



THE CHARLOTTE NEWS

Brodie S. Griffith Editor and General Manager
Cecil Prince Associate Editor
R. L. Young Jr. Managing Editor

THURSDAY, JUNE 25, 1959

Charlotte Needs A Sense Of Urgency

It is now or never for a single, coordinated public school system for Charlotte and Mecklenburg County.

That's the view of experts who have studied voting behavior on such issues elsewhere.

It is a harsh and gloomy judgment, but if it will shock good citizens into an awareness of their responsibilities at the polls Tuesday then it may have some value.

Certainly, it would be excruciatingly difficult for the advocates of equal educational opportunities to recover from a serious defeat. It is doubtful that a new attempt could even get off the ground before serious damage was done to both administrative units. Then the two systems would be divided by considerable built-in bitterness.

The great virtue of consolidation now is that it is the proverbial stich in time. It will head off the decay. It will prevent the fiscal problems bred by two separate systems operating in essentially the same metropolitan community. And it will insure uniformly high standards of instruction for all children with maximum efficiency and ease.

The people of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County simply cannot afford to gamble with the future of their children. Consolidation is an economic and educational necessity. Somehow, voters must

be made to realize this before they go to the polls next week.

On our news pages and on the editorial page we have attempted to focus attention on many aspects of this complex issue. We will continue to do so between now and Tuesday. But unfortunately, a healthy interest in the issue has not been noted.

Perhaps most minds have already been made up. Some, we fear, have been made up on the basis of claptrap, rumors and red herrings. And there are always those who oppose any change on the ground that what was good enough for grandpapa is good enough for today's generation. Actually, consolidation is an attempt to conserve the best that is in each system by saving both from decay.

The opportunity is at hand. It mustn't be missed.

Neither Charlotte nor Mecklenburg County can afford to allow endless duplications, inequities and quarrels over possession of the perimeter area weaken the kind of education we give the metropolitan community's children. A sense of urgency about this critical issue must be developed before the polls open next week. It would be tragic in the extreme if years of work and the best judgment of the county's most thoughtful civic leaders went for naught merely because citizens failed to feel this urgency and react accordingly.

Fire Traps: The Law Is Too Generous

Charlotte's Rescue Mission has 30 days to begin making corrections in a building labeled a "fire trap" Tuesday by building inspectors. That's 29 days too long.

The plight of the mission's staff is genuinely regrettable, for available funds are limited. But it is not nearly as regrettable as the plight of 170 sleeping transients if fire should break out at night in the ancient structure.

Building Inspector C. W. Edge told the News that a nocturnal blaze could mean the loss of many lives.

If that is the case it seems hardly reasonable for the law to allow so much leeway in correcting deficiencies. If the building is indeed in a "hazardous" condition, as Mr. Edge said, the test of good intent in meeting minimum standards of safety ought to be applied quickly. To allow a

month of grace is actually to be cruelly generous. It took just minutes for flames to sweep through an Atlanta hotel a few years ago. The death toll was 119.

Life In (Average) America

"I can't make head or tail out of what's going on in Geneva or Washington or London, but the tragic and moving story of Gloria Vanderbilt's struggle to keep her children for herself and away from that ancient musician is something that average person can feel and understand. — From a letter to the New York Post.

Look at it this way, m'am: Uncle Sam is just trying to keep his kids out of the clutches of those lousy Russians.

Democrats Should Listen To Lyndon

As he prepared a rush schedule for Senate money bills on the eve of a freestyle fiscal year, Lyndon Johnson wisely warned the frisky liberals in his little Democratic army that discretion remains the better part of valor—even though Democrats outnumber the GOP.

The liberals are angry because Lyndon wants to bow to the President's threat of vetoes by "watering down" pending legislation.

The Texas field general reminded the Democratic left that the public elects legislators, after all, to legislate and not to gain leverage for future elections.

"If we have to choose between a political issue and achievement we are going to choose achievement," Lyndon said. In fact, his way to both goals—achievement and political leverage—seems best.

In the first place, Republicans would like nothing better than to see the huge Democratic congressional majority waste itself in vain suiking over the President's veto threats. That would lend substance to their taunts that Lyndon leads a "won't do" Congress.

In the second place, he is wise to ignore the frisking of the Democratic left wing—like Sens. Proxmire of Wisconsin and Clark of Pennsylvania—who think Democrats will gain votes by disbanding

the President's anti-inflation pleas and sending him legislation which is a new "spending" bill will force him to use the veto. The liberal senators have failed, it appears, to calculate the deep emotional complexes like has tapped with his onslaught against "spending" and deficit. This complicated issue lends itself marvelously to black and white caricature, and the fearsome bugaboo of an inflation-ridden country will not be put down by talk of the nation's needs.

Perhaps the only hope of the liberal Democrats is to recast the argument over "spending" slowly—to show that in surplus budgets and tight money there may be the danger of economic stagnation. But that will take time and ingenuity. Lyndon is right in saying it will not be done in a day by forcing bills on the President that cry out for vetoes.

Pidgin Rock

Mario Pei, the linguist, relates, as an example of Pidgin English, the reaction of a Solomon Islands chieftain on a visit to New York: "Me look um big fellow place. He high up too much. He alla same one fella mountain."

Add bass, guitar and drums and we have a new rock 'n' roll lyric.

From The Florida Times-Union

HUP, TWO, THREE, FOUR

It is disquieting to learn that the United States Army has reached that stage of militarization at which it is considering standardization of buttons and buttonholes. Assistant Secretary of the Army Courtney Johnson told a House committee that the Army hopes to save the taxpayers money by making all buttonholes the same size.

You may say that this is a minor point. Let us beg to disagree. Indeed, it is a major point which shows the vast difference between the military way and the American way.

There is nothing that quickens the heartbeat of a man with a military mind so much as uniformity. The sight of large groups of soldiers doing the same acts together, whether marching or shooting, has brought tears into many a general's eyes.

Fortunately, America is a land of 175 million different individuals doing different things at different times. We are a nation of all kinds of buttonholes, big and little, new and old, fine and tattered. America is founded upon the idea that a free society requires all kinds of buttonholes, big buttons and buttonholes for certain jobs and tiny ones for other tasks. Now the Army, in its vast domain, is refuting that idea by ordering all buttonholes the same size.

Even the argument of efficiency hangs by a slender thread. What a terrible

waste of buttonpower it will be to replace small buttons, like those on your cuff, with the one standard size which must also be large enough to hold a fat soldier's bulges.

The next time you see a standardized soldier in standardized uniform with standardized buttonholes think of the possibilities of a standardized America.

Many women would rather have beauty than brains, especially when their car breaks down on the highway—Ellaville (Ga.) Sun.

When better cars are built, where will they find words to describe them? —Dawson County (Ga.) News.

The perfect gift to give a woman is something she can exchange the very next day. —Mattoon (Ill.) Journal-Gazette.

A lawyer fell in love with an actress and decided to marry her. But just to be on the safe side, he hired a detective to investigate her character. The detective's report read: "This lady has an excellent head, but her friends all are eminent and respected; her past is without blemish. The only breath of scandal is that she has been going with a lawyer of doubtful character." —Memphis Press-Scimitar.



France's Record-Setting Thirst Is Quenched at 'Watering Places' Like the Famed Cafe de Flore in St. Germain des Pres

De Gaulle's 'Great Crusade' Is Against Drunkenness

By JIM SCOTTON

Editors' Note: Mr. Scotton, former police reporter for The Charlotte News, has just completed a year of study at the Sorbonne in Paris. He and his wife, Carol, also a journalist, will return to America at the end of the summer.

PARIS

A new word has been added to the "Verity and Severity" slogan with which General Charles de Gaulle has set out to rebuild France.

The word: Sobriety.

The de Gaulle government is launched on a campaign to curb the average Frenchman's record.

Setting thirst for cider, beer, brandy and, above all, wine. It has already tried heavily increased wine taxes, educational campaigns and stricter laws to control France's 430,000 cafe operators and officially uncounted bootleggers.

The wine industry—rich and powerful in wine-drinking France—has already raised protests. A delegation angrily visited de Gaulle after French school children brought home blotters carrying anti-alcohol slogans. De Gaulle refused its demands that he renege that

wine is the French national drink. Do Frenchmen drink too much wine and does it create an alcoholism problem in a nation that has always considered wine a health-giving beverage?

The National Committee for the Defense Against Alcoholism, partially supported by the government, says:

(1) One Frenchman in 25—close to two million—is an alcoholic; the systems of another two million have been impregnated with alcohol through years of steady, heavy wine drinking.

THEY OUTDRINK US

(2) Deaths from alcoholism went up 1,000 per cent between 1946 and 1956; cirrhosis of the liver rose 400 per cent.

(3) Two medical groups reported large numbers of children—30 per cent in one heavy drinking Normandy area—were retarded because of alcoholic parents.

Frenchmen spend 10 per cent of their income on alcohol, most of this going for "vin rouge ordinaire" for meals. This is three times the U.S. spending rate for alcohol.

The combination of heavy spending and cheap wine—table wine costs less than 25 cents a bottle—gives France the highest per capita consumption of alcohol in the world, three or four times that of

U.S. The two latest surveys report annual alcohol consumption as 240 quarts for men and 134 quarts of wine for each Frenchman, woman and child.

ALCOHOL'S EFFECT

Survey after survey has shown that alcohol is retarding French youth, killing French motorists and hampering French productive activity through industrial accidents.

One reason the Frenchman drinks so much, say the anti-alcohol campaigners, is that too much wine and brandy is available. Wine production averaged 16 per cent over consumption in both 1953 and 1956. The French government bought up the surplus, just as in the U.S. the government buys up surplus cotton or corn.

Bad weather cut production below consumption the last two years. But this year something else may reduce production. That is the report that the de Gaulle government will buy no more surplus wine.

FAMILY STILLS

One reason why brandy is available so cheaply, especially in rural areas, is the French law permitting each farmer to distill alcohol for "family use."

In theory the farmer must grow the fruit he turns into alcohol, in fact any French farmer who wants to makes his own "eau de vie" or strong, sometimes overpowering brandy.

In two dozen French depart-

ments there is a still for every two adult men.

Former Premier Pierre Mendes-France, who vainly tried to switch Frenchmen from wine to milk, got a law passed in 1954 limiting this distilling privilege to farmers who actually grew fruit. But the assembly kept postponing the enforcement date and three years ago there were 3.6 million farmyard stills in France, although the number has dropped considerably since then.

BOOTLEGGERS

And some of these stills obviously operate for more than "family use." A report to the French Council of State a few weeks ago estimated illegal alcohol sales at \$150 million a year. In some areas bootleggers operate their own tank cars in broad daylight and force cattle owners to refuse to buy legal, tax-paid alcohol.

Two years ago French police caught one group supplying 200 cafes in the Paris area. Reports are that the de Gaulle government will start enforcing the Mendes-France law this September. Real enforcement would be an enormous help in rural areas, where the alcoholism contributes directly to 30 per cent of the deaths in rural France.

So much wine and brandy is available so cheaply, that the rural Frenchman in particular accrues heavy drinking as a part of his way of life.

Most anti-alcohol workers believe it will be 10 or 15 years before they can make any changes in the French drinking habits. But they are hopeful.

'WITHOUT SUNSHINE'

France does not have the enormous problem of youthful alcoholics that is found in Communist countries, they point out. And the government has certainly come a long way, they add, since the days when it subsidized such slogans as "A life without sunshine is like a day without sun."

People's Platform

Double Standard

en become so commonplace that they deserve mention only on page 57. At this rate how long will it be before white streets will be in danger even in broad daylight? When, may I ask, does it end?

According to certain nitwit newspaper writers (not in The News, I'm happy to say) the entire South was on trial in Florida. Will the North be on trial when the schoolgirl's Negro attackers are hailed into court? Or will they be released to try again? Either way, I'm betting the case isn't mentioned again. The anti-South factions in the North will see to that.

We're supposed to bend over backwards to comply with the so-called laws of the land, but I just wonder what would happen to those same laws if the wife or daughter of a U. S. Supreme Court justice fell victim to the same type of subhuman who attacked that New York schoolgirl.

It'll take something like that to wake us up.

— CHARLES L. MORRIS

Why Tomorrow's Kids Will Go Bad

Charlotte

Editors, The News:

In another 30 years or so there will be letters to the editor about how some juveniles are delinquent because they they don't have the old-fashioned checks around some any more—like turning up the thermostat every morning or pushing the button to open the garage door.

—HYMAN SCHWETZER

Drew Pearson's Merry-Go-Round

WASHINGTON

Hugh O'Brian, who stars as Wyatt Earp in the TV dramatic series that has made Wichita, Kans., famous, sat near the rear of Congressman Hollifield's investigation of radioactive fallout. He sat through the entire hearing as interested as one of the spectators of his own TV drama.

Finally, John Donnelly, assistant to Congressman Hollifield, went up to him.

"What are you doing here?" asked the curious Donnelly.

"I've just spent a week in Africa with Dr. Schweitzer," replied the Hollywood actor. "And he is so worried about the effect of radioactive fallout on civ-

'Wyatt Earp' Plans Show On Fallout

WASHINGTON

He added that he intended to continue on his radio hearings for a week and then to do a TV show on the dangers of atomic war. Hollifield's hearings are showing that any nation which starts atomic war could be wiped out by its own fallout.

Broken Promise

Only the insiders realize it, but President Eisenhower could have saved himself a lot of headaches over Adm. Strauss if he had carried out his promise to Undersecretary of Commerce Walter Williams.

Williams had served for five years under Secretary of Commerce Sinclair Weeks with the explicit understanding that he would replace Weeks when Weeks went back to Boston. Williams had been the chief organizer of the Citizens-for-Eisenhower clubs and served as their national chairman in the 1952 campaign. It was he who helped raise the \$2 million to blanket the TV networks with those famous spot appearances of Eisenhower during the last two weeks of the campaign.

The 'Understanding'

After Ike won, Williams was made undersecretary of commerce with the understanding that he would be promoted to the Cabinet later. Williams is a progressive businessman from Seattle, was an early organizer of the Commit-

tee for Economic Development, believes small business must be supported to retain the principle of free competition.

Ike Reverses Himself

Though not happy with Weeks' big business policies, he remained in the Commerce Department, waiting for him to resign. Finally, Weeks did so. Whereupon Eisenhower reversed himself. Ex-Secretary of the Treasury George Humphrey persuaded him to appoint his friend, the industrialist, partner in one of the biggest Wall Street investment firms, to succeed Weeks.

Tired of waiting, and fed up with big business policies, Williams resigned.