

The Franklin Press

and

The Highlands Maconian

Entered at Post Office, Franklin, N. C., as second class matter
Published every Thursday by The Franklin Press
Franklin, N. C. Telephone 24

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| One Year \$3.00 | One Year \$2.50 |
| Six Months 1.75 | Six Months 1.75 |
| Three Months 1.00 | Three Months 1.00 |

OCTOBER 15, 1953

Obvious

North Carolina recently dropped down into 45th place among the states in per capita income. For the first time in decades, the Tar Heel state ranks below South Carolina in this important index of progress.

Why this slide down the toboggan? More importantly, how can we reverse it?

"More and bigger factories!"

That shouted answer comes, in unison, from North Carolina leaders in industry, business, and politics.

"North Carolina needs, it must have, more industries. More industrialization is the solution.

"That is obvious."

Is it?

North Carolina was one of the first of the Southern states to go in for industrialization. For decades, it has been one of the more highly industrialized states in the region. Today, according to the Blue Book of Southern Progress, it is second only to Texas, among Southern states, in industrial development.

But its per capita income, meanwhile, has slipped downward, by comparison with other states!

To be more specific, consider what has happened in the two Carolinas:

North Carolina long has been far ahead of South Carolina in industrialization. In 1939, the Blue Book reports, this state had 3,225 manufacturing plants employing 270,000 persons. By 1952 the totals had jumped to 7,400 plants employing 449,000 workers.

In 1939 South Carolina had 1,331 plants employing 126,000 workers. In 1952 the figures were 3,100 plants and 224,000 workers.

In the 13-year period, in other words, North Carolina has more than doubled the number of its industrial plants and has almost doubled the number employed; while South Carolina today has not even caught up with North Carolina's 1939 industrial development.

But South Carolina—along with other states—has gone ahead of North Carolina in per capita income!

Industrialization has been accompanied by loss of ground in comparative per capita income. So, say this state's leaders, the answer is more and bigger industries! That, they add, is obvious.

Actually, it is so obviously un-obvious as to raise a question about the omniscience, if not the sincerity, of Governor Umstead and his political, industrial, and business associates.

What is the solution of the problem of this state's relative drop in per capita income?

This newspaper doesn't even pretend to have the answer. But, we respectfully suggest, Umstead and Company do not have the answer, either.

That, we might add, is obvious.

If you doubt it, consult their own statistics!

Newspapers---And You

Editorials appeared in newspapers all over the land, during last week's observance of National Newspaper Week, about the relation of the press to the citizen. But this relationship, like others, is a two-way affair. What about the relation of the citizen to the newspapers?

It would be only natural for the average reader to ask:

"What responsibility have I about the press?"

Perhaps the best way to get an answer to that question is to ask another one:

Why did the Founding Fathers of this nation

write into the very first amendment of the Constitution a provision that the press should be free?

Was it because newspaper people are entitled to special privileges, in their own right. Of course not! That would have been in violation of the entire spirit of the Constitution.

For the answers to both questions—the question of why the average citizen has a stake in and a responsibility for a press that is free, and the question of why the Constitution provided that it should be free—it is necessary to look no farther than the Preamble to the Constitution.

First, there is that opening phrase: "We, the people . . ."

It is not the people in Washington or in Raleigh or in courthouses and city halls who own and govern this land; the Constitution says plainly it is the people—all the people.

And it is not "the people" merely in a general and theoretical sense, but "WE, the people": a government not just of all the people, but a government of and by us.

It follows that how good a government we have, and how long this government of ours lasts, depends, in the final analysis, on the character and the intelligence of the individual citizen.

To the men who wrote the Constitution, it must have been plain that the people could act intelligently, in passing on issues and in selecting their representatives, only if there was full and open information, and free discussion, pro and con; and that the only way for the people to get such information and discussion was through a free press:

Thus the press was given freedom because, and only because, of a larger freedom—the right of the people to know.

A second phrase in the Constitution's Preamble, a phrase setting forth one of the reasons for the Constitution and the federal union, sheds more light on the matter: To "secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity."

How can you and I and other average citizens "secure the blessings of liberty"—the right to freedom of worship and of thought and of speech? How can we make sure they are not being lost by default or betrayed by intent, except through a free press that tells the people what their servants, the holders of public office, are doing; and goes a step farther and keeps the people informed about the pressures being brought by the selfish groups that always find freedom inconvenient, sometimes dangerous, to their own ends?

The press is free, then, for two reasons: First, because the citizen has the right, and the need, to know, so he can think and act intelligently; and second, as a safeguard against the loss or theft of his other and larger freedoms.

A free press thus is something in which every citizen has a stake, and for which every citizen has a responsibility, if he is to "secure the blessings of liberty" for himself and his posterity.

* * *

If and when Americans lose their freedoms, they will not lose them all at once, dramatically, but a little at a time, almost imperceptibly.

And the first they are in danger of losing is their right to know. Once that is sufficiently restricted, it will be easy for their other freedoms to be taken from them — because they will have no way of knowing they are being taken. And whether they are taken by Fascists or Communists, or by well-meaning people who think a good end justifies any means, the result will be the same!

There are at least two ways this right to know, and the freedom of the press that makes it possible, can be lost:

It can, and probably will, be lost if the press becomes so irresponsible as no longer to deserve to be free.

And it can, and probably will, be lost if the average citizen is too indifferent to be willing to fight for it.

He may have to fight for it.

For today, all over the world, there is a gradual but unceasing effort to limit the people's right to know. It is evident not only in Russia and in Europe, but in Washington and Raleigh and many courthouses and city halls.

It was dramatized for North Carolinians last spring when the General Assembly repealed a 25-year old statute requiring legislative appropriations committees to hold all meetings open to the public, and then enacted a bill specifically authorizing committees to meet in secret.

When it enacted the secrecy law, the 1953 Legislature said to the people of North Carolina: "It is

not for you to know how and why we reach our decisions in appropriating your tax dollars for your institutions and agencies."

And what happened in Raleigh last spring was only one of many straws in the wind!

Bouquet

This newspaper often has expressed the opinion that school accreditation sometimes is over-rated, in comparison with the importance of the actual work done in the classroom. For, while accreditation is based on things that can be measured, there is no way to measure the work of a good teacher.

Nonetheless, accreditation is recognition of a large and varied number of accomplishments, each looking toward better classroom work, and as such is something highly desirable. Accordingly, The Press makes its bow to the Otto community for being the first in this county to win accreditation for its elementary school.

That the professional school people had a lot to do with it goes without saying, but they were the first to give the lion's share of the credit to the people of the community, working through their P. T. A.

If the Otto P. T. A. never accomplished anything else, this achievement would have justified its existence, many times over. And of course this type of thing, important and worth-while as it is, is not the primary function of a parent-teacher association. The P. T. A.'s greatest contribution always is in bringing about a better understanding, between parents and teachers, of how best to meet the physical, mental, and spiritual needs of the child.

Others' Opinions

ONLY ONE TIME

(Harnett County News)

Last week a big bulldozer machine was clearing away the last remains of the old Bank of Lillington building. A crowd of citizens were standing around "kibitzing" the job when one of them observed:

"I'll bet you one thing, I'll bet you that's the first time that bank has been bulldozed."

HELPING HAND

(Jacksonville News and Views)

At the market, a store owner and manufacturer were arguing loudly and excitedly about a deal when a friend of the buyer came by. He called the man over and said:

"I can't understand you, Irving. In all the years I've known you, you've never once paid a bill. You know you're not going to pay the man anyway, so why argue about the price?"

"I know," answered Irving, "but he's such a nice fellow. I'd like to keep his losses down."

Poetry

Editor
EDITH DEADERICK ERSKINE
Weaverville, North Carolina

GROWN UP SPRING

An autumn day is a nameless thing—
This or that, the leaves' last fling
But here's the christening I would bring:
Vacation time for a grown up spring.

EDITH DEADERICK ERSKINE.

STRICTLY

PERSONAL

By WEIMAR JONES

CHAPEL HILL. — Have you ever suddenly found yourself deaf?

I did recently, and it is not a pleasant experience.

A little ear infection, plus the medicine the doctor put in, plus the cotton he crammed in on top of the medicine, left me almost totally deaf in one ear. The week that lasted was one of the longest in my life. And the fact I was among strangers didn't make it any easier!

Never before had I realized how necessary, to proper hearing, are both ears. I found myself, in a group, catching a phrase here, another phrase there, and rarely a whole sentence anywhere:

" . . . that's what he said." (Well, I wondered, what did he say? and who said it? . . . you know who he is.) (I might, I thought to myself, if I had caught the name.) And . . . "Mr. Jones . . . (Golly, they're talking about me. What in heck did they say? . . . and what I am supposed to say?)

I found myself craning my good ear first this way and then that; but always a trifle too late . . . or only to have the sound blurred by another one, reaching me from an angle. And even when something

was said directly to me, once or twice I smiled pleasantly and said "yes" . . . only to realize, from the quickly raised eyebrow of the person addressing me, that the answer should have been "no!"

I was first annoyed with myself; then—quite unreasonably—with the people around me. And after a while I felt tired out trying to concentrate on the sounds that seemed to come from all sides, but almost none of which were clear cut. And my mind began to wander . . .

This experience, short as it was, made me think of the thousands who have to put up with this sort of thing all the time. And I suddenly realized that deafness is perhaps worse than blindness.

That is true, I believe, not because deafness really is a worse affliction than blindness, but because of the way people react to the two. We are all sympathetic to the blind; but we make jokes about the deaf. For some strange reason, we give the person who is blind a sort of halo or heroism, while we are just annoyed with the deaf.

And thinking back over my own actions in the presence of persons who hear poorly, I felt ashamed. Because it seems to

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News Making As It Looks To A Maconite

By BOB SLOAN

Naturally there is a lot of talk going on about the football situation here at Franklin High School. There are always hundreds of people who over night become expert coaches. They would do this and they would do that and the only thing they can agree on is to give a losing coach the dickens. I would like to take this opportunity to remind people of the following facts which, if they have stopped to think, they remember as well as I do. Milburn Atkins didn't win a game one year and two years later with virtually the same boys he missed the championship by one touchdown. Bill Crawford had a team beaten 72 to 14 once but later he produced some of the finest teams Franklin has ever had.

To all these fans who would do this and do that or who want to get rid of this person or get rid of that person I would like to make one suggestion as to how we can help the situation.

Let's tell our boys and our coach that win, lose or draw, we are solidly behind them. If they make mistakes—so what, don't we all make mistakes. The biggest mistake we can make is to be out here publicly criticizing and sniping at our boys and coach instead of being 100 per cent behind them. I don't know whether the public quarterbacking will stop, but I have faith in our boys and I believe their play will improve. Let's put as much effort into supporting them as they are putting out on the field and I feel sure things will improve. Remember its STICK WITH FRANKLIN, WIN, LOSE OR DRAW.

Soon the Christmas shopping season will be here. Let's start right now to do our shopping and let's do it at home.

Each year our merchants go out on a limb to invest thousands of dollars to offer a wide selection of merchandise for the public. If we would really trade at home it would enable the merchants to offer a better selection each year. But when you buy goods in Asheville that can be found in the stores here you are discouraging the merchants from stocking those items again.

Do You Remember?

(Looking backward through the files of The Press)

50 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Horace Harrison, Jim Palmer, Frank Curtis, and Arthur Addington left on Tuesday of last week to seek fortunes in other climes. The two former had reached Birmingham, Ala., at last accounts, but the two latter had not reported there.

Mr. W. G. Bulgin has a June apple tree that has bloomed out three times this year and now has the second crop of apples on it. They are fine and well flavored and have no core.

The best interests of Franklin demand that the railroad depot be on the west side of town and it is to be hoped that the engineers will find it to the advantage of the railroad builders, to locate it. If Franklin ever spreads out much it must be on the western side where all the beautiful building sites lie.

25 YEARS AGO

Monday the Franklin post office moved into the new building on the public square. This building was erected by Sam L. Franks and M. D. Billings.

Mr. Frank Granes, of New York, was shaking hands with his many friends here last Sunday.

The town board is having Riverview Street from Main to Tennessee Street widened and graded.

10 YEARS AGO

On Tuesday night, shortly after midnight, the lumber mill of A. R. Higdon, located near the river bridge, was completely destroyed by fire.

Miss Dorothy Morrison, who has been serving as a medical technician at Moore General Hospital, Swannanoa, spent last week-end with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Morrison.