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Che Highlands Maconian

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WEIMAR JONES. Editor BOB S. SLOAN. Business Manager SUBSCRIPTION RATES Out-of-County-One Year

In Macon County-One Year. Three Months Single Copy

notices, cards of thanks, tributes of respect, by individuals, lodges, organizations or societies, will be regarded as advertising and inserted at usified advertising rates. Such notices will be marked "adv." in comptitue postal requirements.

Plain Common Sense

APRIL 9, 1953

It is just plain common sense, it seems to us, to say that :-

- 1. The General Assembly of North Carolina, meeting 300 or 400 miles away in Raleigh, is not the proper group to say what persons shall serve on Macon County's board of education.
- 2. The present system, under which members of the county board of education are nominated in the Democratic primary one spring and appointed by the General Assembly the next spring, has everything to be said against it and nothing to recommend it-it is cumbersome and long drawn-out, it divides rather than centers responsibility, and it creates confusion and uncertainty.
- 3. Considered purely from the viewpoint of partisan politics, the present system is bad. It tends to disfranchise all Republican voters, insofar as naming a school board is concerned. And any such disfranchisement of a large group of voters ultimately is sure to discredit the party responsiblein this case, the Democratic party.
- 4. There is nothing partisan about the problems of administering this county's public schools, and the membership of the school board should be determined without reference to the political affiliations of the persons chosen to serve. The governing boards of the towns of Franklin and Highlands are elected on a non-partisan basis, and the plan has proved highly successful.

In short, common sense suggests that the members of the county board of education should be elected outright by all the voters of the county, and that the choice should be made on a basis of individual fitness rather than political affiliation.

Macon's Rep. Walter Dean has introduced a bill in the General Assembly that seeks to do just that,

Mr. Dean's bill probably is not perfect. Many persons, no doubt, could suggest improvements. Two years' experience with it as law may show the need for amendments.

But this is a first step in the right direction. As such, it deserves the active support of good citizens, regardless of party, who want better schools and better local government.

If the people of this county are indifferent about this matter, Mr. Dean's bill may die in committee. If, on the other hand, enough good citizens are interested enough to write or telegraph Mr. Dean or this district's senator, Dr. J. H. Crawford, or the chairman of the house education committee, to which the bill has been referred, the measure can be enacted into law.

The Grand Jury Report

It has been the somewhat amusing experience of Franklin Press reporters to find that they could safely write and set in type a grand jury report before the grand jury is even chosen.

For one grand jury after another, in reporting on county institutions, etc., says the same things.

In fact, the wording of the reports is sometimes so nearly identical we have even wondered if, on occasion, the grand irrors simply went back to the court records and copied the report of the preceding grand jury.

That situation is amusing, but it also is disturbing. It tends to discredit local government in general, and the grand jury system in particular.

And so we express the hope that next week's grand jury, if it sees fit to repeat recommendations that have been made court after court and year after year, also will give thought to means of seeing that its recommendations are heeded. Otherwise, it might as well save its time and breath.

It Should Be Repealed

Two weeks ago, the N. C. General Assembly, in haste and without either committee study or giving the public an opportunity to be heard, wrote into law an important amendment to the state budget act.

That act for 28 years has provided that the Assembly's joint appropriations committee and its sub-committees should hold open meetings. The amendment authorizes the appropriations committee and its sub-committees to meet in secret ses-

Those are the committees, it is important to remember, that determine how the state's threequarters of a billion dollars of tax money shall be spent during the biennium. It is worth remembering, too, that the appropriations bill is so complicated it must, of necessity, be left largely to committee. And it is a matter of record that it is rare indeed for a major change to be made in an appropriations bill after it comes out of the sub-committee. In other words, the sub-committee pretty-well writes the appropriations law.

Under the amendment, it is writing that law in secret sessions.

That fact aside, it is a highly dangerous thing for a legislature to write into law specific authori, zation for secret sessions. It is a precedent that is especially dangerous at a time when the rights of freedom of information and freedom of thought are under attack in many places and in many ways. It is the kind of precedent that could be-and in other lands has been-the beginning of the end of

Because those things unquestionably are true, the General Assembly surely will give serious consideration to the proposal now before it that this secrecy amendment be repealed.

Letters

MEN'S STYLES

Dear Weimar:

I have just read your "Strictly Personal" column in The Press of the 26th. inst. and in which you referred to the styles which women adopt.

I, too, have given this matter some thought, but my critical attitude quickly passes when I think of some of the styles men have adopted. To use your expression, "once upon a time", (and you and I remember it!) men wore trousers that were termed "full peg" and I could name men in Franklin who have seen those full peg trousers adorned with pearl buttons on the cuffs and along the side seams. Have you forgotten the button shoes, "pistol leg" trousers and the derby hat? I have a photograph of my Grandfather Fouts and a Mr. Cagle, who was later a United States marshal and killed in the "dark corner" while trying to make an arrest. This photograph made by Uncle Green Trotter, shows the long handle-bar mustache. After all, I believe men are just as vain as the women when it comes to styles, make-up, etc.

Please do not get the idea that I am reminiscing as I write this, because to do so might be an indication of advancing years!

Cordially yours,

Burnsville, N. C.

DOVER R. FOUTS.

Others' Opinions

YOU READ A NEWSPAPER

(Mocksville Enterprise)

You pick up your newspaper. The dateline on it reads 1964 or maybe it's 1965-the date is of little consequence.

You glance at the bulletin released by the public relations office of the N. C. General Assembly that is in session in Ral-

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STRICTLY-

PERSONAL

By WEIMAR JONES

to retire from public office.

board I have had the opportunity, as few other persons could have, to know how many times the retiring chairman of the county board of education has been out before daylight to ride a school see if a school furnace was be- terrific public pressure. ing properly fired, and if so, to had occasion to observe his pa- efforts

This is my strictly personal hours of his own time to listenbouquet to a man who is about ing to complaints and suggestions and discussions. I have He is singled out through no seen him working as a board disrespect for others who have minority-often a minority of served with him and who also one; battling the majority on are preparing to retire. It just issues he considered fundamenso happens that I am personal- tal, but working smoothly with ly acquainted with his efforts the same majority on matters as I could not possibly be with involving no major issue of those of other members of his principle. And I have seen him with the heavy responsibility the chairmanship carried-especially during the interim between superintendents.

Undoubtedly, he made mistakes. But through his six-year stint. I have been impressed bus and learn for himself if with his determination to do route or other changes were what he thought was the right needed and practicable, or to thing-sometimes in the face of

And so I, as one citizen, take try to learn why it did not this opportunity to acknowledge provide adequate heat. I have a debt to Bob S. Sloan for his -tience as he gave hours upon schools in Macon County.



Our Great America & by Woody &

'It's People Of N. C. Assembly Slapped Down

"The General Assembly, in its haste and determination to slap down capitol reporters, really slapped down the people of North

That is the central idea in a statement issued last week by the board of directors of the North Carolina Press Association. The statement referred to the Legislature's action in repealing that provision of a 28-year old law requiring the Joint Appropriations Committee and its sub-committees to hold open sessions.

Following the repeal, a fortnight ago, the sub-committee began holding all of its sessions in secret.

The Press Association board of directors, at an emergency called meeting in Raleigh Tuesday of last week, adopted a resolution and issued the statement.

The resolution reads:

"Be it resolved by the board of directors of the North Carolina Press Association, in special emergency meeting assembled in Raleigh, N. C., on this, March thirty-first, 1953:

"The board of directors of the North Carolina Press Association respectfully petitions the General Assembly to repeal the law permitting censorship of budget deliberations by the Joint Appropriations Committee and its sub-committees.

"The board also requests that a public hearing be held, after due notice, on the bill to repeal the secrecy law.

"The board commends the action of the capitol newspaper reporters in resisting this or any other infringement of the right of the people to know how their public affairs are managed." Meanwhile, a bill to repeal the new secrecy law, was introduc-

ed in the House the latter part of last week The statement of the Association's board, outlining what hap-

pened and citing reasons for the repeal of the secrecy law, fol-

North Carolina General Assembly in legalizing secret sessions been scrupulously obeyed, but its joint appropriations committee and subcommittees.

"We have given careful, earnest, calm study to all of the available facts and considerations involved.

'Our organization represents some 200 member newspapers. Moreover, it appears that every newspaper in North Carolina, with a few exceptions, each speaking for itself, is of the same mind as all the others on this issue.

"But in what we say here, we speak as citizens—a group of whose profession daily reminds its members of the importance, in a democracy, of the free flow of information.

cause of a larger right—the right of the people to know.

"This issue would be the same, and equally important, if there one newspaper in North Carolina; if the people of this state were dependent for their information on pony exor carrier pigeon, or word-of-mouth report.

"Indeed, what the newspapers and what this board may say and other freedoms—freedoms is relatively unimportant. The that can live only where there facts are important. The facts

speak loudest and most clearly.
"Any honest and objective consideration of those facts the conclusion that, in the action last Thursday:

acted hastily.

The votes, in both houses, the rules; on a voice vote, with of its virtues is speed. little debate, with no commit- "The best government, the are on their way on a visit to tee study, and without a public most just government, and the England. It is said that quite a little debate, with no commitroute to Raleigh.

2. In haste, the General Asappropriations committee and ions. sub-committees to hold open sessions.

porary situation—as last Thurs- rescinded. day's amendment was but as a "By such action, the Legis-necessary and just part of the lature would be doing a service law providing for a state budg- to the cause of good governple's right to know not only dom. how their tax money is appor-

"We deplore the action of the fore had been seriously questioned. It may not always have we suggest that one violation of a law does not justify another; nor do we repeal a law simply because it sometimes is broken.

"3. The General Assembly set a dangerous precedent.

"If it is right for a commit-tee of the North Carolina legislature to decide, behind closed doors, how some three-quarters of a billion dollars of the taxpayers' money is to be spent. why is it not right for every county and municipal board in this state to do the public's

business in secret? 'The truth is the General As-

sembly, in its haste and determination to slap down capitol reporters, really slapped down the people of North Carolina "And let us make it clear that That is what majorities in both we claim for the press neither houses did. But be it said to infallibility nor special privilege. their credit, a small but cour-We make our share of mistakes. ageous minority had the hardi-And such rights as we have as hood to speak out in protest a free press, we have solely be- against this violation of both good sense and basic freedom.

"The annoying quest of reporters, in their role as the people's information representatives, for all the facts, is a necessary part of the democratic process. It is so recognized by both our federal and state constitutions. And we submit that this annoyance is a small price indeed to pay for our political is full freedom of the mind.

The members of the appropriations sub-committee have defended their action in meetleads straight and inevitably to ing behind closed doors by saying that they can work more speedily in secrecy. Whether The General Assembly this be true or untrue is of no consequence, for it has never been claimed for the democratwere taken under suspension of ic form of government that one

"The best government, hearing—the latter, despite the only government that governs few old benedicts in Franklin right, is that government vised that telegraphic requests which reflects the matured for such a hearing were en judgment of the majority of its citizens

sembly made a basic change in citizens can be trusted, to disthe budget act, which for 28 tinguish truth from error, and lin. years had required the joint to make wise and right decis-

"Last Thursday's legislative ssions. action, dealing with a matter "This provision was written of vital importance, set a daninto the law not to meet a tem- gerous precedent. It should be

as a protection of the peo- ment, and to the cause of free-

News Making As It Looks To A Maconite . By BOB SLOAN

The recent move concerning the local forest service here is a hard blow. It's two most im-mediate effects will be seen more in the future than now. With the supervision of the forest being in the hands of people in Asheville, the Nantahala forest development problems won't receive the attention that they have been getting. Our resources won't be developed as quickly or as carefully.

The second damaging blow will be felt when the time comes, and it will come, that it is necessary for the United States to have a public works program again. Here, we will really be needing money, cash, but I am afraid that most of the funds will be spent over on

A third loss which will show immediately and through the years, is the loss of some of our finest citizenship and community leaders. The personnel of the forest service has always been of the highest type.

Frankly, I doubt that we can do anything to change the decision of the officials concerning this move. I deplore the attitude which says that as citizens we should become another pressure group trying to keep a pay roll in our community when at the same time many of us criticize bitterly out of the other side of our mouth all forms of government spending describing it as all wasteful and all government workers as parasites. If you don't believe government spending, you should uphold this recent ac-

The forest service is one of the finest examples of people performing a function through the instrument of government, which they could not do as well as individuals. If the Smoky Mountain national park was in the hands of a corporation or a private individual would it perform its function of conservation of our water, game, and timber resources and providing recreation for millions as well? No, for example, the cost would make it prohibitive to most of us as a recreation area. Take for example, how many people can visit Sun Valley, Idaho, a privately developed recreation area, as compared with the number who visit the Smokies. Because it is so evident that the forest service performs a function which can best be handled by a government agency I hate to see it cut anywhere, here or in the state of Washington. I think this is the way we should look at this recent action rather than that it was just a blow to Franklin.

Remember, that this may well be only the first step. There are bills in Washington which would

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Do You Remember?

(Looking backward through the files of The Press)

50 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Our citizens waked up Saturday morning to find a young blizzard making itself familiar with all who opened doors. Snow, wind, and sleet were in evidence.

A new mail route has been established on Nantahala from Aquone to the Buck Creek corundum mines, and a postoffice opened at the mines. The name of the office is "Corundum".

Miss Nona Porter and her little nephew, Robert Crawford, arrived from Asheville Friday evening

25 YEARS AGO

Felix is for Al. How Does Zeb

Mrs. Lyles Harris and children envying Mr. Harris his

Mrs. F. S. Johnston, who spent "The majority of American the winter in Florida, has returned to her home in Frank-

10 YEARS AGO

The Rev. S. R. Crockett, of Hazelwood, was in town Tuesday after visiting his farm on Cartoogechaye.

Roy C. Gibson left last week for Canton, Ohio, to work in a defense plant. Mrs. Gibson and daughter will join him later.

Prof. and Mrs. B. E. Fernow, "We believe these things. And of Clemson College, have been tioned, but why it is so appor- we are convinced that most spending several days at their in behalf of better tioned. The necessity and right-members of this Assembly, in cottage on Mirror Lake. (High-in Macon County.

ness of this provision never be-their hearts, believe them, too." lands).