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JUNE 24, 1953

There Went Out A Decree

And there went out a decree from Caesar . . .

Today we have no Caesars in America, but the decrees that go out from Washington apparently are as irrevocable as those of the Caesars of old.

One of the latest is that from the U. S. Forest Service decreeing that the Nantahala National Forest be merged with the Pisgah, and all indications are that the government in Washington proposes to go ahead with this merger, with complete disregard both of the wishes of citizens and of logic.

From the viewpoint of logic, the most damning indictment of the proposal comes from the Forest Service itself.

The plan, when it was announced last spring, was explained as an "economy" move.

Real economy means getting either more for the same dollars or as much for fewer dollars. On that basis, will this move be real economy?

Sometime ago a local committee—John M. Archer, Jr., Mark L. Dowdle, R. S. Jones, and Holland McSwain—named to try to keep the Nantahala headquarters in Franklin, asked the Forest Service for certain information. The reply, a 2,500-word statement, came from Mr. Charles A. Connaughton, regional forester in Atlanta.

The facts and figures given in Mr. Connaughton's own statement leave unanswered many questions about any real savings in dollars, and he admits, in the last paragraph of his letter, that "we know we will lose something (in quality of supervision) that comes with the location of the forest supervisor's office in Franklin".

In letters to Senators Hoey and Smith and Representatives Shuford and Jonas, the committee points out the inconsistency of item after item in the regional forester's letter. A few of those items will serve to illustrate:

Item: The regional forester suggests a savings in office rent will be made, since no additional office space will have to be rented in Asheville for the enlarged administrative staff. This despite the fact that the Pisgah headquarters is now being operated in "four small offices" in the Asheville post office and that the supervisor's office is a judge's chambers, which of course have to be vacated at certain periods. "We cannot believe", suggests the committee, "that efficient work can be done by crowding additional employes into these small rooms".

Item: In 1920, when the Nantahala Forest contained 226,467 acres, it was considered necessary to have a forest supervisor on the forest; today, when the forest contains nearly double that acreage—443,978 acres, according to the regional forester's figures—it is proposed to supervise the Nantahala from 75 miles away in Asheville.

Item: To accomplish part of the dollar savings, it is proposed to reduce the number of those traveling on the two forests from 12 to eight. This, it is anticipated, will cut transportation costs. The committee quite properly raises the question of whether eight men can do the work of 12, and do approximately half of it from a distance of 75 miles; and the further question of how transportation costs can be appreciably reduced when the operating base is moved 75 miles away.

Item: A part of the savings is anticipated from the closing of the Wayah Equipment Depot. There is no evidence that account is taken of the added cost of transporting equipment to and from Asheville for repairs.

Item: The regional forester's letter states that all present employes of the Pisgah and Nantahala Forests have full work loads. But it is proposed to eliminate two mechanics and a mechanic's helper on

the Nantahala and have their work done by adding two mechanics at Asheville—75 miles away.

Item: All of the personnel economies, in fact, are based on the theory that the work now being done by 12 men, all with full work loads, can, by some miracle, be equally well performed by six, with the handicap of distance added.

Item: In the Nantahala, a major use of the forest is recreation. To provide recreation, the government has spent large sums of money. This is a type of activity that requires close and constant supervision, if the investment is to be maintained, and if the maximum use is to be enjoyed. Consolidation of the two forests' headquarters at Asheville, 75 miles away, with a reduction in personnel, inevitably must result in deterioration of the government's investment in recreation areas and in this use of the forest. How important this use is is indicated by the fact that more than two million persons visited the Nantahala last year.

And these are only a few of the inconsistencies that could be pointed out.

Somebody in Washington drew a chart or a diagram or a graph, and came up with a figure of approximately \$40,000 to be saved. (That is now reduced by the Forest Service's own break-down to a maximum of \$31,415). And so the order went out.

There is another item, not touched on in Mr. Connaughton's statement, worth considering:

It is said that the dollar savings is demanded immediately, this very year, by a cut in the Forest Service's appropriation for the coming year. The question then arises:

How much of the maximum of \$31,415 it is proposed to save this year by the merger will be consumed by the cost of transferring the Nantahala headquarters from Franklin to Asheville?

But even more damning than the National Forest Service's poor logic is its cynical disregard of the people it serves.

The national forests, of course, are operated for all the people of the nation, but it appears to be a settled policy that the people of the area in which a public domain lies are due some special consideration.

It is worth noting, in this connection, that the men in the Forest Service cannot—and most of them would not—take all the credit for the success of the Nantahala Forest; a large share of that credit belongs to the people of the area. Without the whole-hearted cooperation of the vast majority of the people in this region, it would not have been possible to operate the Nantahala Forest. In a very real sense, it has been a partnership affair, between the forest experts, on one hand, and the people of the area, on the other.

But was it felt necessary to consult the second partner when this important change was proposed?

The people of this area not only were not consulted; they were not even given a detailed explanation of the reasons for the change, until it was specifically sought by a committee named at a mass meeting!

Instead of consultation or explanation, there went out a decree from Washington . . .

It's a funny world! Take, for instance, the matter of telling the truth.

All of us were taught by our parents to tell the truth. We were told that truth-telling is an un-mixed virtue.

Yet it is for telling the truth that newspapers are criticized most. Every newspaper, sooner or later, has the strange experience of being made to feel that nothing is quite so radical, so revolutionary, so downright reprehensible, as putting the truth in type.

Others' Opinions

NOT GEOGRAPHICAL

(Kingston Free Press)

Senator Wayne Morse, of Oregon, has broken the Huey Long filibuster record and that proves that idle talk is not confined to the magnolia and bayou country.

MAMMA SPOKE FIRST

(Waynesville Mountaineer)

Cpl. Pritchard Smith of the Highway Patrol, and Chief Roy Stephens of Hazelwood, were making a routine check on a matter, when they saw a small boy playing close to the edge of the highway.

The two officers immediately sensed the danger of the boy being so close to the road, and turned and went back to where he was innocently playing in the washed sand.

One of the officers approached the youngster and suggested

OUR DEMOCRACY — by Mat

IT'S GOOD TO BE A KID IN AMERICA
—PARTICULARLY NOW THAT SCHOOLS OUT.

IT'S A HAPPY WORLD OF BIKES AND ROLLER SKATES AND COWBOYS, OF BALL-PLAYING AND FISHING AND DOLLS AND SWIMMING AND LAUGHTER.

AND PARTICULARLY TODAY, WHEN MEDICAL RESEARCH, BY PRACTICALLY ELIMINATING SOME OF THE CHILDHOOD DISEASES AND MAKING OTHERS LESS SERIOUS, HAS GIVEN INCREASING HEALTH, STRENGTH AND LAUGHTER TO THIS WONDERFUL WORLD OF CHILDREN — CAREFREE KIDS TODAY, RESPONSIBLE CITIZENS TOMORROW.

he go back into the yard and not play close to the edge of the highway. "Some driver might run over you, and break an arm," the officer said.

This did not seem to impress the boy, and then the officer said: "If you don't move, I might have to take you to jail."

The lad looked up, but only slightly more interested, and said: "You can't do that, because my mama won't let me leave the place."

CAN BE STOPPED

(Laurinburg Exchange)

Speeding and drunk driving could be stopped, or reduced to a minimum, if people really wanted it. It could be done in more ways than one, and everybody knows it could be done. One way to do it is to require car manufacturers to build vehicles which could not be driven in excess of 50 or 60 miles an hour. That would be attacking the problem at its source. It is a simple matter of engineering and mechanics. But actually instead of limiting the speed of their cars, manufacturers stress speed and power more than anything else, and year after year, season after season, come out with blaring announcements of the new power and speed they have put under the hood, as if power and speed alone constituted the acme of perfection in the automobile engineering field.

Another way to stop speed and drunk driving is to get the right kind of laws on the books and then see to it that they are not violated, distorted, or evaded. A step in the right direction was taken last week when the House of Representatives passed a bill which would automatically take a truck driver's right to drive away from him if he were found guilty of driving in excess of 60 miles an hour, and for drivers of passenger cars the same rule would apply if they go faster than 70 miles an hour and are caught.

Laws like that would do the trick if they were enforced, and the devices of reducing charges to lesser offenses, and rigging indictments were eliminated.

When public sentiment demand is, and when the authorities want to, they can stop drunk driving and speeding on the highways of North Carolina. To say that it can't be done is begging the question. All that is needed is a little stern medicine prescribed and given at the proper time to the right people.

STRICTLY

PERSONAL

By WEIMAR JONES

It's the little things that stick in people's minds, and influence their attitudes and actions throughout their lives.

All of us, at some time or other, have experienced the truth of that; and I had it strikingly illustrated again last week in Chapel Hill.

I was casually introduced to a man, a native of Winston-Salem who now makes his home in New York. He did the conventional thing of asking me where I was from, and when I said, Franklin, his whole face lit up.

"O, Franklin! Franklin is one of my pleasant memories!"

"I have had only one contact with your town, and that was very brief; but I have always remembered it."

"It was about nine years ago. My family and I were passing through Franklin and decided to stop there for the night."

"I couldn't tell you now where we stopped, either the

name of the family or the location; but what I can tell you is it was one of the pleasantest nights we ever spent away from home.

"The room was not elaborate, but it was so clean, so attractive, so home-like—there were roses on the bedroom table, I remember; and the people were so courteous and so genuinely interested in making us comfortable—we have never forgotten it."

"Even today, when we start on a trip, we all hope we will find another place like Franklin."

There was nothing spectacular about what somebody here in Franklin did to make a traveling family comfortable; but the spirit of the home did something to the spirit of its guests, so that they have been grateful to Franklin ever since.

Such a little thing. But look at its effect!

News Making As It Looks To A Maconite

By BOB SLOAN

At the time of this writing, there are it seems to me, more what you might call "Mixed Blessing" news items than in a long time. By that I mean there are many incidents which seem to indicate one thing, but when looked at carefully have a different meaning.

Here are a few examples: Locally, no doubt there was considerably rejoicing Sunday morning when we read that the new highway commissioner would place first emphasis on the completion of the highway relocation from here to Dillsboro. This will make the road from here to Asheville easier to travel which is a great need. However, Mr. Buchanan may now forget the third part of this project—the link between here and the Georgia state line. Had we gotten this section first, we would have gotten the whole thing because the new highway commissioner would not forget the link of the road that ran through his own county — it just isn't human nature.

People are prone to exclaim that the TVA robs a section of income because it doesn't pay taxes on the land it acquires. However, did you know that TVA and its power distributors will pay approximately \$8,300,000 in taxes or in lieu of taxes to state, county, and municipal governments in the fiscal year ending June 30. The TVA officials say the amount is more than five million dollars more than former property taxes on all reservoir land and on all privately owned power properties acquired by TVA and the distributing agencies. Looking still further, however, I imagine that had every TVA dam been built by private power the tax income would be much larger than the above figure, but there is great doubt in my mind that all of the dams would have been built except by a governmental agency for many years to come.

Who would have thought that the Eisenhower administration which theme songed its election campaign on the idea that the government should not go into competition with private business would have done just this in an entirely new field—the money market. By raising the interest rate that government

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Do You Remember?

(Looking backward through the files of The Press)

50 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

The safe for the new bank arrived here yesterday evening at 6 o'clock. It left the depot at Dillsboro on Friday morning, May 29th, and was on the road twelve days. Protracted rains and breakdowns caused the delay. It came in drawn by ten horses and mules.

Rev. Geo. H. Crowell, of High Point, N. C., was here from Saturday to yesterday. He is Supt. of the High Point Graded Schools.

Misses Ethel, Jessie, and Bessie Deal, after a month's visit to friends in Asheville and other places, returned home Friday.

25 YEARS AGO

That Macon County's high school located at Franklin is the most economically administered of any high school in the state is made plain by State School Facts, a pamphlet published semi-monthly by the state superintendent of public instruction.

Plans for the establishment of the Athens Business college at Franklin are being formed here this week by R. E. Carter, president of the college.

Many of the tourist hotels in Franklin are booked to the limit for July and August. It now looks like this will be the best tourist season in many years.

10 YEARS AGO

Charles Melchar, for five years supervisor of the Nantahala National Forest, with headquarters in Franklin, has been promoted to the regional office of the U. S. National Forest Service in Atlanta, Ga.

The Rev. James T. Gillespie, Ph.D., professor of Bible at Agnes Scott College, Decatur, Ga., has arrived in Franklin to fill the pulpit of the Franklin Presbyterian church, temporarily.