THE CHARLOTTE NEWS

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The 1959 Legislature In Retrospect: A Little Sunlight In The Shadows

The record of the 1959 General Assembly was not as somber as it seemed during those last tragic days of parliamentary violence to court reform and constitutional revision.

There were notable achievements as well as destructive mischief.

It would be unfair to judge the value of 4½ months' work solely on the basis of one fast shuffle, however disappointing the action may have been.

No one expected the legislature to play the role of St. George, to engage all of the dragons in deadly combat and to come up with a clear-cut victory over every problem in sight. That is not the way things happen in politics — certainly not in North Carolina politics. Progress, if it comes at all, is achieved only after a long and unremitting struggle against the forces of reaction and decay.

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This was clearly the case in the greatest single achievement of the 1959 session — passage of the state's first minimum wage law. The measure was widely hailed as an act of enlightened statesmanship on the part of Tar Heel legislators. It was. But it was also the result of a slow building of resolve in many minds, the product of many years of hard thinking and hard work. Furthermore, it reflects an evolution in political and social thought that bodes well for the future of North Carolina.

The 75-cent minimum is merely a beginning. The new law is riddled with exemptions. It is nevertheless an important effort to provide Tar Heels on the lowest rungs of the economic ladder some badly needed security against poverty and want.

The legislature that provided this necessary instrument of progress cannot reasonably be called a "bad" legislature.

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The second most important accomplishment of the General Assembly was the creation of a withholding system for the collection of state income taxes. It took considerable courage to nurse this essential piece of legislation to enactment in the face of noisy opponents who did not hesitate to make use of highly emotional and largely irrelevant war cries. But this was simply a good housekeeping measure. It will enable the state government to corner thousands of Tar Heels who have been successfully evading their state income taxes for years and thereby spread the cost of government more fairly. For the individual taxpayers it has the virtues of simplicity and convenience.

The 1959 General Assembly is to be congratulated, too, for several things it did not do. For instance, it successfully resisted efforts to wreck Gov. Luther H. Hodges' 1957 reform of the State Highway Commission and turn roadbuilding back into a cheap political exercise. It refused to give aid and comfort to those who threatened to make a witch hunt of textbook selection. It wisely refrained from tampering with school laws to please those who would cheerfully scuttle the successful program of limited desegregation undertaken in Charlotte, Greensboro and Winston-Salem. It rejected a powerfully backed but ill-conceived proposal to solve North Carolina's illegitimacy problem with compulsory sterilization.

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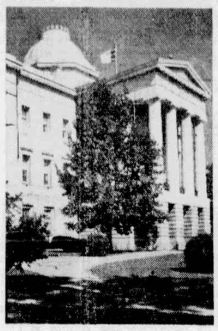
Much has already been written of the General Assembly's most dramatic failure — it's butchery of the judicial reform proposals of Sen. J. Spencer Bell's special study group. It is needless to dwell overlong on the unhappy details. The important thing is that there is a demonstrated need for a uniform system of courts in North Carolina and that need will, in time, be answered. The failure of the Bell proposals in the 1959 legislature did not kill the court reform issue. It only postponed the day when North Carolina can have a pattern of prompt and inexpensive justice for all her citizens.

A less publicized but related failure of the legislature was the reluctance to agree on a completely revised state constitution to replace the obsolete 1868 model under which Tar Heels are now living. Changes recommended by the State Constitutional Study Commission were somewhat less than satisfactory but they provided a starting point for thoughtful legislative statesmanship. Unfortunately, the statesmanship was never forthcoming. North Carolina is still hamstrung by a hand-me-down that is totally inadequate to the needs of a modern state.



From The Capitol Small Favors

Sooner or later, the job must be done. North Carolina must cut the deadwood from its present constitution and give its citizens a statement of governing principles which will draw the proper lines of authority, responsibility and accountability. It must provide an effective framework of efficiency and democracy for 20th century living.

It should be noted, however, that the 1959 General Assembly, as expected, did not bother to obey even the mandate of the present constitution on the question of legislative reapportionment. It was far more interested in writing the present inequities into law with a proposed constitutional amendment limiting every Tar Heel county to one senator regardless of the size of its population.

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There were other important failures which deserve to be mentioned:

The failure of the General Assembly to make a sincere effort to cope with the problem of low salaries for schoolteachers.

The failure to pass badly needed legislation to reduce the slaughter on Tar Heel streets and highways—notably a mechanical inspection law.

The failure to recognize fully the value of community colleges.

The failure to outlaw the much-abused civilian absentee ballot.

The failure to ditch the despised secrecy rule in legislative committee meetings.

Some of these failures can be traced to limp and unpredictable leadership. Few legislatures have taken so long to achieve momentum. The first 90 days produced little more than a study in slow motion. Wearisome or ludicrous minutiae often received attention far beyond what was necessary simply because there was no one to crack the whip. And, certainly, this legislature produced the largest and worst crop of amateur poets in American parliamentary history.

On this strange legislative landscape, the statesmanship of Sen. J. Spencer Bell and the bright promise of young Rep. Watts Hill Jr. stood out most significantly. Both are men of the future—as well as the present—in Tar Heel politics.

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The General Assembly could have accomplished more, we believe, with firmer leadership, more vision, less sectionalism. But Tar Heels have learned through the years to be grateful for small favors. Even amid the rubble of court reform, some gratitude is clearly in order.

From The Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch

THE RITUAL OF THUNDERHEADS

Slowly, too slowly, the season has come for the march of the thunderheads across the clear, hot skies of afternoon.

The plowman, turning tractor or mule at the end of the row, scans the skies for them, and the urbanite, too busy watching his watch and his step, hopes nonetheless the great clouds are there. A southerner cannot bear his summers without hope that the heat will not be as bad as he knows it will be. And the hope for the shower that sweetens the dusk and refreshes the spirit, resides in the thunderhead.

The weatherman, learned and scientific, cooperates in this little conspiracy of hope. Even in his most uncompromising forecasts of fair and hot weather he tags on the teaser, "with some chance of afternoon thundershowers."

Thin, frail reed that the chance is, the countryman leans upon it. He watches the cloud build upon itself, billowing, stretching, growing into magnificence. But his hope is still. So far there is beauty without promise.

Then perhaps the sun blinks and he looks quickly to see the white cloud being streaked with dark, roiling filaments. Distantly, the thunder gods strike upon their massed kettle drums. A breeze darts dustily down the rows to turn upward the pale undersides of green leaves.

Now the plowman's hope is engaged; his glances upward grow longer. He and the heavens are joined in an ancient ritual.

Most often, nothing comes of it—except perpetuation of the ritual. The thunderheads, for all their pomp, are empty. They move their shadows away from the sun, and cross another field to play their drama for another audience.

But sometimes they unleash the shower, and the countryman knows joy, and goes homeward more in peace.

An executive is a man employed to talk to visitors so that the other employes will have a chance to work.—New York Daily Mirror.

From A Milling Horde, Voices Of Prophecy May Sound

By JOSEPH ALSOP

WASHINGTON

In a degree that very few Americans realize, the other Western allies long for bolder, more imaginative, more dynamic American leadership, in a way that very few Americans envision, this country too will suffer if our allies look to us in vain.

These gloomy facts would not be worth recording if they did not have their own enormous silver lining. The silver lining is the subject of this report, which was originally conceived at Geneva.

AMERICA LOOMS

Despite Secretary of State Christian A. Herter's admirable performance as a negotiator, any serious American observer there was bound at first to be deeply depressed. The almost total sterility of our policy, its warmed-over, left-over character, its purely defensive intention, were altogether too apparent. So was the great increase in Communist confidence in future victory. The causes of this Communist confidence — the grave decline in the Western world position, the substantial improvements in the Soviet position — were not easy to forget either.

In these circumstances, since our country alone has the power and resources to reverse the trend, America loomed very large from the shores of Lake Leman. As one thought about it, everything seemed to depend more and more completely on a great jet of new ideas in this depressing city, where any idea at all at present arouses deep suspicion if not outright hostility. Could Washington again recover the wonderful fertility, the remarkable inventiveness that so strongly marked Washington in the past? This was the question one asked one's self.

The result was a theory of the course of American politics which is at least hopeful, and may at least give wiser men something to knock down. If this theory is correct, the last quarter - century of our political history is divisible into two quite distinct periods. The first period, beginning with Roosevelt's first election and ending at the close of the first Truman administration, was marked by the greatest innovations taking place in American politics since the Civil War. The second period, from 1948 onward, has not produced even one major new idea, but has achieved the adjustments and consolidations that were badly needed after all the previous new departures.

One may ask one's self whether President Eisenhower could not have prevented the serious deterioration of the Western position that has taken place during his tenure of the White House. But no one can argue that he has not performed an immensely useful service, by presiding over a successful political adjustment and consolidation after a time of unsettling change. The proof of Eisenhower's success in this respect is very clear indeed. You can see it in any morning newspaper, in the innumerable stories about the almost numberless presidential candidates of the two great political parties.

ALL GOOD BETS

This multiplicity of extremely able men, all of whom are good bets to do a good job in the presidency — this free choice between Nixon, Rockefeller, Lyndon Johnson, Kennedy, Humphrey, and several more — has no precedent at all in the past quarter-century. In all elections from 1932 onwards, there were at most two men, and quite often there was only one man, who seemed likely to be able to do the biggest job in the world.

The reason for this past scarcity, in turn, was not a sudden shortage of able, energetic men. The reason was, rather, that most of the able, energetic men available had not achieved their own adjustment to the immense changes that had been made and were still being made. They would not and could not say, "Here we are, and this is how we ought to go on from here." They wanted instead to row back up the river of time, which is impossible. Robert A. Taft, one of the biggest and finest men of his generation, is the most conspicuous case in point.

'HERE WE ARE'

In contrast, all the current presidential hopefuls, both Republican and Democratic, are briskly saying, "Here we are, and this is how we ought to go on from here." They accept what has been done. They do not want to undo it. They merely want to improve on it.

Nor are these men gripped by the kind of attachment to the past that made so many surviving New Dealers go on parroting Franklin Roosevelt for so long, with such unfruitful results. In fact, except for Stuart Symington, who partly represents a continuation of the Truman group in the Democratic Party, none of the presidential hopefuls has any real attachment to the past—for no one can suppose that a Nixon administration will be a mere continuation of the Eisenhower years.

DYNAMISM

Whether you are a Democrat or a Republican, you cannot help being impressed by the demonstration of American political dynamism provided by this milling horde of impressive candidates. And in them lies the hope for the great jet of new ideas, the bold rush of new departures, which the cause of the West so desperately needs.

'Say, I Just Thought Of Something—What Do We Do If They DON'T Strike?'

People's Platform

Nix To Siberia; Charlotte's Fine

Charlotte

Editors, The News:

Regarding your reader's letter in Saturday's issue concerning the Henderson situation, I'd like to answer a few questions brought up by his letter.

The reader suggests his rights have been abused. It is my opinion that people themselves destroyed any rights that were destroyed since they violated the laws of our land by violent picketing, in support of their union demands. Your reader never mentioned what rights were being revoked. Gov. Hodges has never tried to stop peaceful picketing. He has only tried to stop violence.

Your reader refers to the National Guard as a "costly military operation against the people." Again, my opinion is that had the workers picketed peacefully, the National Guard would not have been necessary —therefore these workers are directly responsible for this costly operation. Speaking of a costly operation, the violence is destructive and what is destroyed by these pickets must be replaced. Bombings, acid throwing, burning, shooting, stoning and mobbing isn't exactly peaceful picketing.

Your reader is making some pretty strong accusations toward Gov. Hodges. He refers to Henderson as being like Russia. Were Henderson like Russia, your writer would not live to have the opportunity to read what he had written. Surely our country is not like Russia! Now I ask, have his rights been abused? Or did he choose that they be taken away?

Are the people really locked out of the mills? If the reader were in the position of Mr. Cooper and had his entire life wrapped up in a mill, would he then feel the same about the mill? I should think not. It seems the workers had a job, making a fair wage, and chose of their own accord to walk out of the mill. Mr. Cooper did not ask them to leave. Their beloved union did this.

Who are these people "stealing the jobs"? Mr. Cooper is the owner of the mill and it seems that the owner has the right to work whomever he chooses.

What is this "weakest link" of the chain? It can be answered, in two words, the union. Men like Hoffa are heading these organizations, crooked as the day is long. I speak for myself and others. No, our country is not like Russia. I suggest we keep our United States as is, trying to improve it, having the freedom to work where, and with whom, we choose. No Siberia for me. I like Charlotte.

—CARL KISSIAH

There'll Be JPs In 32nd Century

Charlotte

Editors, The News:

I warned Sen. Bell that magistrate's courts, known as JPs in North Carolina, had been in existence since the 16th century and would be here in the 32nd century and that he was not big enough to stop the magistrates.

Had he spent that time and knocked out all of the obsolete laws he would have done a great thing for the bar and all of the people of North Carolina. His court reform bills are like the old cracked dinner bells —past history. Four years of his life have been wasted. I am sorry a man trained as a lawyer could not see this.

I am 80 years old and either way it would not have hurt me. I only established a JP's office to have a place to hang around when I grow old. I am just a young 80-year-old kid, enjoying life.

—W. C. McINTIRE
Justice of the Peace

Quote, Unquote

"We haven't all had the good fortune to be ladies; we haven't all been generals, or poets, or statesmen; but when the toast works down to the babies, we stand on common ground." — **Samuel L. Clemens.**

Medical Research Bill

Massing For The Attack

By MARQUIS CHILDS

WASHINGTON

In all the sound and fury of political blast and counterblast one measure soon to come before the Senate relates directly to millions of Americans and their hopes for the future.

It is the bill for medical research which has the potential power of opening the way to longer life and to lives free of disease and pain. Although the Eisenhower administration has been plagued more than any other in recent times by illness and death the Bureau of the Budget comes in with recommendations so small that each year they are raised substantially by the Senate.

KILLERS AND CRIPPLERS

Testifying for larger appropriations, medical scientists this time said boldly that great discoveries can come only from expanded research and the federal government is the only source of the money that can bring large new inquiries. The death of John Foster Dulles, the tragic plight of Gov. Earl Long, the handicap put on President Eisenhower by his heart attack, these headline cases have underscored the three greatest killers and cripplers — cancer, mental illness and heart disease.

For cancer research for next year the Budget Bureau recommended $75,218,000. The House increased this by $8,000,000 and the Senate is expected to add considerably more to it.

"Great breakthroughs in medical knowledge are usually the result of research by many workers, each of whom adds to the sum total or the final accomplishment," Dr. I. S. Ravdin, professor of surgery at the University of Pennsylvania who operated on President Eisenhower for ileitis, testified. "If you provide for the additional research facilities still seriously needed you will have done your share. The rest is up to those of us who believe that the necessary answers will come — next month, next year or later, but come they will."

Neuberger: An Apostle

In his testimony Dr. Ravdin joined equally distinguished medical men in supporting a total of $110,203,000 for the National Institute of Cancer next year. As he has done so succinctly in the past, Sen. Lister Hill of Alabama is once again shepherding the medical research appropriations through the Senate.

He has a stout ally in Sen. Richard Neuberger of Oregon. Little more than a year ago Neuberger who seemed in good health discovered during an annual checkup that he had cancer. He was cured by cobalt radiation therapy and returned to the Senate only a little late for the current session after treatment in Portland.

PASSIONATE APOSTLE

While he had even before his brush with death been an advocate of increased research — he had put in a bill for a massive attack on cancer with funds up to a half-billion dollars. Neuberger is today a passionate apostle of medical inquiry. One of the consultants in his case, Dr. Sidney Farber, professor of pathology at the Harvard Medical School, testified before a Senate committee that the cure rate of cancer has changed in the past three years from 1 in 4 to 1 in 3 as a result of medical research programs.

Few men in political life have the dedication and the resolve that have been underscored in Neuberger's instance by his experience. He at first thought he would inevitably die of cancer. Then he came to the knowledge that patient research had devised a method of treatment that gave him a good chance of life.

His service over many years in the Senate can help to save millions and perhaps even checkmate once and for all the deadliest of the killers. That is a measure of the role he can perform in the future.

Drew Pearson's Merry-Go-Round

Holifield's Horror Show Opens Monday

WASHINGTON

A lot of backstage pressure has been applied to Rep. Chet Holifield of California to stop what may be one of the most sensational congressional probes of the year. It will show for the first time in history what would happen to Russia if she bombed the major military targets of the U.S., and what would happen to the United States in turn if we bombed Russia's main military targets.

Ricochets

In each case the radioactive poison would be so great that the attacking nation would be wiped out by its own fallout.

Reason for the pressure against Holifield to hold up his investigation is the diplomatic sparring at Geneva. Some Eisenhower advisers fear that if the American public becomes too anxious for an end of H-bomb testing, the Russians will be able to put across a half-baked treaty under which they could cheat.

Ike Vs. H-Bombs

Ike himself, however, seems determined to sign some sort of agreement to end H-bomb tests. He is just as vigorously for it now as he was critical of Adlai Stevenson for urging it in 1956.

Reason why Rep. Holifield now has the facts with which to measure total radioactive fallout is that for the first time the total figure for all bomb tests so far held has been declassified.

It's no longer secret that a total of 92 megatons of nuclear explosions have been made by the U.S., U.S.S.R. and U.K. combined.

This will permit the scientists Holifield will call upon to testify to pick 224 targets in the U.S. and show what would happen if they were blasted out of commission. Holifield's simulated atomic attack will use 260 weapons ranging from one to ten megatons. The Pentagon, a prime target in the U.S., will get from eight to ten megatons. Holifield's home city of Los Angeles will get a half dozen.

Computing The Kill

From this, scientists will be able to figure out the complete structural damage to the United States and compute the number killed. But, perhaps more important, they will compute the damage done to the country supposedly launching the attack—Russia. It would be wiped out by radioactive fallout coming back from its own aggression.

Unless the pressure becomes too great, the Holifield investigation is due to start on Monday.

Democrats are blinking their eyes over President Eisenhower's latest speech calling for a "responsible, sensible, fiscal policy in government." These are almost the exact words he used in the 1952 campaign to attack President Truman's "mismanagement" of the national debt . . . The debt was then $265 billion, the annual interest was less than $6 billion and government bonds were selling at par. After six years of Ike's management, the national debt is now $285 billion, the annual interest is more than $8 billion, and government bonds are selling below par on the money market . . . Ike apparently believes that if he preaches economy loud and long enough, the public will believe his fiscal policies are sound. Yet for all his talk about a balanced budget, he has plunged the government deeper in the red this fiscal year than any President in peacetime.