THE CHARLOTTE NEWS

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Will Schoolmen Bury Their Own Baby?

Every official inanity, every fumbled opportunity to advance the cause of common sense, drives another nail into the coffin of city-county school consolidation.

In fact, if Mecklenburg's voters fail to approve the proposed merger June 30, city and county school officials will have only themselves to blame.

Having wisely agreed to consolidation for the good of the community and its children, local educators, administrators and school board members have failed miserably to communicate their reasons to the people. Consequently, some voters are confused and others are suspicious.

An example of the absurd lengths to which fear and suspicion can be carried appears in today's People's Platform. But school officials have done little or nothing to clear up such doubts. One administrator, County School Supt. J. W. Wilson, has actually encouraged widespread confusion by a series of dreadfully inept public musings which were dutifully reported by assembled newsmen.

The responsibility of schoolmen did not end when they made their own study of the necessity of consolidation and ironed out the legal difficulties. As they surely ought to have realized all along, the final decision is in the hands of the voters of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County. These voters are not the type to rubber stamp blindly the unexplained will of the two school boards. They want to know why consolidation is so necessary and they have a right to be told clearly and frankly without any hocus-pocus or mumbo-jumbo.

Nor is there any time to lose. Some ridiculous notions are already abroad. They will be accepted as gospel by naive people unless a sincere effort is made soon to get the truth on record. How long do we have to wait?

Look Quick! Here Come The Billboards

Tar Heel legislators who knuckled under to the billboard lobby last week at least ought to be supplied with picture postcards of the state's lushest scenery. They could then mail them to constituents as solemn substitutes for some of the sights we will soon be missing.

Sen. Robert S. Kerr (D-Okla) once ridiculed as "assthetes" those crazy dreamers who thought that when the taxpayers shelled out $35 billion for a new federal highway program they had a right to enjoy the view of their country as well. But Sens. Richard Neuberger (D-Ore) and Thomas H. Kuchel (R-Calif) finally inserted in the 1958 highway bill a modest provision that would give individual states a little financial incentive to regulate billboards along the new system.

North Carolina's share would have been $800,000. It could have been put to good use in this revenue-hungry state. And, more important, motorists would have actually been able to see the magnificent Tar Heel countryside as they rode along.

But after listening to the high-octane special interest groups, who put their products before nature, of course, the House Roads Committee shouted North Carolina's billboard bill into oblivion. The arguments of the "assthetes"—garden clubs, motor clubs and the like—were ignored. Incidentally, the coup de grace was administered by Rep. Ed Kemp of Guilford, a bright young legislator who sorely disappointed us this time.

Oh, well. We can still buy picture postcards.

Yes, Just Leave It To The Historians

One of the curios of our era is the modesty of the editorial writers who disdain to pass judgment. The death of John Foster Dulles, late secretary of state, has brought a spate of the coy disclaimers. We cite the following, picked at random from among editorial tributes:

Greensboro Daily News: "Today is far too soon to make an estimate of his life and public career. Definitive judgment must be left to historians."

New York Times: "Time and history may write varying verdicts on some of his acts and policy."

News Chronicle (London): "History will be kinder to Dulles than his contemporaries ever were."

New York Herald Tribune: "Only the long purview of history can render a final verdict on . . . John Foster Dulles."

In some ways, this reluctance to judge seems to put us in a new 18th Century, whose writers often looked for that vague god known as "history" or those infallible arbiters "historians" to render verdicts. The decline and fall of judgment gives us the notion, somehow, that it is immodest to summon the materials at hand and try to make up our own minds. We had better leave it to "history."

What assurance do we have that the antiquarians of 2000 or 2050 will see any more clearly than we the significance of a man or event? They will possess the mighty lever of hindsight, certainly, but won't they be as liable as we to judge the past by the standard of their own prejudices and outlook? Even now, our own historians weep that they cannot spend just one little day in the Middle Ages to see what really made them tick.

We are thus lost in an endless circle and no one can be sized up, either by his own age or by another. Upon the death of Mr. Dulles at least half the editorial writers look to the historians of tomorrow for a weighing of the man. And what will those historians be doing? Why, they'll be seated somewhere in a microfilm library, seeking frantically for an editor's judgment written in 1959.

Higher Education

Mount San Antonio College in California offers a course for credit called Hope Chest 61A and 61B for girls who want to "experience the various phases of home living." Students get instruction in the selection and care of linen, silverware, home appliances and are taught how to plan a trousseau and a wedding party. Co-eds who are engaged by final exam time presumably get an "A."

Music From An Old Sumerian Juke Box

At the University of Pennsylvania, archeologists recently translated 30 lines of 3,500-year-old cuneiform characters from a piece of clay no bigger than a quarter. It came from ancient Sumer.

What they got was an impassioned screech which might have come from a 20th Century juke box.

"Oh, her heart!
Oh her heart!
My queen, oh,
Her heart!"

We suggest they pass it along to Elvis Presley.

From The New York Herald Tribune

NEITHER DEAD WHALE NOR STOVE BOAT

When an incautious whale (weight unknown, but probably not over 100 tons) took on the liner President Hoover (10,603 tons), the result might have been expected. As the ship's captain reported laconically: "Whale bumps Hoover. Hoover unhurt. Whale bruised." Under the circumstances, the whale was lucky. Contrary to the old fierce resolve of the whalemen, "a dead whale or a stove boat," the Hoover was not stove and the whale seems to have acquired no more than a prodigious headache.

It was not always thus. When the plump wooden whaling ships and barques set out from New Bedford and Nantucket with their bulwarks studded with trim boats, they could expect much more than a long sail and greasy luck. Many a boat was smashed by the flukes of a right whale or a sperm whale's jaws, and even the ships, stoutly though they were built and able to withstand Arctic ice or the terrible seas off the Horn, were not safe from Leviathan enraged. Moby Dick's revenge on the Pequod was not merely the product of Herman Melville's dark imaginings nor only within the compass of a super-whale with transcendental overtones. The unhappy Essex was sunk by an angry and determined whale deep in the Pacific, and the remnants of its crew only survived after terrible hardships—including cannibalism.

The methodical slaughter of modern whaling, with its floating factories and lethal harpoons, might well inspire a whale to take up the task of Moby Dick and prove to some present-day Ahab that the pursuit of the world's largest living creatures is not to be taken up lightly. The mingled pathos and awe which Melville experienced in the whale hunt has not vanished, even though these great sea beasts are far more helpless in a mechanized world than when they were harpooned at close quarters from a heaving little boat by a sturdy human arm. But whatever methods the whale might take to get his own back and avenge his dwindling race, butting a liner is not to be recommended. That way lie only bruises and flip remarks from the bridge.

The wife of a violent tempered industrialist visited a gypsy fortune teller. "Prepare yourself for a shock," droned the old gypsy. "Your dear husband is about to die a cruel and horrible death!"

I know that," said the wife, "Will I be acquitted?" Lamar (Mo.) Democrat.

Pome In Which Is Reported A Personal Reaction To That Period Of The Year During Which Temperatures Are Consistently High:

I seem dumber
In the sumber.—Atlanta Journal.

There Is A Trace Of Rust On Poland's Iron Society

By JOSEPH ALSOP

WARSAW

They had a fine party at Lowicz on Thursday in honor of the Body and Blood of Our Lord.

It sounds shockingly irreverent when put that way. Yet it is really the best way to describe this vast celebration of Corpus Christi, which was the very opposite of irreverent.

Too many years have passed since this reporter used to cover Sunday morning sermons for the greatest city editor of our times, Stanley Walker. It seems more than a little strange to be doing the same sort of thing, on a larger scale, more than a quarter of a century later, and on the other side of the iron curtain. But in this part of the world, if you wish to sense the deepest feelings of the people, you must go to the old Coronation Church in Budapest, or to Corpus Christi in Lowicz.

TRAFFIC PROBLEM

Something else could be sensed in Lowicz, too, as one began to realize on the short drive out from Warsaw. Lowicz is a little town that is chiefly famous as the place where Napoleon met his last love, Maria Waleska, and as the center of the district which has the prettiest peasant costumes in Poland. The costumes the Lowicz people wear in their Corpus Christi procession make it a great annual attraction, and half Warsaw seemed to be on the way to Lowicz.

Automobiles of every make, motor scooters, motorcycles, and put-put equipped bicycle of every description, even fleets of un-mechanized bicycles furiously propelled by muscular bicycle racing enthusiasts, produced a serious traffic problem. Among the many forms of misery that humankind is heir to, traffic problems alone have always been utterly unknown on this side of the famous curtain. What would have been normal in Nyack was amazing on the Lowicz road.

DEEP PASSION

The state of the road forecast the state of the town. The cathedral square, with its war memorial to the one-fifth of the population of Lowicz killed by the Germans, was one continuous, slowly milling crowd. The cathedral itself (a minor marvel of Polish baroque, all fluting turrets, flying angels, and elegantly gesturing saints) was so jammed one could hardly edge in beyond the doors. As the priest placed the golden monstrance on the altar pinnacle, the hymn to the Host poured from several thousand throats with extraordinary emotion: "With Thy body, with Thy blood save us and bless us, O Lord!"

So it was in the cathedral from this beginning, until the mass ended with the deep and terrible passion of the Polish national hymn, "O God, from ages past, protector of this Polish land." Out in the square, however, as long as mass continued, it was more like a poorly-provided fun-fair.

DUMPLING NECKLACES

There were pastel-colored ices to be eaten. Vendors were also hawking little paper parasols and the strange traditional delicacy-ornament of Corpus Christi in Poland, necklaces of fried dumplings in the shape of a rosary. But Poland's new prosperity has not got much beyond road transport, and these trifles were the only pleasure offered at the fun-fair, besides the pleasure of slowly pushing one's way through the close-packed mob, to see what friends were there. At least everyone could find a friend. Well dressed professional men and blue jeaned university students, young "hooligans" with their long hair and sober, dark clad working families, and people of every other sort including even a stray Communist official or two had all come.

The fun fair in the square was suspended when the mass ended, and the cathedral bells tolled, and the Corpus Christi procession made its way into the open air. It was indeed a sight worth seeing — the girls and women in their embroidered bodices and astounding layers of skirts striped green and blue and red and black and purple and yellow, and the men in their black jerkins and yellow striped pantaloons; the endless line of banners, beribboned and bedecked with flowers; the old men with their kettledrums; the choir boys with their tinkling bells; and at the end, the Host in its monstrance under its silken canopy. The whole crowd bowed in silent reverence as the Host was carried through its ranks.

Polish Street Scene: Signs Of Prosperity Are Beginning To Appear

After that, the object of the day's excursion had been officially attained. But in all honesty, it must be said that the real object, at least for the many thousands of sightseers from Warsaw, had not been quite attained as yet. Most of them must have been believers — most Poles are — but pleasure was what they chiefly sought in Lowicz.

So the town's sole restaurant was packed as in a subway rush. Every other restaurant and cafe within twenty kilometers was soon crowded, too. The roadside from Lowicz to Warsaw was strewn all afternoon with groups of cheerful picnickers. The muscular bicycle racers even took a quiet dip in the little river. It was all very innocent and gay and simple and above all very astonishing.

For if religion is there already, and pleasure comes creeping insidiously in, and faint traces of prosperity begin to appear as well, how can a theoretically iron society keep its iron unrusted? That is the question which makes the party at Lowicz really worth describing.

People's Platform

Press, Educators Plot 'Mad Grab For Power'

Charlotte

Editors, The News:

Is it good for the whole of Mecklenburg County? Let every person of voting age ponder this question concerning consolidation of the county and city schools. If you conclude that we had better leave well enough alone because it is not good for all of Mecklenburg County, then go to work to defeat this gimmick that is loaded with power politics, backed up by a power-hungry consolidated press and certain city school officials who it seems to me are hungry for more centralized authority.

The bait or lure they are holding out is increased pay for county teachers, who already are in the vanguard of the best-paid county teachers in the 100 counties of North Carolina. The tenth-month supplement is about the best month's pay they have. Our schools are the finest in North Carolina and new applications are flooding the county school superintendent's office from counties and states far and near. I say, let well enough alone on June 30, the day you cast your ballot, and vote against this group of power-hungry tax eaters.

Blankenship: A Protest

Usually, the consolidators argue about the savings to be had; but they have overlooked this old saw, because they say it will cost 54 cents in taxes per $100 valuation, meaning, for a medium-taxed home, the rate will be about $50 or $60 for schools alone.

The city taxpayers know that in order to meet bond principal they are going to have to raise the tax rate within the next few weeks. We all know that we have reached our limit in issuing bonds, that we are in debt more deeply than at any time in the history of our city. We ought to stop issuing additional bonds for a while, and we ought to stop voting tax increases, and these consolidators ought to be stopped in this mad grab for power. I say to you that every man who owns his home or who rents his home will feel this extra burden, either in tax bills or rent bills. I am voting squarely against consolidation of the city-county schools and against centralization of power and against more bonds and taxes connected therewith.

To your tents, O Israel!

—MERCER J. BLANKENSHIP

Nation's Taxpayers Spineless, Stupid?

Darlington, S. C.

Editors, The News:

In the hopes of getting a few good citizens to protest against the terrible burden of taxes, I am asking you to publish the following from my letter to Gov. Hollings and our Darlington County delegation.

"Did you ever hear about the revolution that started in 1775 over taxes? Taxes in those days probably cost less than 15 days work out of each year."

"On May 13, 1959, the Associated Press carried a story about the average taxpayer working from January 1 through May 13 this year for the various branches of the government.

"So what did the South Carolina Assembly and governor do? I hardly have the heart or the strength to tell you. Just judging from my own business, I find that direct taxes alone will take three-fourths of my profit during the coming year. This means my wife, my oldest son and I will work the first nine months to pay direct taxes. On the other one-fourth (three months) we still have state and federal income taxes plus Social Security to pay.

"Several economists have predicted that by 1970 the average worker, farmer, and small businessman would be working 75 per cent of the time to pay taxes. I would have preferred waiting 11 more years before reaching this peak of progress.

"My vision is too weak to peer into the future and say what the outcome of this is to be. Evidently, you politicians believe the American taxpayers are a spineless, stupid bunch who will carry any load you put on them.

"You may be right."

—G. M. HARRISON

'Nobody Ever Got Hit By A Planet'

Drew Pearson's Merry-Go-Round

Snobbish Yanks Greet A Friendly King

WASHINGTON

Being a king in this modern day of democracies, press conferences, and Rotary Club luncheons is no easy job. Especially it's not easy when you're only 29 years old and have never taken an official trip outside your country.

However, the coast-to-coast tour of the young King of the Belgians, just terminated, held both lessons and highlights for the U. S.

'You Said A Mouthful'

King Baudouin's visit was a bit different from that of his famous grandfather, King Albert, who with his consort came to New York during the distressing days of World War I. Chiefly remembered from that visit is Mayor John Hylan's famous remark: "You said a mouthful, Queen!"

King Baudouin's visit began in Washington in the Belgian Embassy where he stood tall, handsome, and very much alone. One by one, bemedaled diplomats, full-uniformed officers, and jeweled dowagers stepped up to shake hands. Shyly he greeted them.

There was something a bit incongruous in the scene. Here was a scion of European royalty which through the years had become more democratic, surrounded by representatives of American democracy wanting to become more aristocratic.

There was a day when Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson, appearing in the royal courts of Europe, refused to wear uniforms, inserted a provision in the U. S. Constitution that medals could not be accepted. But at the Belgian Embassy the other evening medals glittered on almost every bosom.

It Was Symbolic

Even the embassy in which the King stood was symbolic of what can happen when Americans yearn for aristocracy and wealth. It was built by Ray Baker, director of the mint under Woodrow Wilson, who married Delphine Dodge, the copper heiress. It passed on to Mrs. Edward T. Stotesbury, widow of the Drexell, Biddle banker in Philadelphia, whose estate passed it on to the Belgian government when inheritance taxes ate up family fortunes.

King Baudouin of the Belgians didn't know this as he stood shaking hands. Nor did the crowd milling in the embassy know why he looked shy, almost a little sad. Most of them did not realize that his mother, the beautiful Queen Astrid, had been killed in an auto accident when he was five; that his father had been taken to Germany by Hitler when he was ten; and that after the war his father was subjected to bitter criticism from the people he was supposed to rule—first, because he had surrendered to Hitler; second, because he took as his second wife a commoner.

Critical Subjects

When the criticism became too intense, his father abdicated. Baudouin became King of the Belgians. He was only 21. He had grown up in a crucible of suffering.

Even as he toured the U. S., inspecting everything from Atomic testing grounds to the Grand Canyon, word came that critical subjects back in Belgium demanded that his father move from the royal palace because of his influence over his son, the King.

Such is the power of subjects in these days of modern European royalty.

American Aristocracy

Touring the U. S., young King Baudouin showed his own democracy, also rubbed shoulders with American industrial aristocracy.

For the first time in his life he held press conferences, addressed huge crowds of people. Most kings don't do this. In Washington, accepting honorary membership in the Boy Scouts of America, he told nervous scout Robert Singleton: "Give me your left hand. I'm a boy scout too and I know the proper shake."

If modern-day royalty has as much strength and democracy as the young King of the Belgians, it has learned a lesson from which Americans can profit.