

SENATOR Sam Ervin SAYS

Washington—The Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, of which I am a member, opened hearings on June 27 which are directed toward the investigation of the much publicized transactions of Billie Sol Estes. Senator McClellan, in his opening statement set the tone of the hearings when he said:



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"It is our intention to pursue the simple objective of seeking the truth. We shall try not to be influenced by factors that are not related to these purposes nor shall we be deterred from securing all pertinent information that we can possibly get." Earlier he said: "It will be the prime purpose of this Subcommittee to examine into the operations and administration of the Department of Agriculture in certain areas to determine whether its affairs are being conducted efficiently without favoritism and without any undue waste and extravagance." Those opened hearings which are expected to give Congress and the people a clearer picture of Estes transactions with the Department of Agriculture.

Other Hearings — The Senate Subcommittee on Constitutional Rights, of which I am chairman, began conducting hearings relating to the hospitalization of the mentally ill on June 26. The bill before the Subcommittee is S 3261 which relates only to the District of Columbia. However, it is hoped that the wide range of studies and testimony from witnesses will produce a bill of such merit that it will be valuable as a model code for the states. We have had some very illuminating hearings. The comments from various professions, including law and medicine, have indicated a general feeling that the bill is a good one.

One of the provisions of S 261 is designed to encourage people to volunteer when they feel they need psychiatric treatment to commit themselves to the hospital. Those who are working in this field say that this is a very fine provision because if a person is conscious that he needs psychiatric help to such an extent that he voluntarily applies for admission to the hospital, his treatment is likely to be much more successful. This bill also requires that all inmates of hospitals for the mentally ill shall receive certain periodic examinations. It also gives them the absolute right to communicate with their families and physicians and with their attorney. All this is directed toward the end that patients may be restored to their service in society in all cases when this is possible.

The bill does not affect the right of "trial by jury" and the remedy by "habeas corpus". The purpose of the bill is to insure therapeutic treatment of

the mentally ill as well as to safeguard their constitutional rights so that patients may return to take their places in society and live fruitful lives. I believe it is a significant step forward for an enlightened approach to a great national problem.

Legislative Highlights — The Senate has acted quickly since June 23 with the passage of a number of "must" bills to cover expiring legislation. Passed have been bills to continue the Export Control Act, to provide a one-year extension of existing corporate and excise tax rates, to provide a two-year extension of the Defense Production Act of 1950, and to continue supplemental appropriations for certain governmental agencies until June 30.

Washington — A storm of Congressional protest has arisen over the U. S. Supreme Court's recent ruling that the Constitutional ban against the establishment of religion is violated by a 22 word prayer authorized by the New York Board of Regents for its public schools. The prayer recognizes the existence of Almighty God and implores His blessings on the students, their parents, their teachers, and their country. I think that most Americans were shocked by this decision.

I am a firm believer in the separation of church and state. I have felt that there can be no political liberty in a country where the state is dominated by a church. Conversely, I have stated that there can be no religious liberty in any state where the government dominates religion. This decision, however, goes far beyond the real meaning of the First Amendment of the U. S. Constitution.

The First Amendment was placed in the Constitution to prohibit Congress from establishing any state church such as prevailed in the lands of our forefathers, to prevent anyone from being taxed directly or indirectly for the support of any church, to prevent the state as an organization from declaring by law that any religion was a true religion and others were false, and to prevent the state from acting through its agencies from proselyting people to accept a particular religion or a particular religious principle.

Until very recent times the U. S. Supreme Court always said that one of the best ways to determine the meaning of a con-

stitutional principle was to seek the interpretation placed upon it by the persons living contemporaneously with the drafting of the Constitution and by the people and governmental agencies after that time. The First Amendment was placed in the Constitution shortly after the ratification of the Constitution. It was drawn largely by James Madison, who is sometimes called "the Father of the Constitution". It was submitted to the states for ratification by the First Congress. It was speedily ratified by the states.

For more than 170 years there has been a practical and accepted interpretation placed upon this Amendment by the school boards, teachers, students, and the public in general. This interpretation, prior to the Supreme Court decision, was that the First Amendment permitted the saying by school children of nonsectarian prayers which recognize the existence of Almighty God. It also permitted readings or passages from the Bible or any other sacred book so long as these passages were not given any sectarian interpretation, and so long as any children whose parents objected were given the opportunity to be exempted from attending such prayers or listening to such Biblical readings. This interpretation was, I believe, a wise one.

A custom prevailed when I attended school in North Carolina to sing "Carolina," a song written by Judge William Gaston. One stanza invokes Heaven's blessings upon our State. It reads in prayerful fashion: "Carolina, Carolina, Heaven's blessings attend thee, while we live we will cherish, protect, and defend thee."

Today, in our schools children are often urged by their teachers to sing "America". From its beautiful words, I quote these words: "My country 'tis of thee, sweet Land of Liberty, of thee, I sing. Long may our Land be bright with Freedom's Holy Light, protect us by thy might, great God, our King."

The very walls of the Senate chamber contain the inscription: "In God We Trust." All United States money bears the same inscription. The Senate opens every session with prayer.

It remains to be seen as to how far the Court will go by other decisions toward extending this interpretation of the First Amendment over our daily lives.

New Books At Local Library

New books received this week at the Shepard-Pruden Memorial Library are as follows:

- Great Stories by Nobel Prize Winners.
- Marine, the Life of Chesty Puller by Burke Davis.
- The Wall, a novel by John Hersey.
- Certainties for Uncertain Times by John Sutherland Bonnell.
- Honey for Tea by Elizabeth Jaddell.
- Tomorrow's Miracle by Frank G. Slaughter.
- The Old China Hands by Charles G. Finney, a humorous account of American Soldiers occupying China three decades ago—from Lt. Col. George C. Marshall to Private Finney.

For Young People
The Wonder of Heat Energy, a picture story of the vital part heat plays in our world by Hy Ruchlis.

I Marched with Hannibal by Hans Baumann.
The First Book of South America by William E. Carter.
Eliza and the Indian War Pony by Paul and Beryl Scott.

Negro Woman Faces Charge For Shooting

An Edenton Negro was admitted to Chowan Hospital early Sunday morning for treatment of a bullet wound inflicted in his foot by a girl friend.

The incident occurred Sunday morning at 514 North Oakum street when Bernice Ward fired a .22 calibre rifle bullet into the foot of Willie Overton during an argument.

Overton was reported in good condition at the hospital. The Edenton woman was charged with assault with a deadly weapon.

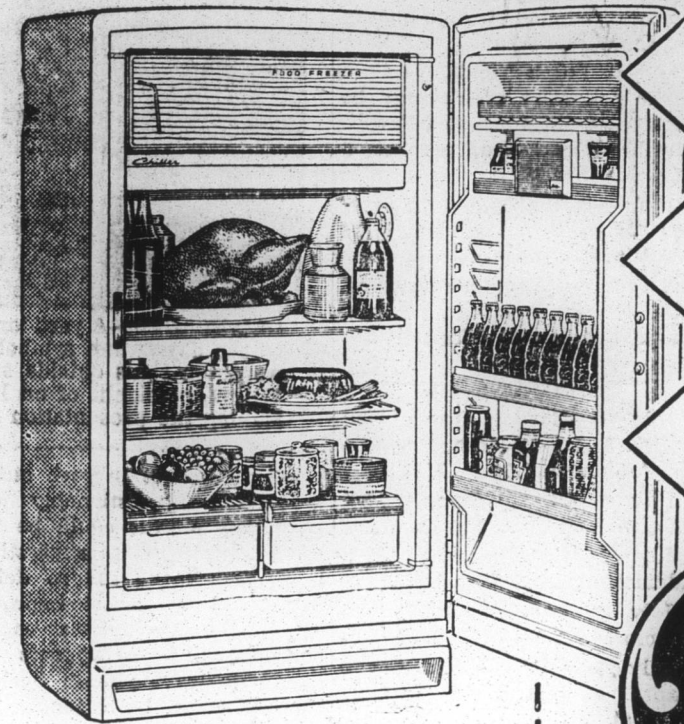
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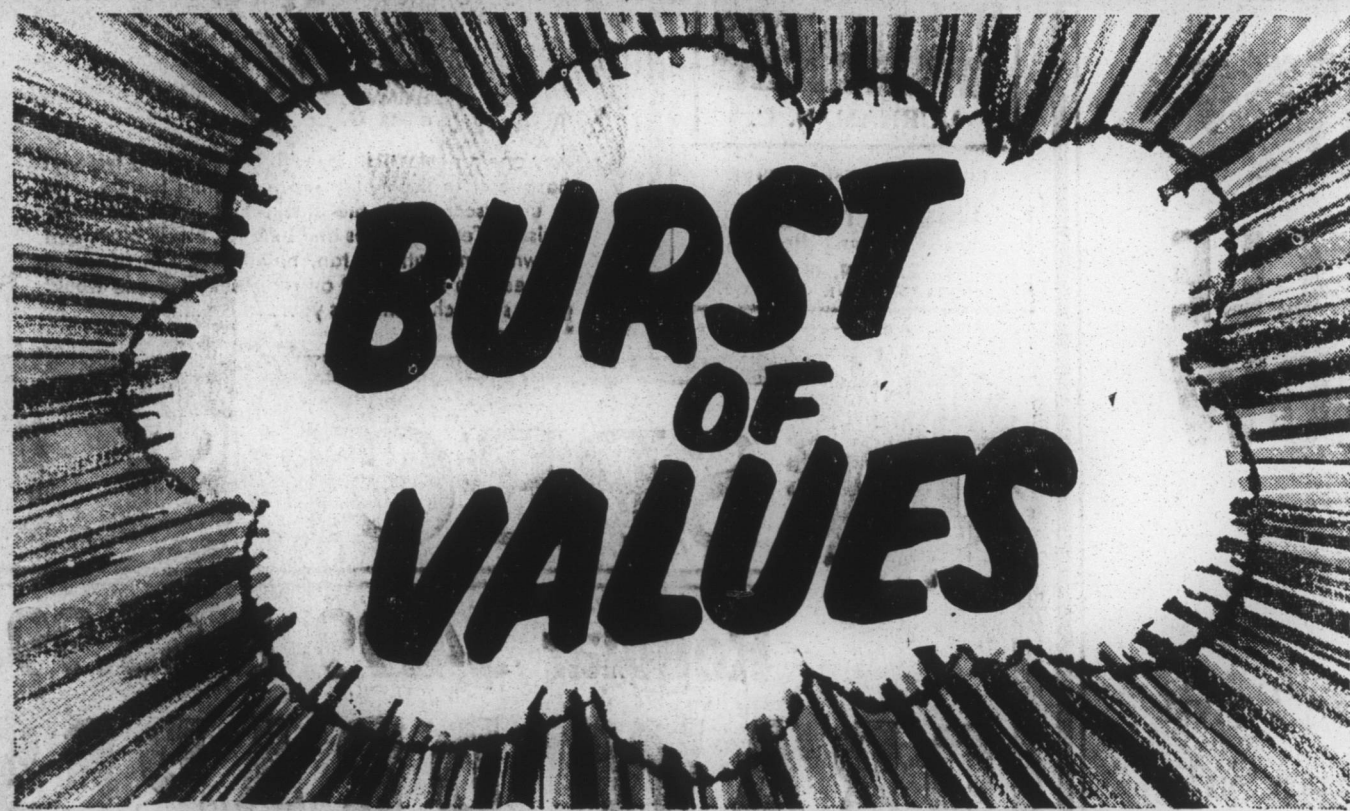
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