

# The Alleghany News

AND STAR-TIMES

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The News is glad to publish letters, not too long, on matters of general interest. But such communications must be accompanied by the real name of the writer, even when they are to be published under a nom de plume.

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"If the choice were left to me whether to have a free press or a free government, I would choose a free press."—Thomas Jefferson.

## Fire Prevention

As fire prevention week is being observed it is well to remember some of the causes of fire and prevention. It was 76 years ago today, October 8, 1871 that Mrs. O'Leary's cow kicked over the lantern that started the great Chicago fire. While we do not have such disastrous fires today we have many more of them. According to the National Fire Prevention Association, "A preventable fire breaks out somewhere in this land of ours every 20 seconds—right around the clock."

The report continues to show that before the sun sets today, over 1600 building fires will have killed 28 Americans, more than half of them women and children, destroyed nearly 1000 homes, 140 stores, 80 factories, 6 churches, 6 schools, 5 theatres and 3 hospitals. Alarming isn't it, particularly when much of this loss could have been prevented?

Figures show that of the more than 10,000 lives lost last year, more than 3,500 were farm people and the farm property loss was around \$85,000,000.

The common causes of farm fires, according to the records of the Agricultural Committee of the National Fire Waste Council, are defective flues and heating systems; sparks on combustible roofs; misuse of gasoline and petroleum products; spontaneous ignition of hay, straw, oily rags, etc.; lightning striking unprotected buildings; stoves, furnaces, and their pipes; matches and smoking; defective wiring and misuse of electricity; hot ashes and coals, including open fires.

Many fires can be traced to some kind of carelessness. They usually do not start unless someone has set the stage for them. The cost of prevention is little, compared to the loss. Let's re-dedicate ourselves this week to preventing fires and thus saving lives and property.

## Give Them A Trial!

States as well as manufacturers and business firms have found through experience that "it pays to advertise."

North Carolina was among the first of the southern states to learn this lesson and its fine advertising program, extending now over a period of ten years, has brought new industries to Tarheelia, hundreds of thousands of tourists, more farmers, more permanent citizens and greater appreciation for our state throughout the nation.

Limited as it has been, we are convinced that this advertising program has paid big dividends to every section of the state, and we think it would be a wise investment if the annual appropriation were increased from \$200,000 a year to at least a half of a million.

North Carolina, the south's number one state, has much to tell and it is extremely difficult to conduct a national advertising campaign in only two media of newspapers and magazines with \$200,000.

With one outstanding advertising agency and several other good agencies located in this state, we think it is high time for members of the North Carolina Board of Conservation and Development to place the state's account with one of these firms rather than to continue giving it to a firm located in Georgia.

Georgia may have more candidates for governor than North Carolina has, but

we doubt if it has an agency that can do as good a job as the Ayer and Gillet agency, of Charlotte.

It is true that Eastman-Scott company, of Atlanta, has been handling the account since 1937, but we see no reason why this company should continue to have it indefinitely.

Placing of the account was postponed at the September meeting of the board and we understand that final decision will be made next Monday or Tuesday when the board meets in Asheville.

We are impressed with the remarkable record made by the Charlotte firm and believe the contract should be given to this "home" organization.

Ayer and Gillet Agency has won distinguished recognition. It is one of the few agencies in the south that is a member of the American Association of Advertising Agencies. In 1946 it won honors by utility advertising.

This agency handles a large number of accounts, has a large, experienced staff and we urge the board to "give them a trial." We believe they can do a better job of telling the story of North Carolina to the world.

## Solving The Health Problem

Many proposals to invest government with wide powers over the people stem from lack of faith in the ability of individuals to solve their own problems by voluntary, democratic action. An apt illustration of this is the continuing effort of minority political groups to saddle the country with a compulsory state medical system. These groups simply do not believe that the majority of the American people are competent to meet the responsibility of caring for themselves in a medical way. It might just as well be argued that the American people are not competent to feed and clothe themselves except at the direction of the state.

It is from this fear of incompetence that dictators are born.

During the past decade, while the issue of socialized medicine has been debated with increasing bitterness and while measures have been proposed in Congress repeatedly that would put a strait jacket on the medical profession, private citizens by the millions have quietly gone ahead joining up with voluntary prepaid medical programs. And actually these voluntary programs have done more pioneering and exhibited more practical effectiveness than can ever be expected of a socialized medical system founded on the shifting sands of politics. At present nearly half the population of the country, sixty-one million persons, subscribe to some kind of a medical plan. Approximately 45,500,000 persons in the United States are enrolled in insurance plans to pay costs incident to disabling illnesses. In addition, approximately 10,000,000 persons are enrolled in prepayment medical care plans and 6,000,000 are insured under combination accident and sickness policies.

If the debate over socialized medicine goes on a few more years, it will become purely an academic matter. The people will have solved their own health problems in their own way, without destroying medical standards or the freedom of the doctors.

## Importance Of Coal

The constant labor conflicts which have disturbed the soft coal industry may have convinced part of the public that the American mines are something of a relic from a dark age, untouched by the march of progress.

The truth is that our mines are far and away the most advanced in the world. Even before the British mines were socialized, their American counterparts were much more productive. Since socialization, British production has gone down, and the American advantage has increased. This is largely the result of an extensive mechanization program, covering many years, which cost the mine owners tens of millions of dollars.

One consequence of the high efficiency of coal mining in the United States has been the record wages now earned by mine workers—wages substantially higher than those paid in any other comparable industry. Another consequence has been an abundance of coal. The only coal shortages in this country have been caused by strikes, and have been rapidly made up once work was resumed.

## At Home On The Farm With The City Cousin

Like the horse-and-buggy doctors of an era long since passed, whose cures and preventives were often worse than the ailment, a specialist in Agricultural Extension occasionally runs across a farmer who is trying to solve a farm problem with "medicine" that's just a little too strong.

I was talkin' to Erice Ratchford, one of those State College fellows, just this week, and he was tellin' me of a very likely instance of this same thing.

Being in charge of Farm Management for Extension, Mr. Ratchford recommends things that lead to more efficient and productive farming. He is particularly interested right now in helping farmers find the answer to a very nettlesome question: "How Can I Save Labor?"

Well, lots of folks would say that the simplest way to save labor is to get a whole shed-full of the latest equipment, machinery and devices. With these on hand, some people get the impression all you have to do is fire the help and just sit back and watch the things gallivant around the farm.

How impractical this line of reasoning becomes is made quite clear by the bustling Mr. Ratchford, who comes to the point quickly to tell you mechanization is not always the answer to the farmer's problem. It's often a case of prescribing the right medicine for the wrong malady, he says.

"Mechanization is an expensive way to save labor," the expert was telling me. "It would be better, on many small farms in North Carolina, for the owner to continue to hire labor."

There are lots of less expensive ways of saving labor, he went on to explain, listing these:

Keep all equipment in good working order. Proper greasing and maintenance adds years to the life of good equipment.

The simplest piece of equipment, such as a middle buster (I have had to ask him what this was) operates better if it is kept in proper adjustment. It will not only do more work, but will also be easier on the man and mule, or tractor.

To save labor at rush seasons, Tar Heel farmers can repair all equipment during winter months when other work is near a standstill. Rainy days also provide an opportunity for "catching up" on this repair work.

All farmers spend considerable time on chores like feeding and watering animals planning these chores will save time and labor, Mrs. Ratchford says. Make running water available to poultry and hogs on range, and carry at least a week's supply of feed to them at one time.

Farm building and lots are not always arranged for the most convenience and to count for economy of time. A few changes or better still—careful planning when the farmstead is laid out—make a big difference in the day's work.

"Another method which our fathers practiced," says Ratchford, "is swapping labor. While this doesn't necessarily save man-hours, it does save money, and cuts the labor bill in the long run. And there are lots of farm jobs that can be done better by two or more men."

"So you see, Cousin," he said, as I got up to go, "although mechanization is a widely-approved method of saving labor and man-hours on the farm, it is not always the most practical—or the least expensive."

While it is more or less of a scientific fact that certain cows have been known to give extra milk to the tune of "When Irish Eyes Are Smilin'" or "Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree"—I was nevertheless inclined to wonder about this man over in McDowell county, who talks his hens into higher egg production.

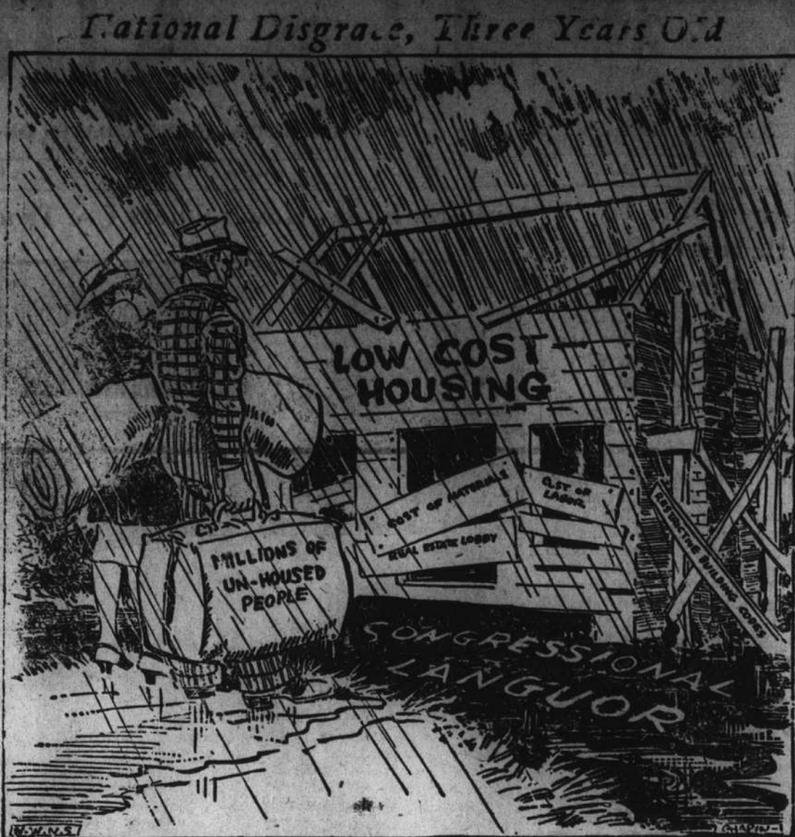
Then I ran into Carl Whiteside one day, and he was giving me the straight stuff. He's assistant farm agent for the State College Extension Service over there, and knows all about such things.

"Do you mean he actually has words with them?" I ask Carl, picturing the farmer as he rakes the lazy birds over the coals in a daily pep talk.

"Well, you see, Cousin," he tells me, "it's like this. It all started when some baby chicks were purchased from C. M. Harris, one of the state's good poultry breeders over at Valdese."

"And then what happened," I says, anxious to get on with it. "They were brooded and grown out by one of McDowell's best farmers who let them range on Laido clover till the twelfth of August, last year."

"Is this the man who talked to them?" I asked.



### The Everyday Counselor

Rev. Herbert Spagh, D. D.

### SPARTA SPECTACLES

By NANCY C. KENNICKELL

This week Jack Frost, with his miraculous paint brush, has splattered enough paint to beautify our mountains. In fact, they can hardly be recognized as the green hills of the fading summer.

This week, Sparta Specs have also made a change. I used to wonder about people who bought glasses at the "dime store," by just trying them on until they found a pair suitable, but now I know the Sparta Specs can be worn in quite the same manner. Whether or not they will fit, we'll soon know.

**Just A Little Shaver!**

When does a man become a man? A good question, but we can offer the opinion that a little tot might well believe he had become a man, when he receives his first haircut. We had the pleasure of seeing Lloyd Richardson, 13-months old son of Mr. and Mrs. Meredith Richardson, of Whitehead, get his first haircut. And what a brave lad he was. A couple of times, it looked as if he'd shed a tear as the clippers approached and he saw his blond curls fall to the floor, but indeed he took it like a man!

**On The Top Floor**

It must be rather convenient, living directly over your work . . . and a little confining too. One can always be found when "duties call." This time, two can be found, Rodney Busic and Basil Landreth have moved into their new apartment directly over Ev-an's and Higgin's Jewelers and Higgin's barber shop. They have promised to have open house soon.

**Sleeping On The Job**

Must be nice to own a business and be able to sleep on the job. Not many of us can get away with it. It would be telling, to mention any names, but a certain young business man, when he isn't selling antiques is usually enjoying a session with Morpheus.

**Speaking of sleep,** Mayor Glenn Nichols is the man who loses sleep and never seems to catch up. Baseball seems to be his main reason for lack of sleep. Maybe with baseball finally winding up, he'll be able to sleep in the afternoons.

**Sparta and Sparta**

The Yellow Jackets are full of that fighting spirit. After the victory on the local gridiron last Friday afternoon they'll be ready to meet the Jonesville eleven here tomorrow. Keep up the good work!

Other sports Sparta fans are enjoying include skating and bowling. Unless you make a habit of it, suggest you don't try it until Saturday so you can have Sunday to recuperate.

We won't try specializing until next week either, see you then.