

Editorial

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POLITICAL "LEADERSHIP"

It is doubtful if any political "leadership" has ever been as widely divergent from the actual stream of American opinion as that which is now being offered by Guy Gabrielson, the Chairman of the Republican National Committee.

In his partisan approach to the fight against communist aggression in Korea, the Republican Chairman seems particularly out of step with the rest of the country.

At the start, when United States and United Nations forces were fighting a delaying action against the well-prepared aggressors—trading space for time—the leader of the opposition party was loud in criticism of what he called U. S. "bungling" and "unpreparedness."

When the inevitable counter-attack was launched successfully, the Republican Chairman reacted as though he regarded this as a blow to his political strategy. He expressed the strangely-worded belief that "the GOP can win the November 7th elections on the Korean war issue even if it ends in a United Nations victory before then."

Mr. Gabrielson sought to disassociate the Republican Party from the whole American endeavor to localize and crush the Korean threat to world peace. The Democratic Administration, he said, "would have been glad to have us share

The Critic



the blame for the casualty lists, the blood shed, the tears and the sacrifice endured by every American home." But the Republican Chairman prefers to wash his hands of it.

Has any political shaft ever been wider of the mark? And has any political "leader" ever been guilty of a more flagrant misjudgment of the attitude of the American people?

The Chairman of the Republican Party would be better engaged in claiming credit—which no one would wish to withhold—for the co-operation of most Republicans in Congress in steps initiated by the Truman Administration to meet a grave threat to the peace of the world.

Mr. Gabrielson gives the impression of desperately reaching for an issue—any issue—but without comprehension of what the people of the country are thinking. This Republican desperation is understandable, for all of the earlier GOP "issues" have exploded like over-inflated toy balloons.

A year ago they raised a campaign banner against the "Welfare State." The only enthusiasm which this aroused was on the other side. Next they solemnly decreed that the 1950 battles would revolve around the "issue" of Liberty vs. Socialism. But the barrage proved to consist only of blank cartridges left over from 1936. Next came the abortive attempt to persuade the people of the United States that their government was being run by "communists." This smear campaign has also now become a Republican liability.

Contrived "issues" and catchy slogans, empty of any real meaning, will not fool today's voters. And they seem particularly inappropriate at this time, when our country faces great dangers and real problems.

CAPITAL REPORTER Scott Summers

RALEIGH, N. C. — Associate Justice A. A. F. Seawell's death Saturday brought a long-simmering State Supreme Court situation to a boil.

At least three of the Justices, including Mr. Seawell, were eligible for retirement. All three wanted to retire, but when Governor Scott was elected did not do so. They felt that occupation of the State's highest tribunal called for men of dignity with the highest concept of their duties. They did not retire because they were afraid of the type men Governor Scott would name to replace them.

These three Justices, according to members of the bar, felt that Supreme Court Justices should be men of conservative leanings with the utmost respect for the State laws. They were afraid that the Governor would name as their successors men with too liberal a viewpoint. They felt, too, that Scott might select their successors from a political standpoint rather than giving what they felt was due consideration to their legal abilities.

In other words, from a State standpoint they were afraid that their retirement would put the Governor in a position of "packing" the State Supreme Court, much in the same manner that President Roosevelt sought to handpick members of the nation's highest tribunal.

Thus the Governor's appointment to succeed Justice Seawell will be given the utmost scrutiny. If the justices are displeased with the appointment, feel the Governor has done just what they feared, there will be no retirement until after the next gubernatorial election. They will stay on, and possibly will help campaign for a conservative governor in 1952. However, if Scott names a conservative, or even a "conservative liberal," two of the remaining justices likely will go ahead and retire if they are convinced Scott will do likewise in naming their successors.

The new appointment probably will be made by the time this reaches print. But there is no dearth of candidates for the Supreme Court seat. Among those seeking the spot are (or were) Attorney General Harry McMullan; Jeff Johnson, campaign manager for Senator Frank Graham and who has been classed as a conservative but is more liberal than some folks think; Superior Court Judge Hunt Parker; and Allan Langston, Raleigh attorney. Those are just a few of those who wanted the job.

Jeff Johnson, at this writing, apparently had the inside track. But some Scott supporters felt that appointment of McMullan to the bench would be the smartest political move that Kerr Scott could make. McMullan, a conservative who has fought Scott in many matters—particularly the Smith-Graham primaries—has the knowledge of the law that is needed. He would satisfy the remaining court justices. And his appointment would give the Governor the chance to name his own man as Attorney General. Some of McMullan's rulings have been adverse to the Scott administration, and since a ruling by the Attorney General stands in lieu of a Supreme Court decision, it could be very important for the Governor to have his own boy in that job.

Secretary of State George Marshall's recent order that traveling congressmen—including Tar Heel Harold Cooley—must travel by private plane and at their own expense where possible has an interesting background.

Two years ago Cooley's Republican opponent charged that Cooley was galavanting over the world, and taking his wife along, at government expense. Cooley denied the charge.

Now Marshall has ordered that the globe-trotting Cooley and other congressmen can not travel by U. S. government planes unless there is no other transportation available. The ruling followed a hop by the congressmen via Uncle Sam's aircraft.

Over in Sampson County, an investigation is turning up charges that the county attorney, A. L. Butler, has accepted pay for extra services. In paid advertise-

ments, a group calling themselves the "Sampson County Taxpayers League" says Butler was paid \$4,000 for extra services in connection with the Sampson County hospital and Sampson County jail. The group charges that the services should have been covered by Butler's regular salary as county attorney.

Although the ads are being signed as non-partisan, there are political overtones. Butler is a state Republican leader. He is nephew of the late Marion Butler, Populist U. S. Senator from North Carolina in Reconstruction Days. The group making the charges is made up of Sampson Democratic leaders. And the Republicans have held Sampson County offices since 1938.

The investigation probably will be taken before a grand jury.

In addition, it is expected that the "Taxpayers' League" will pay attention to activities of L. A. Hall, chairman of the Sampson county board of commissioners.

Incidentally, the investigation has turned up information that the Sampson sheriff makes better than \$20,000 a year. It is all legal, but good pay. The income comes from the regular \$3,300 sheriff's salary, plus fees and a cut of insolvent tax collections allowed by law. It puts Sampson sheriff's pay at more than that of the Governor of the state.

Reports are reaching me that Negro leaders are passing the word to members of their race to scratch Senator Nominee Willis Smith's name from the ballot and vote for Republican E. L. Gavin of Sanford.

The reports are that Negroes are being urged to turn out in record numbers at the general election, and to vote the straight Democratic ticket except for Smith.

Labor is instructing its members to write-in Frank Graham's name if they don't feel they can vote Republican.

And despite Senator Graham's call to all his supporters to vote for Smith, there are persisting reports that a lot of them either will write-in Graham's name, not vote in the senatorial race, or will vote for the GOP standard-bearer.

Democratic leaders are pooh-hooing the idea that a Republican will be elected, of course, and no one will know until the ballots are counted. It is a very unlikely event, however, but not altogether impossible.

Party harmony is the keynote of the congressional district rallies, which wind up next week. And you can't tell how folks will vote when you listen to them talk. Apparently the final decision depends on the number of people who will stick to the party line as compared to those who vote for or against the individual. Don't be surprised, though, if the Republicans capture the biggest percentage of votes in the Senatorial race in many years.

The Hackney Body Works company at Wilson has come through on its contract to build school bus bodies for the State. By the time you read this, the Wilson firm probably will have delivered the last of 350 buses it was slated to build.

At first the Hackney outfit had a contract for 450 buses, which were to have been delivered before school opened in September. But by mid-August the company had not delivered but a few, and 100 of the buses were taken from Hackney and allotted to another firm, with Hackney paying the difference between its bid price and actual cost plus transportation of chassis.

The Wilson firm had been caught short in the steel squeeze, caused by the war in Korea, but finally got going and delivered the buses a month late.

The shenanigans at the congressional rallies are leaving the so-called political experts talking to themselves.

Conservatives are touting Bill Umstead of Orange as a candidate for governor in 1952. The experts can't make up their minds whether this is a sounding out process—trying to get the Scott-led liberals to say who they'll back—or whether it's a



serious move to put Umstead in the race.

It could be a move to find out whether or not the east-west tradition still is holding firm. If it is, Umstead would have one strike—at least—against him. Reported willing candidates Secretary of State Thad Eure, State Treasurer Brandon Hodges, Agriculture Commissioner L. Y. Ballew, Highway Commissioner Henry Jordan, and Asheville Publisher D. Hiden Ramsey are keeping quiet. The furore caused by a premature, and according to Thad, unauthorized announcement of Eure's candidacy has died down.

If Governor Scott has a favorite, he isn't letting it be known. And all of the above-mentioned men have been doing the rallies except Ramsey, who has said nothing and is laying low.

Some eyebrows were lifted when Congressman Bob Doughton and C. B. Deane told voters to send Kerr Scott some men to the legislature who would help him carry out his program.

It sounded fine to Scott supporters on first glance, but a second look had the governor's friends wondering what good the pleas were. Most of the house and senate members were decided in the primaries, and general election will have little effect on the makeup of the 1951 General Assembly.

The Governor's announcement that Congressman Ertel Carlisle will lead a fight for flood control and hydroelectric development of the Cape Fear came as a surprise. The governor was credited with some astute maneuvering.

All in all, the rallies give the appearance of some of the politicians seeing that Scott's popularity is on the upgrade and trying to climb on the bandwagon.

But one suspicious Scott supporter tabbed it as a "feint before they (opponents of the governor) swing a roundhouse punch."

Anyway, things should be interesting politically speaking, around the Old North State for some time to come.

Some of the officials of the Forestry Division of the Department of Conservation and Development do not particularly care for Kerr Scott and that feeling is echoed down in District 7 of the Forestry Division.

Some time ago, I reported a district meeting near Little Washington on August 18 at which forestry men reportedly said "Whose Afraid of Big Bad Kerr Scott?"

As all reporters do, I made some mistakes. That meeting was not District One, it was District Seven. And it was not near Little Washington, it was in Washington County. And no one now remembers singing of any such song.

But here's a statement made by one of those present:

"At one table was Warden Darden of Washington County and others, some of whom were plenty high. A friend of Darden's made a statement speaking of Kerr Scott and said he (Scott) is 'just something they pulled from a mule's tail, sent to Raleigh and made governor.' To which many applauded and Mrs.—(the wife of a Raleigh Forestry official, whose name does not matter) went so far as to reach across the table and shake his hand in gratitude. This man made many nasty statements about Governor Scott and some of those at the central office

(Raleigh headquarters) seemed to enjoy it. Governor Scott was cursed, damned and belittled beyond human decency."

Following publication of the original story, I was asked to check the facts. No one seemed to be worried about the reported misuse of State property in District Seven, but some of the Raleigh brass was unhappy about the reported singing of a song derogatory to the governor.

That story was used only because I thought it was funny. Folks who work for the State have a perfect right to like or

dislike their governor, just as everyone else does.

A check showed that after the story came out in CAPITAL REPORTER, a meeting of all District Seven county wardens was called on September 20 at 10 a. m. in Elizabeth City. The meeting was held at the district warehouse. Nine wardens were present—one from Martin county, being able to come because he was appearing in court as a witness. The session was called by V. W. Herlevitch, district forester.

Herlevitch said that there had been a lot of undue publicity about the August 18 party, that he was going to get to the bottom of the matter and that it would be just too bad for the man who talked to this reporter. He said everyone would be interviewed and that they had better tell the truth.

If it will make Mr. Herlevitch any happier, the original story did not come from one of his wardens, nor did it come from Raleigh.


And nobody cares whether he or anyone else likes the governor.

But how about checking up on the report—that has been turned in to Raleigh headquarters—that one man hauled away State property for his own use, and used a State-owned truck to do the hauling?


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