The Charlotte News

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THURSDAY, JANUARY 27, 1938

Ickes Passes a Law

General Old Ironpants Johnson in his column yesterday was adverting to the recent decision of a Federal court against oil companies charged with violation of the anti-trust acts. But never mind the court, the oil companies, General Johnson or the anti-trust acts. Our subject is another contemporary institution.

In telling of the codification of the oil industry under NRA back there in 1933, the General went on to say:

"NRA held that production control was sufficient without fixed prices, but when Mr. Ickes got the goods to administer, he put in price-fixing."

He put in price-fixing — he, Harold S. Ickes, who had been named administrator of the oil code, he put in price-fixing. Boy, that's bureaucracy for you! It's the perfect definition. Bureaucracy is when things in elegant offices put in things that have the full force and effect of law.

No More Carpetbags

Reconstruction, ladies and gentlemen, seems to be at an end. Or at least, Reconstruction, as we have known it historically, seems to be at an end. For, as everyone knows, Reconstruction has always been the child of that party which calls itself Republican and which our fathers succinctly called Damned Radical. Yet, yesterday, when administration leaders in the Senate moved to invoke the rule of cloture in order to break up the Southern filibuster against the anti-lynching bill, it came about that—

Senator McNary, Republican, of Oregon, the minority floor leader, announced briefly that he would oppose the cloture motion.

And if the spectacle of the capital-general of the Damned Radicals in the Senate galloping to the rescue of embattled Dixie isn't a sign that Reconstruction's hash is settled, what is it?

A Happy Birthday

One hundred and fifty years ago Captain James Cook crept into Botany Bay under cautiously shortened sail, as you may read in his "voyages," and a new "continent" began to figure on the maps.

"Down under" — Australia, of course—is beginning to be a little old now. And very far she has come since Cook went poking in. And very far, too, since those days when the land was only a place where England sent her criminals when she felt cranky about hanging them. Even the aborigines, among the most primitive known outside of the nearby and now extinct Tasmanians, are beginning to wear pants.

So, very fitting it is that four American cruisers should be lying in the waters off Sydney and thundering their salute to the Antipodeans. For that, though, and without for a second meaning to impugn Dr. Cordell Hull's motives, it occurs to us that it is very accommodating of Australia to have a birthday just now. From Sydney to Shanghai is about as far as it is from Pearl Harbor to Shanghai. But Pearl Harbor has not had any birthdays and if we mean to congregate cruisers there, even might, of course, have cause to take it amiss.

Not Very Helpful

In the South Carolina House of Representatives yesterday, Representative Foster of Greenville read a chart showing a wide difference in rates charged by the Duke Power Co. and TVA. Hon. Foster's point was that Duke rates were excessive by the standards of TVA, the chart showing that in some of the different towns in Duke's area the rates were as much as double those charged in the TVA area. Reductions ordered in the Duke rates, Representative Foster said, showed that they had been too high, and reductions probably to be ordered in the future will show that they are too high now. At the same time, we believe that facts are indispensable to lawmaking; and if our South Carolina lawmaker had cared to look facts in the face, he would have found that a considerable part of the difference between Duke and TVA rates was due to the very type of legislation he was championing — taxes. And it ought to be obvious to anyone that additional taxes, far from enabling private power companies to reduce the spread between their rates and tax-free TVA's rates, will only further justify the spread and make it more difficult to bring rates down.

A Motion Carried

With no fuss and no feathers, speedily and as a matter of routine with only routine opposition, in the short space of five minutes and with nobody much as witness to the momentous change except a couple of newspaper reporters, the City Council at its regular mid-weekly meeting yesterday modernized the Blue Laws. Out came that section which made it a misdemeanor to pay to play or to watch outdoor games on Sunday.

In strict fact, the ordinance legalizes only sports, but it seems agreed that the same logic will inevitably be extended to the case of the moving picture shows. Quietly and unobtrusively, it will come about that we shall presently be able to relieve the long tedium of Sunday afternoons and evenings by seating ourselves in a darkened house and watching the flickers.

There'll continue to be some muttering to the effect that it is all wicked and immoral, of course. But it is just as immoral as, and no more immoral than, the decision that we prefer our modern BVD's to the red flannel underwear of yesterday. After a while even the mutters will die out, and Charlotte, going to baseball games and moving pictures on Sunday, will judge, quite correctly, that it is just as moral as ever it was.

Murder Is Murder

It is easy enough to understand the motives which, the day before yesterday, inspired the Spanish Government to loose its bombing planes over the Insurgent capital of Salamanca and kill some 225 people and wound some 400 more—most of them civilians. That kind of warfare is routine with Franco's forces and has been since the war started. Only the day before, Insurgent planes had killed 273 civilians at Barcelona. And the desire to retaliate in kind is a natural human impulse.

Nevertheless, when the Spanish Government takes to this kind of fighting, it forfeits some of the respect and sympathy which it gained in the democratic countries when, after a brief following of the tactics of "an eye for an eye" in the early days of the war, it adopted the policy of confining its attacks purely to military objectives and sedulously sparing civilians. The bombing of civilians is murder, as certainly when it is done in the name of democracy as when it is done in the name of fascism. And one murder does not justify another.

Moreover, the Spanish Government has all along maintained that the Spanish people generally, even in territory held by Franco, were secretly its partisans, and the reports of neutral observers have pretty well borne out that contention. But how long are civilians who see their relatives and neighbors bombed out of existence by Government planes going to keep on feeling that way?

Where There's a Will

Stories from Gastonia telling of the condemnation of four tenement houses there continually refer to Section 2773, N. C. Consolidated Statutes. We are interested in this Sect. 2773, N. C. S., and are having it looked up to see exactly what it says. Meanwhile, it stands to reason that being a State statute, it applies as well to Charlotte as to Gastonia; and if Gastonia can invoke it in order to raze four frame houses which are fire-traps of the worst kind, why, so could Charlotte.

All it lacks is the will and the evidence, and the latter can be supplied in such abundance that it would be difficult to decide where to make a beginning. The will is a horse of another color, and we concede that it is not to be ridden, too impulsively, since it involves the destruction of property. But so, egad, does a fire hazard involve destruction of property — other people's property, and other people's lives. And when the public good and private good conflict, private good must give way. That is law and common sense; and in this case it is simple humaneness, as well.

A Better 'Ole

(Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch)

It is now proposed that the Government buy the anthracite coal mines. This would provide another hole for the Government to go in.

NOTE ON A HAIRY STATE

By HUGH S. JOHNSON

TULSA, OKLA.—Oklahoma, which I have just visited, was a hairy state when I first knew it—and it still is.

In the early days of the opening of the Cherokee Strip, it was the last oasis in a desert of encroaching civilization. Wet and wide open, its tent cities had more saloons than all other retail establishments combined.

The rough drifters of the old West concentrated there because there was no place else for their kind to go. It was tough sledding, too. There was little money—mostly barter. In the first territorial Legislature a man introduced a bill to change the name of "prairie-dog" to "prairie-squirrel"—to save his self-respect on that first winter's diet.

Thirsty And Hasty She Used To Be

Old Dad Shirley kept himself in liquor credit by digging up wagon-loads of willow-shoots along the Salt Fork and trading them to amateur settlers as nursery peach-slips. They didn't find out the difference for a year or two. Like Huck Finn's pap, he used to make enough for "three drunks and one delerium tremens" every time he killed a grey wolf. He was an old trapper and the government paid a bounty of five dollars a scalp. By expert cutting, stretching and coloring he could make as many as twelve scalps out of one pelt.

The "opening" created the last American crop of outlaws of the old Billy the Kid type. They differed considerably from the modern gangster. Mostly they declared themselves and shot it out in the open with the law. Assassination and taking rival mobsters for a ride weren't in their line. Maybe they seem glamorous to me through distance. I was a kid keeping the general delivery window in what was, for a while, the only post office in a country 60 by 30 miles, and, at one time or another, I saw nearly all of them.

But The Old Gal Has Got Teeny New

Of course, Oklahoma is not in the least like that now — especially this eastern part. When I first saw it, it wasn't even Oklahoma but Indian Territory. My father's home was in the Creek Nation, and there were only a few white men in it. Will Rogers, as a boy, was almost a neighbor and his father and mine were buddies. I saw my father bring home two pop-bottles filled with something he had skimmed from a creek. It was petroleum. Shortly after that he drilled the first oil wells in Bartlesville—and knew so little about it that he put down several on one town lot and pumped himself dry before he got well started.

But this kind of thing was the end of the Indian's last home. It was found to be literally saturated with oil and the white men had it in a few years.

In the beginning, the new oil towns were as rough as the old strip towns, but now they too are all scrubbed, manicured and permanently waved. Still the State is a curly wolf. If it doesn't like its Governors, it impeaches them, and it can do that under its constitution if it doesn't like the color of their eyes.

Even Alfalfa Bill Has His Good Points

Old Alfalfa Bill, who is going to be Oklahoma's Governor again, stampeded the Baltimore convention for Woodrow Wilson by taking advantage of a momentary lull to bellow over and over again in his bull's voice, "New York and Tammany Hall can't hornswoggle Oklahomans." Don't discount Alfalfa Bill. He looks like a sour dough from the Panamints. But he practically wrote the State constitution, and, when he was later Governor, he astonished the lawyers by disclosing that the State National Guard is just a sort of private standing army for the Governor. He used to enforce his own flat about oil production and in an interstate boundary dispute, Nobody dared to impeach Alfalfa Bill.

The last Senatorial run-off primary election was fought out on an issue between Huey Long's "every man a king" and Doctor Townsend's old age pension. Josh Lee promised "a farm for every farmer and a home for every worker." Gomer Smith was straight Doc Townsend. Mr. Roosevelt's New Deal—espoused by Governor Marland—was snowed under and Huey Long, per Josh Lee, won out handsomely. Our other Senator—Thomas—wants to end all our trouble by printing bales of paper dough.

We may still be "wild and woolly and full of fleas," but we are way up in the top flight of states on any classification you may choose.

Uses of Firing Squads

(Greensboro News)

The new, democratic parliament of Russia has adjourned after a brief session without passing a single law. What was done about mileage allowance, the dispatches do not say.

About A Road The Yankees Did Not Take

And The Lee Family Of Asheville To Which The Confederate Commander Belonged.

Dear Sir:

The Lee family for four generations in Asheville have held a distinguished place—Col. Stephen Lee, educator and long-time resident of Chunn's Cove; his son, the late J. Hardy Lee, identified with early Asheville and especially the growth of Trinity Episcopal Church of Asheville; his son, Captain Walter Lee, army hero who died in the Philippines; his brother, Major Lyons Lee, World War veteran, patriot and outstanding Asheville business man; their sister, Miss Elizabeth Lee, and Major and Mrs. Lyons Lee's children.

With an interest as complete as this, I feel justified in asking space for a few excerpts I found last week in bronze on the grounds of the capitol in Atlanta, Georgia.

These excerpts bear touchingly on the Lost Cause of the Confederate States. Lieutenant General Stephen D. Lee, nephew of Colonel Stephen Lee, of Asheville, spent several years with Colonel Lee, and was considered by his Asheville kindred to be a very charming and lovable man. Not far from a magnificent equestrian statue of General Gordon on the capitol grounds in Atlanta on a tablet in bas relief is this inscription: "The Battle of Ezra Church, On July 28, 1864, Lieutenant General Stephen D. Lee, having relieved General Cheatham, in command of Hood's old corps, was ordered to hold the Lickskillet Road, leading to Ezra Church. Stewart's corps was ordered to Lee's support. An attempt upon Sherman's part to turn the Confederate left and to threaten Hood's communications on the west of the city, necessitated this counter movement, and a spirited battle in this vicinity was the result. Opposed to Lee in this engagement was the Federal commander General O. O. Howard. The enemy, having already gained a strategic position, could not be replaced, but at heavy cost was the ground held. Darkness found the Confederates still in possession of the road."

To me, the whole spirit of the Confederacy is summed up in the words—"Darkness found the Confederates still in possession of the road."

MAUDE WADDELL.

Atlanta, Ga.

ECONOMIC COOPERATION MAY HELP PEACE CAUSE BUT WE SHOULD BE READY FOR WAR

Dear Sir:

Economic cooperation and education for peace might, as was stated here by Miss Eleanor Eaton, national field secretary of the Woman's International League for Peace and Freedom, eliminate war from the world scene. However, we must realize that competition rules the economic world of today, just as competition rules the lives of each of the individuals making up our world society. And education for peace is a fine thing, but peaceful thoughts are destroyed in men when they become angry. Peace among men is a goal toward which all strive. But there is doubt, while advocating peace, it is wise to diminish our nation's defensive forces. For, were we to lay down our arms, and were another nation to take advantage of our unpreparedness to invade our country, we should have added nothing to the cause of peace. Indeed, much would be lost. It would seem to be necessary, that while we advocate peace, we remain prepared to fight, just in case.

PATRIOT.

Charlotte

Visiting Around

Aw, Gee, Ma; Not Again!
(Headline, Williamston Enterprise)

SWEET POTATOES
MOVING TO MARTS
FROM THIS POINT

Pretty Tiring Work, We Should Think
(Adv., Taylorsville Times)

CUSTOM HATCHING DONE—Let us do your hatching, 2 1-2c an egg.—Mrs. C. F. Friday, Taylorsville, N. C.

Like Our Own Paul, C. A., He Saws on the Broadway
(Broadway Item, Franklin Press)

Guy Paul, of Highlands, is setting up a sawmill in the Broadway gap.

You Forgot to Say, "For the Present."
(China Grove News)

Mr. and Mrs. Arch Frye are moving into the home of Mrs. Frye's father, Mr. John T. Deal.

He's Got You There, Parson
(Sanford Herald)

Parson Gibson has certainly steered one youngster from the path of religiosity, for we heard a kid make a remark the other day showing he had taken the Parson's message a mile bit too literal.

"Gee," the youngster exclaimed, "I'll skip Sunday school and church now!"

The remark came about after he noted the bulletin board at the Presbyterian church. Parson Gibson had lettered this statement.

ALWAYS DO WHAT YOU ARE AFRAID TO DO.

BELIEVE IT OR NOT By Ripley

On request, even with stamped addressed envelope, any factual and reliable proof of anything appearing in this column will be given by mail.

Today's Cartoon Self-Explanatory

ON THE RECORD

By DOROTHY THOMPSON

The "March of Time" Film

THE tempest raging around the "March Of Time's" film, "Inside Nazi Germany 1938", raises some interesting questions. One: Is the film propaganda, and if so, for what and against what? Two: What is the function of the motion picture Theater? Must it confine itself exclusively to entertainment or should it be also a forum for public debate?

By and large the film industry has answered the latter question by edging away from all controversial subjects. Many decisions of the Will Hays' Office, and notably the decision a little more than a year ago to ban "It Can't Happen Here" from the movies, indicate that the industry prefers, for commercial purposes, to stick to "entertainment."

Whether they are clever in sensing the mood of the public, in making this decision, is doubtful. It is surely not without significance that the Left Wing theater is the only branch of the legitimate stage that is putting new life into drama, and it is doing it by dramatizing in the theater, political, economic, and social questions with which people are genuinely concerned.

A Censorship That Always Cuts

Except for so-called sustaining programs on the big radio networks, where opinions can be heard, and for a very few commentators who are under heavy criticism, the mass of radio programs all are carefully de-editorialized, the reason given being that since most of the air programs are commercially sponsored, the public must be protected against having viewpoints presented which are such that business sponsors will pay for their expression.

I see some merit in this argument, but on the other hand I don't just see where censorship can begin and end. After all, the final test of anything is its reception by the public. Nobody is forced to listen to any radio program. He can turn it off and get something else. In this sense there is a continual censorship of everything, but it is a censorship exercised by the public directly. Is there any better or less dangerous censorship?

Warners Saw Film As Nazi Propaganda

The film "Inside Nazi Germany" was censored at the outset by an important distributing agency, Warner Brothers, who refused it on the piquant grounds that it is Nazi propaganda. Mr. Warner said that the effect of the pictures themselves, without the accompanying comment, would be to present a very favorable picture of Nazi Germany. Mr. Warner therefore did not want to censor the film on the ground that it was propaganda, but on the ground that it was the kind of propaganda he does not like.

Apparently he thinks that the "March of Time" photographers should have gone around Germany, seeking and photographing every sign of distress and misery, and perhaps performed the superhuman Houdini trick of breaking into concentration camps and prisons and photographing them.

But if they had done that they would have produced bad and unfair propaganda, because it would have presented a picture utterly remote from reality. Germany is a highly organized, strongly disciplined country of very competent people, and shows on the surface all the results of that organization, discipline and competence, and the "March of Time" photographers and commentators have done a magnificent piece of journalism in relating the outer show and the actual achievements, to the means by which this show and achievement are obtained.

But Argument Is Presented Most Fairly

And in a very few minutes of highly exciting picture and comment they have given a picture of a totalitarian state from the viewpoint of American democracy. Certainly it is propaganda—such effective propaganda that the German consuls in San Francisco and Buffalo and the vice-president of the Hamburg-American Line have protested; a showing of the film before members of the German Embassy in Washington received a very frigid reception, and Fritz Kuhn, the leader of the German-American Bund, threatens a march on the Embassy Theater, in New York, where the film is being shown.

These people obviously do not share Mr. Warner's opinion.

And the film is good propaganda, because it is affirmative, it is for something rather than against something. There is not a picture or a comment in the whole film which indicates hostility to the German people or the slightest indication that we ought to interfere in their affairs. It is only when the film switches to the United States and shows German-Americans being harangued and drilled with the same sort of methods used in Germany, when Swastikas are spotted across the map of the United States, indicating Nazi camps, and finally when the scene is shifted to the Town Meeting at Southbury, Connecticut, where the villagers met to keep a Nazi camp out of their midst, that the film becomes both a protest and a very simple, telling argument for America's sticking to her own way of life.

And inasmuch as the only propaganda is for certain ideas of civil and human rights embodied in all our great state documents, ideas under which this country has tried to live for 150 years and which it has at least always held before its eyes, who on earth can doubt either the right or the reason of again in this world making such an affirmative declaration?

Winter in Charleston

(Charleston News & Courier)

This day did one man in offices at 134 Meeting street get out his fly swatter and squash many of the pestiferous creatures and did another man go to work with a death spray for them. The hope that the incinerator would end this fly plague has not been fulfilled.

Earlier Days

News of 75 and 100 Years Ago From Files in the State Library at Raleigh

JANUARY 27, 1863
75 YEARS AGO

FROM EASTERN CAROLINA

Raleigh—The sensational dispatch sent from this city on Monday night stating that the enemy was advancing from Newbern in two columns turned out to be a hoax. An intelligence officer from Kinston assured us last evening that, if the enemy were in motion below, the fact was not known to the military authorities at Kinston or Goldsboro.

—Fayetteville Observer.

JANUARY 27, 1838
100 YEARS AGO

FROM ENGLAND

Latest news from England states that Canadian affairs were engrossing the attention of Parliament and the nation and had affect upon the funds.

On account of Canadian affairs the session of Parliament was to recommence January 16.

Lords Brougham and Melbourne have had a personal altercation in the House of Lords. They accused each other of "crooking the pregnant hinges of the knee that thrift might follow fawning."

—Fayetteville Observer.

ITALY

The Pope is dangerously ill. Two of the best physicians in Bologna had been summoned to attend at Rome.

From the Lisbon papers, we learn that the state of the public security in that country is most deplorable. With the exception of Lisbon and Oporto, no place is safe from open violence to persons and property.

The King of Hanover has called out the military to put down the manifestations of students in favor of the professors of the University, and has banished seven distinguished persons engaged in these liberal movements from his kingdom.

We lament to learn by the Leipsig Gazette, confirmed by the Sualian Mercury, that the plague has reached Galicia.

—Fayetteville Observer.

The White House Charmer

(William Allen White, Emporia Gazette)

Our chief criticism of the omniscient, omnipotent and beloved statesman in the White House is that he can't pass a voter without starting a flirtation. And when a bunch of voters passes, dear Roosevelt is given to smiles, winks, dropping his handkerchief, stretching his feet on the sidewalk, clearing his throat, turning his head and sighing his heart out in an earnest and often successful attempt to start a violent love affair.

With all his charm, with all his keen intelligence, with all his high courage and acumen, if he could only exhibit now and then a little forthright, injudicious rage at the sins and follies of selfish, dumb and sometimes dangerously wicked political groups what a man he would be!