically, the law should make the results of such tests admissible as evidence, set up a scale of evidentiary values for the tests and dispense with the necessity for calling an expert to interpret the results.

According to Motor Vehicles Commissioner Ed Scheidt, 27 states already have laws to determine the percentage of alcohol in the blood of arrested motorists. The list includes South Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee and Virginia—a fact which prompted the RALEIGH NEWS & OBSERVER to grumble editorially that "North Carolina is an island for the protection of drunken drivers".

Even though the tests would be taken voluntarily, they are needed to insure equal and exact justice in the prosecution of drunken driving cases. They could detect accurately whether or not there is sufficient alcohol in the blood to cause a driver to lose normal control of his bodily and mental faculties. Since impairment can also arise in cases where alcohol is wholly absent (diabetic shock and heart attacks, for instance) such a law would protect the innocent as well as help convict the guilty.

The second legal weapon the state needs in its war on highway accidents is a mechanical inspection law. Obviously, it should be designed to overcome principal objections to the short-lived 1947 inspection act. Just such a bill died an undeserved death in the House Roads Committee in 1957. As a result, unsafe cars still crowd Tar Heel highways — cars with mechanical defects responsible for 5 to 10 per cent of all motor vehicle accidents.

The state must have these two laws if it is to make any substantial headway in its continuing struggle to make Tar Heel highways safe. The rolling junk heap and the drunken driver represent deadly perils. Authorities ought to be given the simple, scientific means to cope with them.

The People Vs. The People's Servants

THAT musty "servants of the people" epithet which politicians like to claim, especially during elections, is so stale that people seldom stop to ask whether it is true.

The stange story out of Fulton County, Ga., gives Atlantans and their metropolitan neighbors full reason to begin to ask. There, state politicians seem to have a people in harness.

In a situation which smacks of northern Virginia, the people of Fulton County, Ga., have become alarmed at the adamance of their elective officials on the segregation problem. When Mayor William Hartsfield of Atlanta asked Gov. Marvin Griffin, himself an acolyte of massive resistance, that Atlantans be allowed to hold a referendum on the question of desegregation versus school-closing, Griffin refused.

At stake in the quiet struggle is the education of 100,000 children in the greater Atlanta area; for both Gov. Griffin and Gov.-elect Vandiver, together with Sen. Russell, have declared that if Atlanta schools are ordered to begin desegregation they will shut the schools fast rather than accept any compromise whatsoever.

Meanwhile, it has become clear that a large part of public opinion in Atlanta would accept some desegregation of the schools rather than have them bolted. Clergymen have signed a manifesto to that effect. State Representative from Fulton County M. M. Smith has declared that as between absolute segregation and public schools "I am for public schools." The chairman of the Atlanta board of education has declared that he will not close the schools unless ordered to do so by state officials. Civic organizations, citizens' organizations, and the PTA of Atlanta, along with the Atlanta newspapers, have endorsed their city's stand against the state officials.

No one can say, as yet, whether a majority of citizens in Fulton county would or would not vote to close the schools. They have been denied the opportunity to express themselves.

It seems that the people of greater Atlanta, who are not integrationists but who are determined not to duplicate the folly of Little Rock and Norfolk, find themselves under the thumb of administrative tyranny. The governor is presumably as much the servant of Atlanta as of backcountry south Georgia, yet it is not at all clear that he is not master.

North Carolina may be sympathetically thankful that its democracy is not yet so out of joint as Georgia's. There the statehouse seems to wag the people.

Pop Warner League Sets An Example

THE pint-sized gladiators in plastic helmets and canvas shoes had themselves a ripping good time at Memorial Stadium yesterday afternoon.

It was Charlotte's Pop Warner football league's big day, and this junior-sized bowl game put the lid on the second season of the program here. The North Mecklenburg Optimists' Club, sponsors of the bowl and the league season, are to be lauded on their accomplishment.

This answer to the shiftlessness bred by "nothing to do" is welcome.

Particularly welcome is one aim of the Pop Warner Football League program. "To stress school work, good citizenship, good manners, thoughtfulness of others, and respect over the actual *playing* of the football game."

For somewhat older participants in the sport, where occasional fist-fights, riots, and the "winning is everything" credo of many football coaches prevail, an example is being set.

That in itself would make football little leagues worthwhile.

From The Chicago Tribune

WORD SAVING

IT TURNS out that the United Nations, after all, has a goal. It is not world saving, but word saving.

A special committee of the General Assembly has just used 6,000 words to admonish the members. Its word: You are too wordy.

If anybody thinks 6,000 words may in themselves, represent something like verbosity, the special committee has an awesome figure to offer in rebuttal.

Six thousand words are a mere trifle, considering that last year the U. N. output of official documents ran to 242,853,500 pages.

Secretary General Hammarskjold has directed U. N. to attempt this year to reduce the verbiage by 25 per cent. This, we are sure, is a lofty goal but one worthy of the high ideals of U. N. If word saving makes progress who knows but that the organization might then find time to straighten out such lesser problems as the Middle East and Quemoy.

Rockets now being shot hundreds of miles up are the only things that can look down on the national debt.—LAUREL (MISS.) LEADER CALL.

Kefauver Auto Report Treads On Sensitive Toes

By MARQUIS CHILDS

WASHINGTON

DESPITE the optimistic predictions of a beginning boom that will soar to giddy new heights by mid-1959 the skeptics are watching the rate of sales of the new automobiles to try to gauge the realities behind these gaudy forecasts.

The rate of growth in production of the steel industry upward

SEN. KEFAUVER
Stirred Detroit

from the recession low of less than half-of-plant capacity is also being closely followed. With orders dependent on car sales the steel industry has been nervous lately, since the recovery has not been as fast a rate as had been anticipated.

TWO FACTORS

In the report on the auto industry put out by Sen. Estes Kefauver's anti-monopoly subcommittee it was suggested that the only two significant factors in car sales are prices and consumer income. The price tag on the '58s is up from $50 to $100 over the '57s.

What the committee looked into in exacting detail was "administered prices" in the auto industry — why car prices do not respond to the law of supply and demand. Production reached a peak in 1955 when 7,900,000 cars were turned out. It dropped last year to 4,200,000, and the estimate for '59 is somewhere between 5,200,000 and 6,000,000. Yet prices have gone up each year.

SPUTTERING INDIGNATION

The Kefauver report produced sputtering indignation in some segments of the industry. It showed labor costs per car for the giant General Motors Corporation to be $300 to $400, which is roughly equal to the profit per car of $313 at the 1957 rate of output. At a rate of production 25 per cent higher, or about 7,500,000 cars a year, the profit figure would average $423 a car, according to the committee's estimates.

The report suggests, and this is perhaps the most disturbing intimation it contained, that perhaps a major shift in consumer likes and dislikes is taking place. In the mid-twenties when Henry Ford I stuck to his Model T, arguing that what people wanted was a car to get you there and back regardless of looks, he lost over two or three years a considerable share of the market he had had. Show and style had begun to make an appeal.

It is possible, the committee says, that the consumer has turned back to utility and practicality in the car he wants to drive. If this has any basis in fact it has horrendous implications for the industry, for it means that all the glitter and the fiery lights that make the new cars so spectacular have lost their appeal.

The report points to another difficulty the industry faces as car prices advance. Because of the rapid decline in resale values it is almost impossible to push time payments beyond 36 months. If it were pushed to 42 months, according to the report, for more than a year and three-quarters, or half the entire financing term, the buyer would owe more than the car was worth on resale. The temptation would be strong to let it be repossessed.

A political tempest may blow up when Senator Kefauver comes back to the Senate next year for another appropriation for his subcommittee. He wants to investigate "administered prices" in bread and in drugs. Here, too, are sensitive toes that will resist being stepped on.

Some of the able members of the committee staff came from the Federal Trade Commission. They were pushed out of the FTC when the Eisenhower Administration took over. The FTC recently issued a report on the drug industry, but committee experts say it skirted the issue of rising prices.

LONE DISSENTER

The only dissenter on the automobile report was Sen. Everett McKinley Dirksen, who defended the industry. A separate statement from Sen. Alexander Wiley hints at the need "to stabilize prices and wages in this and other excessively large businesses where power is concentrated to such an extent that some folks claim it constitutes a danger to the nation."

Kefauver has been pressured from the liberal-left to make his reports more sensational so they would get big headlines. On the other side of the political fence the resentment of the committee's detailed findings has been intense. But almost everyone agreed that in the recent campaign high prices were one of the two or three most important causes of discontent. So there is political mileage in the line that the senator from Tennessee has been pursuing and the Senate seems certain to give him another lease on life.

People's Platform

A Locksmith Should Have Been Called

Charlotte

Editor, The News:

JUST suppose, Mr. Editor, that there had been a bomb at Harding High School today. You reported that a squad of 30 police officers rushed to the school grounds and that students after going to their home rooms were told to "check their lockers . . . because the lockers had combination locks on them . . ."

Just suppose one child had opened the door to his locker and promptly got his head blown out. On whose shoulders would rest the responsibility of that child's death and/or others that may have occurred? No, not on the child's own shoulders, but on the shoulders of those who decided that the child should be the one to so expose his life to danger!

Our local police force is a very fine group of men indeed. They have proven their courtesy and courage many times over. Part of an officer's work involves exposing his own life to danger — in dark alleys, in grills, in brawls, in homicides and also in performance of his duty in searching for hidden bombs, be they mythical or real. I know they do their work well and thoroughly. They expect danger and act accordingly. The school child should not be expected to expose his own life and surely does not know how to act.

It seems to me, Mr. Editor, that the conference of police and school principal should have decided that a locksmith should have been hired to open those combination locks thus protecting the young lives and allowing police to do their own work. There are several such craftsmen listed in our city phone book who could and would have dropped everything to answer such a call. There is an honorable craft and such a service would be part of their everyday life and work.

These are the same men who should be called, when the child locks himself in a bathroom or closet and who are ignored on which occasions, the fire department is called. Sirs, neither the police nor the fire department have the general know-how to open locks and I urgently recommend that on any and all future occasions—be it bomb scare or locked room that those responsible insist that the proper man—your local locksmith, all men of high integrity and valor, be called.

—JEROME J. BRUSH

Policemen Fill A Real Place

Charlotte

Editor, The News:

HARDLY a day passes that there isn't some article in the local newspapers about the corrupt conditions in the police department, dishonest policemen, etc. I would certainly make no attempt to prove these allegations false. Neither do I think we should judge the entire force by an unfavorable few.

I had my first personal contact with a Charlotte police officer last week when I had an automobile accident in which my five year old daughter was injured. Officers K. D. Jetton and M. C. Stubbs happened to be in the vicinity and arrived at the scene of the accident within a matter of seconds. Officer Jetton immediately took over and could not have been more thoughtful, kind, or efficient in the way he handled the situation. Needless to say, the shock of the accident, plus seeing my little girl was hurt had me on the verge of hysteria. As Mr. Stubbs called for an ambulance, Mr. Jetton very calmly and gently secured the necessary information and had my daughter and me smiling and off to the hospital in short order. When my husband arrived at the accident, he was also treated in the same manner. My daughter later remarked, "I sure do like policemen."

I feel that my experience is not at all typical of the police force than the damaging reports we are always hearing. Policemen work long, hard hours with little or no thanks and small pay. I know that you who have received their services agree with me that they fulfill an invaluable duty in our community. I, for one, am very grateful and extend my sincere thanks to Officer Jetton for making a terrible experience bearable.

—MRS. JOE F. FUNDERBURKE

Drew Pearson's Merry-Go-Round

Four Powerful Men From 'Hillbilly State'

WASHINGTON

A QUIRK of political fate has picked out four men from Arkansas, sometimes called the "hillbilly state," to influence the nation on four vital problems. They are:

Gov. Orval Faubus, who has made history on resisting school integration.

Sen. John McClellan, who has made headlines and influenced legislation regarding labor and racketeering.

Rep. Wilbur Mills, chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, which writes the taxes which the American people pay.

Perhaps none of the solons from the major states, including New York, California and Pennsylvania, have so influenced the nation on these diverse subjects in recent times as these four men from Arkansas.

Lush Tax Loopholes

While the public has been watching the headlines from Alaska, Berlin, and the Near East, a little noticed congressional committee has been writing laws which will affect every American taxpayer.

The laws will decide whether the big stock life insurance companies shall pay taxes commensurate with other companies, or whether small taxpayers will have to dig into their pockets to make up the difference. The big life insurance companies have been getting by with such scandalously low taxes that some have paid relatively little on their multi-million-dollar profits.

Also under quiet debate is whether other tax loopholes will be closed, including the 27½ per cent oil depletion allowance, a tax bonanza also paid in the end by the small taxpayer.

Money That Lost

It was the big oil and gas operators who contributed heavily to try to defeat liberal and Democratic candidates on Nov. 4. Generally, their money lost. The liberals won. When the liberals arrive in Washington, the new Congress should have the best chance since the early 1930's to plug tax loopholes. Plugging these loopholes could balance the budget without cutting the national defense budget.

This is why it's significant that the tax hearings are being held before the new liberal senators and congressmen arrive in Washington. When they get back the new insurance tax laws will all be neatly written, and the new congressmen will merely be asked to step up and vote for them.

Arkansan Tax Writer

The man who is steering the new tax laws is Rep. Wilbur Mills, the Arkansan who heads the House Ways and Means Committee. The handsome, astute Mills knows tax law, but in recent years is inclined to favor the big taxpayer. So do most of the Republicans and conservative Democrats now on his fame-duck committee. Nevertheless they are rushing work on the new insurance tax laws before the new Congress arrives.

Chief injustice in the present life insurance tax is the fact that insurance companies are taxed only 7.8 per cent on income from investment while other businesses must pay a 52 per cent corporate tax. Profits from insurance premiums aren't taxed at all.

Tremendous Advantage

This tremendous tax advantage has caused some businesses to set up life insurance companies as a screen for their operation. An oil company can set up an insurance company, hire a few agents, then pay taxes on profits at 7.8 per cent, not 52 per cent.

This is a favorite device of certain oil millionaires and may be why Sen. Bob Kerr of Oklahoma fought so hard against plugging life insurance tax loopholes at the last Congress. Kerr is one of the biggest oilmen in the Southwest.

Here is how the tax loopholes work:

How They Do It

1. The York Chemical Co. employed the small Piedmont Life Insurance Co. and dumped several million dollars into it. This put the extra capital under the protection of life insurance tax laws.

2. The big New York installment finance company, C.I.T., formed its own life insurance company. Dubbed Life, to insure installment buyers, it then kept its interest rates low on installment loans but charged borrowers high rates to insure their lives. The profit, therefore, was made by increased premiums, rather than interest rates. Add insurance premiums are not taxable.

Big Bonanza

As a result, Patriot Life, organized five years ago in 1953 with only $2,200,000 paid-in capital, paid $5,000,000 in cash dividends last year to stockholders. Eighty per cent of the premiums collected by the company went into the pockets of stockholders as profits. Yet not a penny of these profits was subject to federal income tax.

The Presidential Virus

California's Bargain Power

By DORIS FLEESON

SAN FRANCISCO

CALIFORNIA Democrats are already erecting "keep off the grass" signs on their rich national convention delegate preserves. It is not that they are particularly hostile to any presidential candidates from outside—and they have seen them all in recent months.

What they do feel is that their best tactic in the party drive for national power is to maintain their bargaining position by means of a favorite-son candidacy for Gov.-elect Edmund G. (Pat) Brown. The word is that if any rival wishes to make the test here, Brown will meet him head-on.

STEVENSON'S POWER BASE

California was the 1956 power base of Adlai Stevenson, who is still highly regarded by important party leaders. It would certainly be a key point in a 1960 Stevenson draft, which his admirers now clearly hope for. Since he would not again enter any state primaries, the Brown favorite-son maneuver at this stage probably helps him by enlarging the possibilities for a convention deadlock.

But the clinical history of the presidential virus is clear and plain. Once it is injected by kind friends for whatever reason, the victim may begin by running only a slight fever, but the disease soon takes command and normally runs its full course.

ADLAI STEVENSON
He Used California

HUMOR

At this point Brown speaks of such potential glory with detachment and humor. His attitude, in fact, is much the same as that of his Republican opposite number on the East Coast, Gov.-elect Nelson Rockefeller of New York. Both talk only in terms of the job they must do as governor and seek to turn aside 1960 speculation.

Noticeably, however, both also show immense interest in building the party and helping to influence its policy.

Actually, both men are automatically involved in presidential politics simply because they are the governors-elect of the first and second states. No Republican has ever been elected President who did not carry New York; one Democrat — Woodrow Wilson — saved himself even after his GOP rival won New York by carrying California.

BROWN RALLIES WEST

Rockefeller in addition is the inevitable rallying point for Republicans and independents who do not like Vice President Richard M. Nixon. Brown, similarly is a natural spokesman for his party's expanding base in the West and Midwest, which is more liberal than its base in the South, and has different problems than the one in the North.

The commanding position of the big states in matters of political craftiness is increase in the era of mass communications. Every three decades both parties have designated their most capable number on the East Coast. Governor Nelson Rockefeller of New York. Both talk only in terms of the job they must do as governor and seek to turn aside 1960 speculation.

Noticeably, however, both also show immense interest in building the party and helping to influence its policy.