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The Next School Board

NO public office in Macon County is more important than membership on the county board of education; for that board—even if it does nothing else during its two years in office—is charged with two responsibilities that will affect the life of every school child in this county:

1. The board must select a superintendent to run the county's schools for a two-year term.
2. It has the duty of laying down general policies under which the superintendent shall operate the schools.

In a very real sense, then, it is the members of the county board of education who will determine whether this county has good, mediocre, or poor schools.

Under the law (it is a poor law, but it is the law), members of the board are appointed by the general assembly. But they are nominated in the primary, and the county's representative in the legislature is under both a legal and a moral obligation to appoint those persons nominated. Our next school board will be chosen, therefore, in the May primary.

Yet a fortnight before the April 17 deadline, no one—man or woman, member of the present board or otherwise—had filed as a candidate for the board of education. And as this is written (April 2), the total number of candidates for this five-member board is one!

One explanation, of course, is that nobody seeks the office because of the pay (\$5 per meeting), nor does membership on the school board carry vast political power; the only real compensation is the consciousness of serving the public need.

A more important explanation, though, probably is public indifference; for, if enough people had asked enough persons to stand for the school board, we would have no dearth of candidates.

It is true that it is the duty of good citizens to run for these offices. But it also is the duty of us average voters to see that they do run.

You probably think we should have better schools in Macon County. The chances are you have said so many times.

Now is the time to do something about it.

Sit down and figure out who you think are the five men or women in the entire county best qualified for the job. If you can't think of five, think of four, or three, or two, or even one.

Then see, or write, those you think are best fitted to give us better schools, and ask them to run.

Undoubtedly Macon County has plenty of intelligent, conscientious, capable citizens who would make A-1 school board members; it is simply a question of deciding who they are, and then getting them to run.

You may think that members of the present board have done the best possible job under the circumstances, and that they are the five persons in Macon County best qualified for the board. If you do, tell them so, and ask them to run for re-nomination.

If you do not think so, then find someone you think will do better.

The board of education is the foundation upon which we must start to build a better county school system. If you and I do nothing about getting the best possible members on that board, then we will have no right to complain if our children have poor schools during the next two years.

Business Tip

If anybody wants to buy a weekly newspaper (and, strange as it may seem, a lot of people do), here's a suggestion that may save them hundreds, perhaps thousands, of dollars.

All week, in newspaper plants all over the country, enthusiasm about the edition just ahead grows steadily among members of the staff. The quantity of advertising is satisfactory; the news is good, and gets better as the press deadline nears; the editor feels he has written some editorials, this time, that folks will read. Yes, sir (and he rubs his hands), it's going to be a good paper; maybe, the staff agrees, the best edition the paper has ever put out. . . . They wait impatiently to see the first copies.

And then, when it's off the press, the editor sits down, pride in his heart, to read.

But here he finds a picture that doesn't show up

properly; there he notes an advertiser's signature left off the ad; on another page an important item didn't get in at all; he spots a bit of bad English, for which he can blame nobody but himself. And then the typographical errors begin to jump out of the page at him. (Funny how those darn things so often make sense—but always the wrong sense!)

That bubbling enthusiasm of a little while ago is quickly gone. His shoulders sag. He sticks a copy of the paper in his pocket, to re-read after supper, and goes home.

* * *

If you think the picture is overdrawn, ask the editor of this newspaper. Thursday morning, the day after publication, finds him ready to sell the paper at a rare bargain (by Friday or Saturday, the enthusiasm, and the paper's price, are mounting again.) Once a week, for more than two years, he has had that experience.

But last week the editorial psychology hit an all-time low. Along about Thursday morning somebody might have gotten The Press for nothing—might, in fact, have been paid a premium to take it.

For what should meet the eyes of the editor—and, alas! of the public—on page two but this remarkable report of a social event, the first such event the honor guest's health had permitted her to attend in sometime:

" . . . the party was the worst such event Mrs. Lyle has been able to attend in sometime."

And the hostess at the party in question was none other than the editor's mother.

* * *

What was the business tip?

That ought to be obvious; if you're going to buy a newspaper, make the deal the day after publication.

The Prospects of World Peace

By Dr. T. D. (Dick) Slagle

Excerpts from a paper read before a joint session of the Franklin and Highlands Rotary clubs here March 31.

THE one thing this world needs most is security against aggression. That was the object of the League of Nations organization, and the very fact that attempts have been made is encouraging. The principle of unity is sound, but confidence is being lost because it is becoming obvious that the United Nations organization is as ineffective as the League of Nations. Some of the outstanding weaknesses seem to be that: 1. the UN covers so many related and useful fields that attention is drawn from the main issue; 2. support of the organization is dependent on the unguaranteed promises of nations . . . ; and 3. the veto can be used by a single member.

The surprise attack, directed against civilians as well as armies, has been shown to be a useful means of declaring war and may be expected to be the standard method of the future. This is so destructive that prevention seems to be the only worth while answer, and that depends on convincing prospective aggressors that counter attack will be certain and so strong that the risk is not worth taking.

We Americans are able to forget war easily because we have suffered little as individuals, but the development of modern weapons leaves us vulnerable now, while our national wealth makes us the logical target of any power that feels reasonably sure of success.

We are apt to fall into the comfortable error of thinking that the atomic bomb is a weapon which will frighten away any attacker. But Russia has intimated that she has something more deadly than the bomb. While I admit I know nothing of what is being done along that line and am no specialist in the field, I believe that bacterial warfare offers an aggressive weapon with natural advantages that place atomic energy and the crossbow in the same category.

When the bomb explodes it does an immense amount of damage, but the area may be avoided and no further harm results, while bacteria reproduce themselves without limit and may cause a widespread epidemic.

Neither side can use an area which has recently been hit by an atomic bomb because of dangerous radiation, but after all or most of the inhabitants of a country have been killed by disease, a vaccinated army could take over without opposition and use the undamaged facilities.

Production of atomic weapons is still a very expensive and slow process and requires raw materials of which we probably have little, while bacteria can be grown with comparatively little expense by a few people and in any quantity. Furthermore, the limitations of the bomb are already pretty well known, while there are an unlimited number of kinds of bacteria and their short life span makes breeding for different characteristics easy and rapid. They may be developed to attack different tissues by preference and to produce either acute or chronic disease resistant to treatment by our best drugs.

Defense against atomic attack is no doubt difficult, but our protection against disease outbreaks is only developed against natural means of spread and would be completely ineffective against man-made epidemics.

Let us use, as an example, the organism that produces the so-called "bubonic" plague, a disease controlled with great care and expense by our Public Health service. When this germ is carried to the lungs in droplets from a coughing patient, it causes an acute and almost invariably fatal infection, and one that is very contagious. Suppose that on some peaceful night, a few airplanes passed to the windward side of some of our large American cities and sprayed a few tons of a concentrated culture of these plague organisms into the air in droplets of a liquid that would stay suspended for a considerable time. It is almost certain that a large number of the population would breathe enough germs to contact the infection and that the planes would get away without their mission being discovered.

After a few days there would be an explosive outbreak of an extremely deadly disease that would not be diagnosed for another day or two until sputum cultures were identified, and autopsies done on the early victims. By that time all our potent drugs would have been used and most medical and hospital personnel would be dying from the same infection contracted from the first cases.

The transportation system of which we are so proud would have carried exposed passengers to all parts of the country where the same process would be repeated before the transportation system itself would be knocked out and people in areas not raising their own food would die of starvation if not infection. Our country's defenses would be completely disorganized and a few vaccinated troops could overcome any resistance we might be able to offer.

I know all that sounds fantastic, but I believe it is possible and even probable as a means of starting the next war.

And there is good evidence that there are countries that would not hesitate to do that kind of work to get our uninjured national resources and keep us out of their way as a hindrance to plans for expansion.

So long as it is possible for minorities to use ignorant masses to fight for them, aggression will be tried, and so long as the given word of nations is the only binding force, there will be no security in joint defense agreements. There seems to be no general confidence in the ability of the UNO to insure against aggression and we cannot expect recovery and lasting peace without that.

As I have indicated, aggressors respect only superior force,

Smokey Says:



CARD OF THANKS

We wish to thank our many friends for the kindness and sympathy shown us during the sickness and at the time of the death of our mother. Also for the many floral tributes.

The Children of Mrs. Fannie Moses.

Political Calendar

Following is a list of dates on which important political events will occur in this election year:

- April 17 — Final date for primary filing by candidates for county offices. (State senate, representative, surveyor, five members of the county board of education.)
- May 1—Registration books open for primary election.
- May 8—Democratic precinct meetings.
- May 8 — Registration books open for primary.
- May 15—County Democratic convention and meeting of county Democratic executive committee.
- May 15—Registration books open for primary.
- May 20—State Democratic convention in Raleigh. Meeting of state Democratic executive committee.
- May 22—Primary registration challenge day.
- May 29—Primary election.
- November 2—General election.

and that is not provided by the loose defense pacts we have made so far. Treaties are kept only when convenient and no country could be expected to go to the extent of armed intervention against a powerful opponent merely because some distant ally was being overrun. . . . We still need bonds to make us keep our word in this stage of civilization.

But security is worth any effort and any cost. It is no longer something to be desired, it is necessary for life on this planet and there is probably not too much time. If the present international mess is the product of the efforts of past experts in the diplomatic field, then it is time for amateurs to get busy. We can hardly do worse, and our interest may encourage those who are now trying to make some progress.

It is evident that we need something more effective than the UNO, and it is my thesis that it is possible and practicable to create a union within the members of this group and complementary to it, but one that will give security and cannot be obstructed from within.

Fundamental causes of conflict are too much a part of human nature to be removed at this stage of evolution, and any form of international police would be too cumbersome to work in the foreseeable future. But the most probable precipitating causes of war are desire for gain and the wish to weaken a prospective enemy, and the means of counteracting these are obvious in theory at least. We may make the probability of gain by conquest too slight to be worth the gamble, and we may prove to nervous countries that they have nothing to fear from envious neighbors.

Pacts for collective security have proven so unreliable that no prudent government will depend on such flimsy support for national safety. We must have more tangible evidence of good faith. It is easy to make promises in peace time but hard to keep them when it means war. Bonds are used to insure discharge of obligations in business and it seems reasonable to suppose that groups of nations could use the same principle to guarantee cooperation under stress.

Security depends on available force. At present that means a coalition of such strength that no combination of aggressors can hope to win against it, and so organized that there can be no doubt it will function as a unit and in full strength if any member is attacked.

I propose a pact of peace-loving states, open to all on absolutely equal terms, in which every member agrees to come to the aid of every other in case the latter is attacked. These pledges would be backed by token military forces of every country stationed in each of the others' with the avowed purpose of aiding in the defense of the nation they occupy if its borders are violated. These units need not be large enough to materially aid in its physical defense, but would be placed at many points in the state in question so that attack would be against them as well as the native defenders and would automatically bring in their mother countries on the side of the victim.

The pact should be simplicity itself, binding members only to give support in case of attack from outside. It would be obvious that it could not act as an offensive force against any state and so could not cause logical objections on that ground. No veto could interfere with its operation, and no other kind of bond could give equal assurance that obligations would be fulfilled.

Invasion of a border protected by such a combination would be equivalent to declaration of war on all the nations represented by the token forces and would seem to be much more unlikely than the sudden swallowing of small nations that has become such a familiar pattern of expansion.

Suspicion would be avoided by the small number of occupation forces in any country and by the fact that all would be invited to enter the cooperative under the same rules; no veto, no restrictions, no obligations except joint protection.

This would require some exchange of military information of course and the more of this the better. A combined military staff would have to coordinate the planning and disposition of token units as well as direct operations in the improbable case of aggression.

Let me illustrate. Russia wants the Dardanelles but Turkey objects to the parting. So long as the UNO is off balance Russia has nothing to fear from other countries but she is delaying the coup until Turkey is softened up and her claim is taken for granted from sheer repetition. When all allied troops are out of the area, Turkey will be suddenly occupied under some pretext, or a communist revolution will be promoted which will amount to the same thing. What can be done about it then? It will be just another case of the stolen horse and the unlocked stable door: we will have lost a friend and prestige and we will have "peace in our time" as we have had for the past decade.

The same illustration would apply to Iraq, Iran, China and, in the past tense, to the late lamented Baltic States, the Red Balkins, and even further back it could be fitted into the picture of Germany, Italy and Japan and their unfortunate victims.

Would these countries have lost their independence if there had been a few hundred troops from Britain, France, the U. S. A., and the other democracies participating in their defense, at the borders, at the time of their occupation? Would Turkey and Greece need to fear their neighbors with that kind of protection?

Others' Opinions

CHAIN LETTERS

I may not remember correctly, but I thought I read something a year or two ago, when there was a regular "epidemic" of chain letters, that the Post Office department had a ruling against sending them through the mails. Evidently it hasn't stopped them. Anyway, I wonder how the writers, always anonymous, could be found out. It would no doubt take a fine piece of detective work to reach them.

One thing sure—good luck or bad luck—the chain is always broken when one of the letters reaches me. My waste paper basket never gets too full to be pushed down to take them in. The one I received last week stated that it was the "luck of London and had been around the world four times." I may have stopped it on its fifth time around, but I am not going to worry about the "bad luck" it warned me I'd have if I didn't keep it going.—Miss Beatrice Cobb in Morganton News-Herald.

Life is not so short but that there is always room for courtesy.—Emerson.