

# THE NEW BERN MIRROR

Published Every Friday at 410 Johnson Street  
New Bern, N. C., by the Sole Owner

J. GASKILL McDANIEL Editor and Publisher

## SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

One Year .....\$2.50

Second Class Postage Paid at New Bern, N. C.

## THE WRONG WAY

Someone may have considered it a master stroke of strategy to hold a public meeting on the hospital matter last Friday night where only charges and questions, not answers and explanations, would be forthcoming.

Such ground rules, ordered by a presiding Hospital Board Chairman who was destined to be asked, and was indeed asked, about free ambulance service from which his family is said to have reaped benefit, imposed a handicap on citizens who had the courage to speak up.

The fact that many did speak up, despite the omnious announcement that a "court reporter" was present to write everything down, is an indication of not only the public's genuine concern but its refusal to be intimidated by obstacles that never should have been placed in its path.

Certainly one can appreciate apparent lack of desire on the part of the Hospital Board Chairman, Mr. Larry Pate, to explain circumstances surrounding free ambulance service said to have been given a member of his immediate family.

No one can deny, and make the denial stick, that a member of the Craven County Board of Commissioners, Mr. Grover Lancaster, told approximately two hundred citizens in open meeting the previous Tuesday night that Danny Jackson, a top official at Craven County Hospital, had admitted he gave Mr. Pate's relative free ambulance service.

No one can deny, and make the denial stick that the Chairman of the Craven County Board of Commissioners, Mr. D. Livingstone Stallings, then told the assembled citizens, in a manner that would have done credit to an Academy Award winner, "I will see to it that this bill is paid."

Actually, there is little reason to believe that the Hospital Board, or the Craven County Board of Commissioners (none of whom showed up for this most important meeting) stood to learn anything new at last Friday night's gathering.

No one has denied, nor could such a denial stick, that the very officials who proposed to investigate charges at this late date have held secret meetings with the accused parties (they didn't show up for Friday night's meeting either) to thoroughly discuss the charges. To this extent, Friday night's meeting was meaningless, and could serve no useful purpose.

A local citizen, Mr. Mack Bennett, who requested an investigation by the Craven County Grand Jury on the morning following the Tuesday night meeting of the Craven County Board of Commissioners, has explained to the press why he took this action.

"I attended the Tuesday afternoon session of the Commissioners," he told The Mirror, "and inquired about alleged acts involving Craven County Hospital. I was told that the matter had been investigated, straightened out, and there had been no improprieties."

Then, according to Mr. Bennett, and the facts bear him out, he was among approximately two hundred citizens who, less than three hours later, at the Tuesday night second session held by the Commissioners, heard Commissioner Grover Lancaster state that "We found truth in all but one of the charges."

One of the charges brought out at this Tuesday night meeting, concerned a stainless steel sink and other equipment, said to have been taken from Craven County Hospital, installed in a camp or cottage belonging to Hospital Administrator Lonnie Moor, where it reportedly has been in use for two years.

No one can deny, and make the denial stick, that Chairman Stallings, in the presence of approximately two hundred citizens on the Tuesday night referred to, said, "I understand this matter has been attended to." He told the citizens he understood the equipment was being returned.

These are things that John Clark Wheeler, commentator for New Bern's television station and a friend of Stallings, described as "minor" in his Friday night newscast. Incidentally, Wheeler, the station's top newscaster, covered none of the meetings, but in each instance presented Stallings in a favorable light. This surprised no one.

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# MIRROR MORSELS

As diamond cuts diamond, and one hone smooths a second, all the parts of intellectual are whetstones to each other; and genius, which is but the result of mutual sharpening, is character too.--Adolfo Bartoli.

To the young I offer two maxims: Don't accept superficial solutions of difficult problems. It is better to do a little good than much harm. I should not offer anything more specific; every young person should decide on his or her credo.--Bertrand Russell.

Private opinion creates public opinion. Public opinion overflows eventually into national behavior and, as things are arranged at present, can make or mar the world. That is why private opinion and private behavior, and private conversation are so terrifyingly important.--Jan Struther.

Research teaches a man to admit he is wrong and to be proud of the fact that he does so, rather than try with all his energy to defend an unsound plan because he is afraid that admission of error is a confession of weakness when rather it is a sign of strength.--H. E. Stocher.

Science has sometimes been said to be opposed to faith, and inconsistent with it. But all science, in fact, rests on a basis of faith for it assumes the permanence and uniformity of natural laws, a thing which can never be demonstrated. --Tryon Edwards.

Be unselfish. That is the first and final commandment for those who would be useful, and happy in their usefulness. If you think of yourself only, you cannot develop because you are choking the source of development, which is spiritual ex-

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# Village Verses

## VOX POPULI

How sad it is, in this free land,  
That just a few will take a stand;  
The silent many stay resolved  
To never ever become involved.  
Play it safe their constant creed,  
"I won't speak out, there's no need."  
Pontius Pilate, one distant day,  
Washed his hands, then looked away.  
—JGMCD.

pansion through thought for others. -- Charles W. Elliot.

It took thrift and savings, together with tremendous character and vision, to make our nation what it is today. And it will take thrift and savings, together with constant ingenuity and stamina, to conserve our remaining resources to enable us to continue to be a great nation.--John W. Snyder.

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