

THE PILOT

Southern Pines

North Carolina

"In taking over The Pilot no changes are contemplated. We will try to keep this a good paper. We will try to make a little money for all concerned. Wherever there seems to be an occasion to use our influence for the public good we will try to do it. And we will treat everybody alike." — James Boyd, May 23, 1941.

Government Should Represent People

It is only about a month until citizens of North Carolina vote on the State Constitutional amendment, known as the "Little Federal" plan, that would decrease the House from 120 members to 100 and increase Senate membership from 50 to 70.

The Pilot is opposed to the amendment for what is the best of all possible reasons: we believe in and want to strengthen and preserve representative government—and what we want to see represented in the General Assembly is people, not areas of land or special interests.

The Little Federal amendment would so apportion the membership of the House that representatives of only 19 per cent of the people of North Carolina could control that body. That is not right.

The amendment's plans for the Senate would permit a variance of as much as 50 per cent between the number of people represented by one senator and by another. That is not right.

Rapidly growing counties would be denied their present privilege of acquiring more House representation by allotment of one of the 20 "swing" seats that would be abolished under the Little

Federal plan. That is not right. Nothing that the North Carolina Farm Bureau—the proposed amendment's major organized backer—or any other group of proponents can say will alter the central issue: legislative bodies exist to represent people and to represent them as fully and fairly as possible.

The Farm Bureau opposition is surprising. That organization prides itself on its democratic methods—sifting the opinions and desires of its members from county grass roots toward its state and national organization headquarters. Yet Farm Bureau support of the proposed amendment has many earmarks of a decision imposed from the top on the rank and file.

Thousands of Tar Heel farmers live in populous or growing areas that would be unfairly represented if the amendment is approved to assuage the fears of legislators from counties that are standing still or losing population.

We have a notion that a considerable number of the state's farmers—who are as generally fair-minded as any other segment of the state's population—will refuse to accept Farm Bureau dictation from on high in the voting January 14.

Off Again, On Again Legal Snafu

After many persons, in the past few weeks, have been arrested for transgressing a newly instituted and most unrealistic 20 miles per hour speed limit on S. W. Broad St., the town council approved at its regular meeting this week a new "State Highway Traffic Engineering Department study" that will put the limit on this long, wide stretch of street right back where it used to be—and ought to be—35 miles per hour.

This sudden reversal will not bring back to those who have been arrested the considerable amounts they have paid out in fines and court costs, nor the time lost in attending court, nor, quite understandably, will it raise their opinion of policy-making in town hall.

We were told when the 20-zone was established that State law requires 20 miles per hour in a business section, as that area of S. W. Broad St., from Massachusetts Ave. to the Morganton Road

traffic light intersection, was then designated. Yet here come the State people themselves to assert that 20 miles per hour is much too slow for that street!

The traffic engineering study approved by the council covers all state-maintained, state-controlled streets within the town, of which S. W. Broad is one. Having been approved by the council, the study is going back to the State whose personnel will write the applicable ordinances, return them to the town to be enacted, and then the signs on S. W. Broad St. will be changed back to 35 miles per hour.

What will happen until the new ordinance becomes effective, we don't know, but we recommend, in the name of civic sanity, that the "speed watch" that has trapped so many drivers on that street lately be kept off it until the 35 limit is restored.

A Post-Assassination Irony

One of the numerous tragic ironies apparent after President Kennedy's death is that he was allegedly killed by a mentally ill young man less than a month after the President had signed into law a bill that marks for this nation a tremendous step forward in the treatment of mental sickness and retardation.

Mr. Kennedy, it is well known, took a special interest in mental health. In a message to Congress last February, he had said:

"We need a new type of health facility, one which will return mental care to the mainstream of American medicine and at the same time upgrade mental health services . . . Located in the patient's own environment and community, the center would make possible a better understanding of his needs, a more cordial atmosphere for his recovery and a continuum of treatment . . ."

The bill Mr. Kennedy signed October

31 was the Mental Retardation Facilities and Community Mental Health Centers Construction Act, making available funds for construction of facilities for treatment of both the retarded and the mentally ill; for temporary assistance in staffing the new centers; and also funds for research in the field of mental retardation and a program for training teachers of the mentally handicapped.

Because of the foresight and efforts of its Mental Health Association, Moore County last summer authorized and began successful operation of one of the new type mental treatment centers described by Mr. Kennedy—and it is expected that the center here will benefit from federal funds authorized by the October 31 bill when its new building is constructed near Moore Memorial Hospital.

At how many points, we wonder, in what Walter Lippmann called the "futile and lonely and brooding existence" of Lee Harvey Oswald, the President's accused assassin, could that pathologically hostile young man have been helped by skilled mental counsel or treatment?

One chapter in Oswald's history, as it has come out bit by bit, revealed that he may have narrowly missed, by a quirk of fate, just such attention at a most formative period of his life. At age 13, we are told, in Brooklyn, N. Y., his persistent truancy brought him before authorities prepared to afford him mental treatment—but his family moved back to Texas before it had begun. Without that move to Texas, would a President's life, a decade later, have been spared?

The incident is enough to alert us all—but especially teachers, physicians, ministers, law enforcement officers and others coming in contact with disturbed young people whose condition is not recognized or understood by their families—that there is a tremendous responsibility in this field. And we can be thankful, here in Moore County, that a local treatment center, along with increasing community comprehension of the nature and threat of mental illness, offers guidance and hope for such youngsters.

The great new mental health program made possible, in part, by the slain President's interest and determination, may yet save many lives—and will certainly lighten many burdens of misery—though it came too late to save his own.

SMALL UNITS LACK ECONOMY, EFFICIENCY

School Roadblock: District Mergers

The article below, published last April, is reprinted here because of information it contains important to a community like Southern Pines, having one of the State's smaller school administrative units, and the views of State educators regarding such small units and their costs, although not all of the information is applicable here. Dr. Raymond Stone, who is quoted throughout, is one of the State Board of Education staff members who has been helpful in consultation on the proposed new Moore County Community College.

BY BILL WOMBLE
(In the Raleigh News & Observer)

Our State, striving mightily now to improve the educational opportunities of its youngsters, is hobbled by its reluctance to overhaul a school system rooted in narrow, provincial thinking. In a few places, the thinking has managed to outdistance the system. The result then has been well-rounded community school programs, efficient and economical.

But until the system, which today sees as many as six superintendents to a single county, is modernized on a statewide level, progress probably will continue to be painfully slow.

These are the conclusions drawn from the latest surveys by State specialists, whose duty it is to study North Carolina's public schools and provide for State Board of Education and legislative action.

Merger is the roadblock, as it has been for decades, to a network of Tar Heel schools which have a potential equal to any in the nation, so the specialists say.

Very Few Mergers

There have been city-county administrative mergers put through in recent years, but the number has been small, and the State still is handicapped by a hodge-podge that deprives countless thousands of children of opportunities afforded those who happen to live in privileged areas.

The State didn't plan it that way, of course. But that is the way it has worked out.

Here is a partial picture: —There are now 173 school administrative units in the State's 100 counties. (This will be reduced by two this year.)

—The largest, Mecklenburg County, which merged with the Charlotte system, has 62,960 students; the smallest, the Town of Fremont, has 575 students.

—Although 5,000 students are considered the minimum for effective operation, 95 units of those in this State have less than this number. (Ten thousand students is judged ideal.)

—There are 49 administrative units with from 5,000 to 10,000 students; 18 range between 10,000 and 15,000; eight have from 15,000 to 20,000; and two from 20,000 to 25,000.

Basic Factor

Now, the "population" of school units is a basic, though by no means the only factor in determining an equalization of educational opportunities. This is pointed out by Dr. Raymond A. Stone, who has analyzed North Carolina's situation in a recent study. Stone is assistant to Dr. I. E. Ready, director of the Department of Curriculum Study and Research, State Board of Education. (Dr. Ready has become since this article was published, director of the State's new Department of Community Colleges.

DECAY OF DECENCY IN MODERN AGE

"The decay of decency in the modern age . . . the treatment of human beings as things, as the mere instruments of power and ambition, is without doubt the consequence of the decay of the belief in man as something more than an animal animated by highly conditioned reflexes and chemical reactions.

"For, unless man is something more than that, he has no rights that anyone is bound to respect, and there is no limitation on his conduct that he is bound to obey. This is the forgotten foundation of democracy in the only sense in which democracy is truly valid and of liberty in the only sense in which it can hope to endure.

"The liberties we talk about defending today were established by men who took their conception of man from the great central religious tradition of Western civilization and the liberties we inherit can almost certainly not survive the abandonment of that tradition."

—WALTER LIPPMANN

However he retains the Curriculum Study post.—Pilot Ed.)

Merger of city-county systems, Dr. Stone emphasized, is not necessarily a dollar-saver, when considered on a statewide basis, but it certainly does result in better use of school money. Administrative costs in many cases could be better spent on improved instruction programs, he said.

Comparative costs on operating multiple units within a county and single units, show this:

Johnston County's schools, all under one superintendent and with 17,173 students, cost a total of \$72,551 to administer in 1961-62. The State's share was \$40,526 and local funds amounted to \$32,025.

Cherokee County, with only 4,187 students but three units rather than one, spent \$60,185 on administration, of which \$40,920 came from the State and the remainder from the county.

Pasquotank County, which is even now considering a merger of Elizabeth City schools with those of the county, is another example of the high cost per pupil of division, Dr. Stone said. Its two units had 5,922 students and their total cost was \$51,160.

Moore County Cited

Moore County had 9,245 students and its over-all cost for three separate units was \$71,323; Rockingham County, with four units and 16,717 students, spent a total of \$114,013 in 1961-62.

The lone county with six administrative units — Robeson — cost the State and local taxpayers a total of \$166,194 for administration during the last full term. The county had 26,202 students. (At least one of the small units, St. Pauls, is making a move to come into the county system.)

Mecklenburg's huge single unit cost a total of \$363,249 in 1961-62, of which \$282,819 was furnished locally and the State contributed \$80,430. There were 62,960 students in the unit.

These figures, Dr. Stone contends, clearly show that the State fiscal policy for its schools definitely favors the smaller units, and, of course, at the expense of all others.

This is because the State's money is allocated on a per-pupil basis, nearly uniformly across the State, and each unit, no matter its size, is entitled to its own superintendent and staff.

Dr. Stone found that other factors affecting what he termed the "structural adequacy of an administrative unit" varied widely throughout the State. He attempted to measure them.

One he called "ability" to meet the need locally. For an index to this, he used the county's net revenue payments to the State's General Fund, reducing this to a per-pupil "ability." Then he ascertained the county's own school contributions, and reduced this to a per-pupil basis. The ratio between the two he termed "effort."

"Effort to support schools is a two-fold indication of structural adequacy," he explained. "It not only indicates the financial burden for schools being borne by the county, but also the value people place upon education locally."

Stone's report shows little Camden County, with an "ability" quotient of \$86.41, contributing \$59.63 per pupil for an "effort ratio" of 69 per cent. This was the highest in the State.

Guilford County, with an ability quotient of \$49.7, contributed \$74 locally, an effort ratio of 14.9 per cent. Dr. Stone said the median effort was represented by

Wayne County, with a ratio of 15.99 per cent. Carteret County was the lowest, its ratio being 3.5 per cent.

Funds Under Study

The report then turned to a study of the total funds available per pupil in the units of varying sizes. There appeared to be, he said, no correlation between size of unit or kind of unit and available funds per pupil. The significant variable was the local contribution.

For instance, the Charlotte city unit's expenditure was almost \$110 per pupil more than that of the Davidson County unit, or 1.7 times as great. The Iredell County unit, with a current expenditure of \$197.69, represented the median.

The conclusion reached was that the smaller unit, though it might have available to it funds nearly equal, per pupil, to those of larger units, still could not provide as adequate and efficient educational services as the larger systems.

Dr. Stone's findings on the administrative costs of the varied-sized units pointed up a gross inequity. The smaller the unit, said his report, the higher is the per pupil cost of general control.

"The Fremont city unit spent virtually ten times as much per pupil for administration of its schools as did the Gaston County unit, \$18.01 to \$1.84," stated the report. "The State spent 22 times as much per pupil for general control in the Fremont city unit as it did in the Charlotte city unit. The Tryon city unit spent 15.8 times as much per pupil from local funds for general control as did the Scotland County unit, \$6.81 to \$43. The median cost per pupil for administration of schools was \$3.04 from State funds, \$1.90 from local funds."

Why Resist?

Why, then, if small units are both uneconomical and inefficient, are mergers so often resisted? Dr. Stone suggests several reasons.

"Until the position of assistant superintendent was provided in 1961, there was no incentive to enlarge small units," he said. "Indeed, there was a penalty. Where the State had formerly provided two superintendents only one would be provided if merger of two units were effected. The salary for superintendents strongly favors the small unit. The State now allots a superintendent to every unit . . ."

"The school law does not clearly place responsibility for improved organization. The law permits the State Board of Education to add city units, but does not clearly empower it to abolish units to improve educational opportunity."

Remedy Suggested

As a remedy for the situation, Dr. Stone had three suggestions:

1. Establish, through change in State laws now limiting the Board of Education's powers, a system of adequate administrative units —adequate as to size, financial resources and personnel.

2. Encourage in all counties and units, no matter the size, greater local interest and support of education.

3. In units economically poor or geographically handicapped (by mountains or sounds), the State should provide equalization funds. In the more isolated places, it might even consider boarding schools, Stone said.

Pending the reorganization of units, the State should expand its television education program as a stop-gap, Stone suggests.

Grains of Sand

Surprise Surprise!

A husband was buying a Christmas present for his wife. The salesman sailed up to him: "Scarves? This way, Sir."

The man looked them over and picked one out.

"Oh," said the fatuous clerk, "That's lovely! Won't your wife be surprised!"

"She sure will," said the husband, "She's expecting a fur coat."

O Tannenbaum!

Out in Stanley Dunn's front yard on Young's Road is something very exciting. It's a balsam tree and it's from the Smoky Mountains, right here in North Carolina.

Across from the balsam—actually there are two—is a lot full of pointed firs stuck in the ground, on sale for Christmas trees. You creep through them, brushed by the fluffy branches, and you breathe deep the wonderful fragrance of the northern woods. Perhaps you recall how extra sweet that fragrance was when the firs were interspersed with balsams. It's a fact, the light green balsams, with their beautiful flat needles, lend a special fragrance to the air that is beyond words.

For those who don't know balsams we'll add that it's one of the loveliest of trees. Especially at Christmas-time. Not only for its heavenly smell but for the exquisite cruciform of its branches. The small tips of the branches, the top of the tree itself and, of course, the whole of the tiniest emerging seedlings, are in the shape of a perfect cross. Heart-catching as well as nose-catching is the balsam.

Mr. Dunn seems to have proven that balsams can be grown in this climate. His two were transplanted from their mountain home several years ago and are doing well.

Now we gather, from last Sunday's Greensboro Daily News, that other types of Christmas trees are being grown in this state. The Scotch fir, probably the most generally used for this purpose, can be grown, the article says, throughout the state; in other words: right here.

There's an idea for someone. Why not grow our own trees and have them, all fresh and fragrant as Mr. Hicks's candles, instead of getting them all the way from Canada?

Those Passport Photos

Trippers who plan a journey abroad still have to face the candid camera of those who specialize in making shots for passports; but they really aren't quite as awful as they used to be. There has been such a fuss made by the subjects because they were so dreadful and by the passport officials because they were not dreadful enough to suit their morbid taste, that photographers did, somehow, achieve a perhaps-not-so-actually-happy medium, but still better than the old ones.

Richard Armour of the famous "Armour's Almanac," however, in noting that November 20 was the day when the lamentable passport photo rules were first enforced, has, as usual, the last word.

"As of Nov. 20, 1913, all Americans were required to submit photographs attached to their passports. They were not allowed to submit a photograph of their own choice but had to have one made at a nearby shop that specialized in thugs, imbeciles, and corpses.

"Quite obviously the photographs were not intended for identification but for relaxing international tensions by giving French and Italian customs inspectors a laugh."

The Public Speakin

People Of Dallas Not Guilty In Assassination

To the Editor:

In reference to your editorial in the December 5 issue, "Dallas Must Act," I gather from this editorial that The Pilot is advocating the views of the "mass hysteria" preachers currently trying to assign guilt for the assassination of the late President Kennedy to the whole of the United States. It seems that you, along with others, have completely lost sight of the fact that the deed was carried out by a member of a party advocating views completely alien (or they should be) to our American philosophy. Oswald was a known member of the Communist party; however, this fact has been consistently played down. WHY? It seems logical that this fact should be emphasized rather than treated with kid gloves.

I can see no wisdom in castigating the people of Dallas for this tragic act even though it was committed in their midst. The views of many Dallas citizens

may not have coincided with those of the Kennedy Administration; however, the right to disagree is a paramount right in a free society such as ours is supposed to be. No doubt there was police negligence involved in the transfer of Oswald to a second prison, but the idea of dismissing all involved as punishment for their "guilt" is quite far-fetched.

Your paragraph on world opinion was especially annoying to me. "Should the fate of Europe be entrusted to such a country?" . . . If the truth of the assassin's Communistic record were given the place it deserves in our propaganda machine, Europe would see that he was indeed one of Russia's own!

All in all, I was quite unaware that the people of Dallas had been drummed out of the United States' family, thus necessitating wholesale removal of public officials in order to be readmitted to the union. In my opinion they never left it!

JUNE MELVIN

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