

The Franklin Press and The Highlands Maconian

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DECEMBER 6, 1956

A Fine Start

The progress reported by the Western Carolina Telephone Company in making telephone service available to rural families here is encouraging.

The total number of telephones in use in rural Macon has grown by 91, an increase of 25 per cent, during the past year. Even more significant, in a two-year period, telephone lines have been built into five communities that before had no phone service whatever.

For this progress, the Western Carolina concern deserves the commendation of the public. And aside from the fact it is deserved, such commendation undoubtedly will spur the telephone company to continued and greater efforts.

Much remains to be done; officials of the Western Carolina Telephone Company probably would be the first to say so.

Two comparisons suggest just how much:

First, the total of 457 rural phones in this county represents only about 17 per cent of the approximately 2,600 rural families.

Even more important, there still are many communities in which there isn't a single phone. Imagine Franklin or Highlands without a phone, then add the fact that in the country neighbors are not close and many of the roads are unpaved, and it becomes apparent how badly a rural community is handicapped when it has no telephone.

To the telephone company, we offer our own hearty congratulations. And more power to it as it speeds the program of taking the telephone to the people of rural Macon.

Two Little, Too Late

In Hungary, following the ruthless suppression of the Hungarians' bold and stubborn revolt, there is great suffering. Thousands are cold, homeless, hungry.

The great heart of America goes out to these people. Both our government and individual Americans seek to relieve the misery.

This is as it should be. But all our sympathy cannot stifle two nagging questions:

Wouldn't it have been better to help these people win their revolt for freedom, and thus a chance for a decent life, than to sit on our hands then, and now rush in to help them stay alive in an existence that is hardly worth living? Indeed, had we any right to refuse them help then—arms, and possibly troops, parachuted into Hungary—in view of the fact that our Voice of America encouraged the revolt?

Since we did encourage it, obviously we must do whatever we can to relieve the suffering that has followed. But that raises the second question, a cynically cold-blooded question: How long can we continue to spend our substance repairing the physical and human damage for which the Communists are responsible without so weakening our own economy as to assure the Russians' ultimate victory in the life-and-death struggle that the cold war is?

Speeding, on our one-way streets, is just about as dangerous as it was when traffic went both ways. The chief difference is it's easier now. That fact calls for (a) more self-control, on the part of motorists; (b) more legal control, by town authorities.

Good Taste, Too

That was a fine parade last Thursday opening the Christmas season here. Its quality would have done credit to any community, anywhere.

As is so often true of such events in Macon County, the entries reflected the originality and the ingenuity of the people here. And the parade itself was made possible by something that is increasingly in evidence in Macon County, enthusiastic cooperation of town and country, business and civic organizations.

To every one who participated, as well as to the sponsors, congratulations are in order.

They are in order, too, on another count: Unlike business men in many other places, the Franklin merchants had the sense and the good taste to postpone the formal opening of the Christmas shopping season until after Thanksgiving.

Oil And Friendship

If and when Britain and France take definite steps toward pulling their troops out of Egypt, the U. S. State Department last week indicated, we'll permit emergency oil supplies to start flowing to Europe.

It has taken this country years, at a cost of billions of dollars and world-wide hate, to learn you can't buy friendship.

Is it going to take us equally long, at an equally high price, to learn the reverse—that we can't lead the world by resorting to blackmail?

Our Own Medicine

Every year we spend thousands of dollars trying to attract people to Franklin. But, as was pointed out in this space last week, there's almost nothing here to tell a visitor when he's reached Franklin. A visitor who sets out to come here easily might drive right through Franklin and to the next town without knowing he'd passed his destination.

As one way to remedy that situation, we suggested that business houses here put "Franklin, N. C." under their firm names, on signs or windows.

When last week's paper came out, we read that editorial suggestion. Then, apprehensively, we stepped out on Palmer Street and had a look at the front of The Press office. And what did we see? You guessed it: The sign said "The Franklin Press" period!

Well, we've taken our own medicine. The sign now reads

The Franklin Press
Franklin, N. C.

Who'll be next?

It's a smart man who knows the ropes of his business so well he is never tied down.

"Guess who's calling?" seems like a mighty good excuse for hanging up the phone.

Local Man Suggests

Give Both Little And Big Counties Fair Share Of Votes

(EDITOR'S NOTE: One of the nine members of a commission appointed several months ago to study the whole problem of legislative representation in North Carolina, Weimar Jones, of Franklin, filed a dissenting report. That report (which contains a summary of the recommendations of the commission majority) appears below. Both reports were addressed to Governor Hodges, who made them public last week.)

The earnestness and sincerity of other members of the Commission on Legislative Representation have won my unqualified respect.

I find myself in such disagreement with their conclusions, however, that I cannot, in conscience, sign the majority report.

Failure to do so imposes on me two obligations: First, to say why; and, second, to offer something I consider better.

Both my objections to the proposals of the majority and the recommendations in this minority report are based on the following assumptions:

That this commission's sole duty is to come up with the

fairest, most workable plan it can devise; what action is taken on our recommendations is the responsibility of the Legislature and the people—not ours.

That while it may be true that "half a loaf is better than none", on so fundamental a matter as fair and honest representation there is no good reason why the people should be offered less than a whole loaf.

That repeated failure of the General Assembly to perform a duty is not, in itself, sufficient reason to change the state constitution. The people's remedy for unfaithful servants is the ballot.

That while a change in the constitutional method of legislative representation may be desirable, the constitution should be amended only if the change gives promise of substantial improvement in the method itself.

That the present constitution, since it was adopted nearly a century ago under Reconstruction conditions, well may be subject to improvement; further, that there is nothing either sacred or magic about the figures 50 and 120—the membership of the senate and

house as fixed by the constitution.

That such basic law as the constitution should deal with general principles only, leaving the details to the General Assembly; and that any constitutional provision should be so simple and clear as to be easily understandable to the average citizen.

That any system of legislative representation, to be fair, must take account of two factors: First, population; second, protection of the rights of minorities, including the smaller counties and the less populous sections of the state.

The majority report would: (a) Give the more populous counties ten additional members of the house; (b) place two restrictions on the present allotment of senate seats on a basis of population only; and (c) provide for reapportionment and redistricting by a commission, made up of five state officials.

The proposal has four major weaknesses:

1. It is cumbersome, not simple. In the house, seats are now allotted under a formula so in-

volved as to approach obscurity:

"... the ratio of representation (after each county has been given one member) shall be ascertained by dividing the amount of the population of the state, exclusive of that comprehended within those counties which do not severally contain the one hundred and twentieth part of the population of the State, by the number of Representatives, less the number assigned to such counties..."

Instead of clarifying this complicated provision, the majority report would add new complexities in the senate, writing in provisions limiting the present population-only basis for seats in that chamber.

2. The constitution plainly says the General Assembly "shall" reapportion house seats and redistrict for the senate after each decennial census. Failure of the General Assembly to obey that mandate is indefensible. Why, then, have legislators, sworn to uphold the constitution, repeatedly violated that oath? It seems reasonable to assume it may have been because of fear, on the part of legislators from the smaller

—Continued on Page 3

It's Your AMERICA



WINNING THE VOTE
LONG AFTER THE CONSTITUTION BECAME LAW, ONLY PROPERTY OWNERS COULD VOTE. DANIEL WEBSTER ARGUED THAT "VIOLENCE AND REVOLUTION" WOULD RESULT IF THOSE WHO HAD NO PROPERTY WERE ALLOWED TO VOTE.

LIBERTY QUOTES
"DEMOCRACY IS A CONDITION WHERE PEOPLE BELIEVE THAT OTHER PEOPLE ARE AS GOOD AS THEY ARE."
—Stuart Chase

THE RIGHT OF AMERICAN WOMEN TO VOTE CAME ONLY AFTER YEARS OF AGITATION AND PETITION, INCLUDING A DRASTIC PROTEST ACTION DURING WORLD WAR I WHEN SUFFRAGETTES CHAINED THEMSELVES TO THE GATES OF THE WHITE HOUSE.



STRICTLY

PERSONAL

By WEIMAR JONES

In one important phase of North Carolina's state government, we have two disgraceful situations.

The state constitution says flatly that, after each census, the General Assembly "shall" make changes in the distribution of its members. It says that 20 of the 120 seats in the lower house "shall" be reapportioned among the larger counties, according to population. More importantly, it says the state senatorial districts "shall" be re-drawn so that each of the 50 senators shall represent approximately the same number of people.

The first disgrace is the repeated failure of legislators, who take an oath to support the constitution, to obey this plain mandate of that constitution.

The second disgrace results from the first. Because the General Assembly has refused, ever since the 1950 census, to do its duty in this matter, we

have the spectacle of a senate—which the constitution says shall be based on population alone—having one-fourth of its members elected by districts containing only one-tenth of the state's population.

In other words, the men who make our laws themselves refuse to obey a basic law. And what we call "representative government" doesn't come within a mile of being representative.

It was against that background that the 1955 General Assembly authorized appointment of a commission to study the problem and make recommendations. Seven of the nine members of that commission made a majority report; an eighth member declined to sign that report; the ninth filed a dissenting, minority report. Since that minority report summarizes the recommendations of the majority, as well as presenting the dissent, and since it was filed by a local man, it appears elsewhere on this page.

Letters

Blights Franklin

Editor, The Press:

We have recently returned from Franklin — our favorite vacation spot. We noted with interest the many fine improvements you have made in your community. We also enjoyed the beautiful drive on the new Highway 23-441 from Dillsboro.

Why should all this be spoiled by the blight of the wrecked car graveyard as one enters Franklin. It is a most ugly and depressing sight. Knowing Franklin's civic pride, cannot something be done about it?

Algonquin, Ill.

CLIFFORD & ISOBEL SWETT

VIEWS

By

BOB SLOAN



Congratulations to Hall Callahan and the Franklin Jaycees for a fine Christmas parade. The Jaycees sponsored the program, and Hall sparked it. Oftentimes, we do not stop to think of the prodding and pushing that must be behind a movement of this kind. Someone has to do a lot of sweating and worrying to get the job done, and Hall carried the burden this time.

However, as Mr. Callahan said, upon being congratulated upon the fine job he had done, "What made it possible was the fine cooperation we received from everyone."

Another group of unsung heroes for the occasion are the merchants of Franklin. They gave generously to finance the parade and the Christmas opening celebration. I suggest that we remember this before we pick up a mail order catalogue or drive over to Asheville to buy our Christmas presents.

Three business firms that have recently improved their stores are the Twins' Shop, Franks TV and Electric Service, and Downs and Dowdle. All are to be congratulated for this evidence of faith in Franklin and Macon County's future.

The Ford "Thunderbird" and the Chevrolet "Corvette" have recently been on display in the showrooms of their respective local dealers. Sport cars of the 270 horsepower "Corvette" class and 285 horsepower "Thunderbird" class are not often shown in towns of this size. This is just another example of how progressive our merchants are, and how they go all out to give their customers the same advantages and services that they get in larger towns.

Do You Remember?

(Looking backward through the files of The Press)

50 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Monday was County Commission day. The newly elected board took hold of the county's affairs as new commissioners were sworn in. The administration as it now stands is as follows: R. M. Ledford, clerk; D. W. Blaine, register; H. D. Dean, sheriff; J. W. Ammons, surveyor; R. F. Henry, coroner; and E. H. Franks, W. R. Cloer, and J. W. Cochran, commissioners.

One thing that will be badly needed here next spring and summer will be increased hotel accommodations. Without them, Franklin will miss much cash business.

Quite a number of our people attended Thanksgiving services at our church, though perhaps more stayed away without once thinking they owe any gratitude to Providence for the many blessings which have come to them during the past year.—Burningtown item.

25 YEARS AGO

The Highlands High School was visited Wednesday by state officials, accompanied by M. D. Billings, county superintendent, for the purpose of determining what it would take for accreditation of the school.

Closing of the Maxwell Farm Home, eight miles west of Franklin on Highway Number 28, by the Asheville Presbytery, will only be a temporary measure and any reports the property will be sold are false.

Mrs. John Wright entertained the Sewing Club recently and the talk was about old patchwork quilts. Mrs. Wright showed an especially beautiful one, "The Rising Sun," which she made for a wedding gift.

10 YEARS AGO

Otto McClure, of the Prentiss Community, is recovering at Angel Clinic from burns he received while vainly attempting to save his livestock when his barn burned last Thursday. He said the loss will be between \$2,500 and \$3,000.

FIRE EXTINGUISHED

A trash fire was extinguished by the Franklin Volunteer Fire Department about 2:40 p. m. Wednesday last week (Nov. 28) at the Ross Lunsford home on Bidwell Street.