

"NOTHING BUT A PRIVATE"

ANOTHER "LITTLE AND INCONSEQUENTIAL" LEGIONNAIRE WRITES AN OPEN LETTER TO MAJOR CHERRY

Rocky Mount, N. C.
May 16th, 1944

Mr. Gregg Cherry, Candidate,
Sir Walter Hotel,
Raleigh, N. C.

Dear Sir:

I read Marvin Revel's "open letter" addressed to you and published in the News & Observer on May 9th.

I attended the Convention referred to by Mr. Revel, and I recall distinctly that after Valentine had presented his resolution, the purpose of which was to eliminate your vote as a Past Commander unless you were also a delegate, you not only said everything Marvin Revel attributes to you, but in the course of your speech you also said:

"Let ME talk. Who is this Itimous Valentine? Nothing But a PRIVATE—Raised down here in Nash County—Most of you don't even know where Nash COUNTY is, let alone Spring Hope—a one - horse lawyer from a country town".

Probably no two people will agree precisely upon the words you used, but if it be granted for the sake of the argument that none of the words attributed to you were actually spoken by you (you have not denied them), how can you explain the effect of the words you did use, the impression you made, and the deep feeling of indignation you stirred up in the hearts of your fellow legionnaires?

Cries of **"Throw him out!"** were directed against you from all over the house; others asked, **"Who ever heard of you before YOU became Commander?"** One reporter covering the Convention wrote in his paper that **your own Post, Gastonia, handed you a "slap in the face"** by voting for the amendment and against you by 19 to 11.

No amount of denial on your part—no printing of the

record—not even publicizing the fact that you changed your vote and voted with the majority (after you saw that you were beaten) or that you shook hands with Valentine after the voting was over, can explain away the contempt and indignation which your fellow legionnaires felt as a result of the insult you offered to the manhood, to the self-respect, to the patriotism, of a gallant Private in the first World War.

"Nothing but a Private!"

Frankly, Mr. Cherry, whom do you think fights these bloody wars anyway? When "D-Day" comes, whose names will be first, second, third, fourth, etc., on the list of casualties? Will it be Privates, or gallant and brave as they may be, only Majors, Colonels and Generals?

What kind of a Governor do you think you would make for the returning Privates, their fathers, mothers, wives and sweethearts? If you lacked respect for him as a soldier, how could you respect him, or be willing to serve him, when he comes back here as an ordinary citizen?

I am a Legionnaire, Mr. Cherry, a **Past Commander of my Post**. But this is not a quarrel between us legionnaires, nor is it simply a **protest against your dragging the Legion into politics against the plain provisions of our Constitution, which you swore to uphold**. These are involved, to be sure, but it goes far beyond that! In fact,

Your conduct on the occasion referred to indicates your fundamental thinking, your basic attitude toward those who come from the country and small country towns; toward those you consider **"little and inconsequential"**, whether they be **Privates**, ordinary citizens, or mere members of the Legislature while you were Speaker.

It goes to the heart of the question of whether a man like you ought to be Governor of our State at a time when our men and women—so many of them **Privates**—may be returning, God willing, to their businesses, their homes to take up again the broken thread of their lives.

It goes to the heart of the question of whether a man like you ought to be Governor of a State that has so many of us **"little and inconsequential"** people in it.

With the seeds of money at your command I have been informed that you have canvassed North Carolina thoroughly for the absentee votes of our men and women in the armed forces; you have had letters and blanks printed and mailed at the same time indicating that you were instrumental in providing them with a ballot, and asking that they vote for you. I believe, however, there are enough of us **"little and inconsequential"** citizens; enough of us Legionnaires, also fathers, mothers, sisters and wives of the members of our armed forces now fighting alongside of Valentine, to see that we do not lose in North Carolina what they are fighting and dying for over there.

Yours truly,
ROBERT DENNIS

PEOPLE ARE READING AND THINKING "NOW-A-DAYS". BELOW IS AN EXCERPT FROM A LETTER FROM ONE OF THE MANY MOTHERS WHO HAVE WRITTEN LEGIONNAIRE REVEL:

"I am glad about your open letter to Mr. Cherry in yesterday's News & Observer, and I am sure that thousands who read it will be grateful to you for your timely warning. It gives me the creeps to think what might have happened if you had not written it. Folks everywhere must have stopped to do some serious thinking as a result of your letter. I proudly clipped it and sent it to my son in New Guinea. He will show it to his fellow officers and all the North Carolina men he meets".

WILKES IS FOR RALPH McDONALD!

VOTE FOR HIM FOR OUR NEXT GOVERNOR ON PRIMARY DAY, SATURDAY, MAY 27

(This advertisement paid for by Legionnaires and democratic citizens of the "inconsequential class" but nevertheless those interested in electing a man Governor who will reflect credit to our State and its youth).