

# The Franklin Press and The Highlands Maconian

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OCTOBER 6, 1955

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**NEWSPAPER WEEK**

OCTOBER

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THREE times within a recent week, this newspaper was told it had been unfair — to the State Board of Assessment, to the bus companies, and on the desegregation problem.

Maybe we were unfair, on one, or all, of those matters; because the people who edit newspapers are human, subject to all the frailties, the mistakes of judgment, and the temptations common to human beings.

And it is a terrible thing for a newspaper to be unfair — no matter how unintentionally. When unfairness is charged, the least it can do is admit the possibility, print the charge, and try again to state, as clearly as it can, its position — then leave it to the reader to determine just where the truth lies.

## TELEPHONE EVALUATIONS

TWO weeks ago we commented unfavorably on the fact that the telephone lines of the Southern Bell Company, within this county, were valued for taxes at only a little more than half as much, per mile, as lines of the Western Carolina. It has since been pointed out to us that that left an inaccurate implication.

For the State Board of Assessment, in arriving at the taxable value of telephone companies, puts a value on all the company's properties (excluding real estate), and then pro rates the whole value by miles of line. Thus such things as central offices are taken into account in fixing the value per line mile.

For practical purposes, it would seem doubtful that the proportionate value, per mile of line, of a relatively small company, like Western Carolina, would be almost twice as great as that of a big company, like Southern Bell. But the reader was, and is, entitled to the exact facts in reaching his conclusions.

## ABOUT BUS SERVICE

"DO you want to put the bus companies into bankruptcy?" we were asked the other day. "How can you expect them to operate when they are losing money?"

We don't. And you can't.

But when a public utility is granted the privilege of a monopoly, protected by the state from competition, that privilege carries with it an obligation — the obligation to provide service. The whole purpose of granting the monopoly, in fact, is to assure service to the public; if it were a competitive proposition, the competing companies would operate only where and when it was profitable; protected by monopoly, the utility is expected to give service, generally, making the profitable lines support the unprofitable ones, and making the good years and the good months take care of the bad ones.

Our major criticism has been directed not at the bus companies, but at the State Utilities Commission; because that agency is paid by the taxpayers to see to it that the public gets service from those utilities that are given a monopoly so they can provide it. We don't think the commission has been very active in looking after the interests of the very people it is paid to protect.

Our further position is that it is bad business for the bus companies themselves to give poor serv-

ice, just because a particular line, or a particular run on a particular line, is unprofitable.

The point can be illustrated even with a business that gets no monopoly protection from the state. Frequently a particular issue of The Franklin Press is unprofitable; certain issues, in fact, are unprofitable every year — the one immediately after Christmas, for example. But if this newspaper published only those weeks that it made money, how long would it have any subscribers?

## EQUALLY BAD

A LETTER to the editor, published last week, called this newspaper's position on segregation "flabby" and "neutral".

We are not the proper ones to say whether our position has been "flabby". But if, by "neutral", the writer had reference to this newspaper's efforts to present a wide variety of viewpoints, then we plead guilty to being "neutral". And we shall continue to try to be "neutral", in that respect. Because the whole purpose of having a press that is free is to make possible the dissemination of just such a variety of viewpoints. The newspaper that fails to present divergent viewpoints is not fulfilling its function.

More serious is the charge, in a personal letter, that we tried "to make an issue where none really exists". The reference was to the editorial, "Stop at Color Line", three weeks ago, and an editorial statement, the following week, giving information not available at the time the earlier piece was written.

The earlier editorial attempted to make the point that refusal to face facts, thinking with the emotions, and discrediting an argument because of its source rather than on its merits, is bad; that it is equally bad, no matter which side indulges in it; and that, of late, rabid integrationists have been as guilty, or perhaps even more guilty, than rabid segregationists.

Perhaps we were wrong. But that is what we thought at the time, and it is what we think now. Honesty will not permit us to say otherwise.

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WE welcome these criticisms. Not because it is pleasant to be criticized — it rarely is; but because it nearly always is profitable. It tends to create that spirit of humility that should go with every responsibility.

## Letters

### Applauds Publication Of Letter

Editor, The Press:

Having seldom been attracted by your paper before, I am now compelled to applaud the printing of Mr. V. L. Deane's letter in your September 29th issue.

Mr. Deane's obvious prejudice and vitriolic comments on your stand deserve less than no mention or note. The publication of the letter, however, gives view to all your readers the type of mind and biased short-sightedness that combat the forces of good and justice in this country.

The Mr. Deanes of this world are nothing. They belong in the family applauding group of Tallahatchie whites.

Please send Mr. Deane's Franklin Press to me. I am delighted with the turning over of the rock, and sickened with the view beneath. Congratulations.

ALBERT L. CHALKER.

Atlanta, Ga.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: The above letter came in the form of a telegram.)

## Poetry

Editor  
EDITH DEADERICK ERSKINE  
Weaverville, North Carolina

### PETUNIAS

Not all the spices of bright Araby  
Nor costly perfume from old France or Spain  
Can give fragrance half so sweet to me  
As wet/petunias crushed by falling rain.

MARIE SMITH INZER

### THEIR JOB TO MAKE SURE

## That The People Shall Not Lose Their Voice

The people are losing their voice; who but the country editor can speak for them?

A challenge to assume responsibility for voicing the opinions of the "little people" — those who might otherwise become forever lost in a world of bigness — was boldly placed before editors of non-daily newspapers at a recent national editorial conference.

They came from the sugar cane country of Louisiana, the lake land of Minnesota, from Iowa farm land, for high Colorado, beautiful West Virginia and

North Carolina, the California valley, from Illinois, Missouri and Indiana. Some of their opinions were shaped or modified by the province from which they came, but they had one bond in common.

They knew that they must listen — listen to the people, that they must speak for the people.

In an earlier era, when many communities had two or three newspapers, readers witnessed vigorous editorial debates on local, national and international affairs in the columns of the local press.

Newspapers have followed the trend toward consolidation which has been characteristic of business and industry. Numbers of daily newspapers have been declining.

"Of course, we encourage our subscribers to read a daily newspaper," said one weekly editor. "We don't think they can be intelligent citizens today if they don't."

But the large, daily newspaper is less and less able to deal with strictly local problems. This remoteness must be overcome by the local editor

who is close to the people, and, as in the old days, always has spare time to listen and courage to speak to his community.

The 10,000 non-daily newspapers in the United States today are not just country cousins, little sheets that couldn't quite make the grade against their big daily relatives.

They are special media, interpreting and communicating to a special group — the people of their community.

And they have rededicated themselves to the goal that the people shall not lose their voice.

## FORESTRY - U.S.A.



**RIVER RUN**  
IN THE EARLY DAYS, OUR RIVERS WERE THE PRINCIPAL HIGHWAYS FROM FOREST TO MILL. EVERY SPRING FOUND THEM CHOKED WITH LOGS. TODAY, MORE AND BETTER ROADS HAVE BROUGHT AN END, IN MOST PLACES, TO THE COLORFUL RIVER RUNS OF OLD.

BUT IN DOWN EAST MAINE, ON THE MAJAS RIVER, THE RIVER DRIVERS STILL KEEP THE LOGS ROLLING FROM FOREST TO MILL AS THEY HAVE BEEN DOING FOR NEARLY 200 YEARS — A GOOD ANNUAL HARVEST, FROM WELL-MANAGED FORESTS.



PROTECT THE FORESTS AND USE THEM WISELY

## News Making As It Looks To A Maconite

By BOB SLOAN

The farm problem is the chief sore spot of present economic conditions in this country. While most everyone else is experiencing conditions that are generally considered "Boom Times," farmers are getting less for what they sell, and paying more for what they buy.

Undoubtedly, the causes are many. The Republican agricultural leaders cite two chief causes. They say the prices have been driven down by the accumulation of surpluses under the government price support plan. Secretary of Agriculture, Ezra T. Benson, adds to this a statement in which he contends that some of the surplus we have accumulated has come from farmers who are working poor land and in some cases using inefficient methods. Subsidies help make this possible, he feels. The Republicans and their chief farm spokesman are partly right.

The Democratic farm program during the Truman administration did not differ too much from what we now have, except, that instead of a flexible sliding scale of price supports, they were fixed at 90% of parity which is higher than the present price support level. Surpluses accumulated, but the farmer did receive more for his crops. However, it cost the government more.

Many writers, economic seers, and politicians will tell you that there is no solution to the farm program. This I do not believe.

There is one plain fact that we must face up to if the farmer is to have a stable income. If you have price supports which guarantee the farmer a good price for his product you must have a very strict control on the amount the farmer is allowed to produce. This is terrible, everyone cries — "Why it's regimentation." That may be, but if the government is going to assist the farmer to have a normal income, then the government must have the right to limit production. Otherwise, the price support program (See Back Page, 1st Section)

## Do You Remember?

(Looking backward through the files of The Press)

### 50 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Hon. Kope Elias has received notice that he has been appointed one of the assistant marshals to receive President Roosevelt at Raleigh on the 19th inst., and to lunch with him.

Dr. Charley Trotter left Monday for Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore, Md., to resume his studies and duties.

Messrs. H. T. and S. L. Angel, who have been in California during 18 months past, arrived here Thursday and will remain for some time.

### 25 YEARS AGO

Mrs. A. B. Omohundro returned to her home in Arkansas last Friday, after spending three months with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Lee Barnard.

Miss Edwina Dalrymple, who is teaching in Hayesville, and Miss Norma Scroggs, from that town, spent the week-end with Miss Dalrymple's parents, Mr. and Mrs. George Dalrymple.

Mr. and Mrs. E. W. Allfather, of Black Mountain, were in Franklin last Monday.

Mr. Porter Pierson, of Highlands, was a business visitor in Franklin the first of the week.

### 10 YEARS AGO

T. H. Callahan, manager of Belk's Department Store here, with his family, has moved from Bryson City to the Orlando Apartments on Harrison Avenue.

Mr. and Mrs. Earl Dryman, who have been making their home in Clinton, Tenn., have returned to their home at Scaly.

Chief Petty Officer Frank Norris has returned from foreign service and left this week for Athens to re-enter the University of Georgia, accompanied by Mrs. Norris, who has been spending the summer in Horse Cove. — Highlands item.

Mishawaka, Ind., Enterprise