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DECEMBER 27, 1956

Basic Question

We in the mountains like a man to say what he thinks. So we make our best mountain manners to Federal Judge William H. Atwell, of Dallas, Texas.

The Supreme Court's segregation decision is not based on law, judge Atwell says flatly; "but rather on what the Court regards as . . . authoritative, modern psychological knowledge".

Judge Atwell may be wrong. But that is not the point. The point is that surely, among the hundreds of federal judges in this county, there are others who hold the same view. Yet, in the two and a half years since the segregation decision not one has dared express it.

And there is a second point, even more important than the character of our federal judges. Judge Atwell may be wrong; but he **could** be right. And if he is, then we are faced with a much more fundamental question than that of segregation. We are face to face with the question of whether we in this country shall continue to be governed by law or whether we are to be governed by a judicial oligarchy.

Fitting

We, in this community, can never hope to get ahead through sheer size and quantity; natural conditions and circumstances make that almost impossible. If we are to excel, we must do so through such qualities as originality and simplicity.

We are blessed that the situation forces this choice upon us. First of all, because those are among the qualities of all true greatness, whether of an individual or a people; thus we must emphasize qualities that tend toward greatness. Second—and less important—such qualities pay far handsomer dividends, in dollars as well as inner satisfaction, than size and quantity ever can. And we are blessed again that we, as a people, are richly endowed with originality and simplicity.

It was fitting, therefore, that the judges of the Rural Community Development Christmas lighting contest should have put major emphasis on these two things in selecting the first-place winner.

The Higdonville Community is to be congratulated not only on winning the first prize, but even more on putting emphasis where it belongs.

If Winter Comes . . .

Somebody (the weatherman, maybe) said it was supposed to be the first day of winter last Friday, but apparently, nobody told winter. The day was as beautiful as any of spring's daughters.

Picknickers at Arrowood Glade, a summer suit on one fellow we saw, cardinals and woodpeckers in evidence, a greater number than usual of cars going the wrong way on one-way streets—what better signs of spring than these?

Besides, whatever the weather, now that winter is officially here, we can take heart. For "if winter comes, can spring be far behind?"

Add Definitions

Here are some definitions given by the Bulletin Free Press, a Colorado newspaper:

A recession is a period when you tighten your belt. In a depression you have no belt to tighten. When you have no pants to hold up it's a panic.

And when you haven't even underwear, we suppose, it is naked inflation.

Insane Idea

The U. S. Constitution provides that if the President is unable to perform his duties, the Vice President shall do so. But it fails to say how Presidential disability shall be determined, or by whom.

The Congressional Quarterly reports that a House committee is drafting legislation to settle the question; it would authorize the Vice President to decide when the President is incapacitated.

That's right, the Vice President! The man who rarely is either a physician or a psychiatrist, the man who often is completely out of sympathy with the President's program, and the man who has most to gain, in power and prestige, by having the President declared unable to perform his duties—the man, in fact, who probably sought the Presidency in the first place, but had to settle for the second honor.

Isn't that a little like letting a husband or wife determine when his or her spouse is crazy enough to be put out of the way—in an insane asylum?

Others' Opinions

(Opinions expressed in this space are not necessarily those of The Press. Editorials selected for reprinting here, in fact, are chosen with a view to presenting a variety of viewpoints. They are, that is, just what the caption says—OTHERS' Opinions.)

The Easy Way Is Seldom Best

(Rocky Mount Telegram)

An amazingly cavalier and contemptuous reason is being advanced in behalf of the Weathers Commission's legislative reapportionment plan by the Sanford Herald and echoed by the Greensboro Daily News. The idea is that the Commission's compromise program is more acceptable because it avoids a dreadful pitfall inherent in the Weimar Jones minority plan, a snare which the Herald describes as follows:

"We wonder if North Carolinians would obtain representation by the best minds under a system of the counties being limited to a single representative (as under the Jones proposal). Because North Carolina is principally rural, the house would be characterized by a rural outlook. The influence of urbanism would be mostly in the senate (which Jones would limit to 50 on a population basis.) Compromise would have to be worked out on an inter-chamber rather than an intra-chamber basis, which involves many disadvantages."

In refutation we can only quote the great jurist, Oliver Wendell Holmes, who once observed that "no generalization, including this one, is worth a damn." It seems to us that the theory expounded by the Sanford Herald and the Greensboro Daily News that the urban areas will produce more enlightened legislators is based on an untenable generalization which history itself effectively denies. Some of the nation's leading statesmen, including such towering figures as Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Jackson, Lincoln and Woodrow Wilson, sprang from rural backgrounds and more often than not represented rural areas. The same is true of North Carolina's greatest sons.

This erroneous assumption is compounded by the view that the enlightened, urban-elected Senate would be constantly deadlocked with the dumb clucks in the House, elected by the rural counties.

The Sanford Herald, having ruled out the possibility of compromise between these supposedly impossible-divergent legislative branches, then cites compromise as the best defense for the Weathers report:

"Compromise is the key to successful legislation. It is the key, too, to an effective system of legislative representation. While compromise weakens the Weathers report, it strengthens it also, for it affords it a definite chance of enactment and constitutional amendments being involved, ratification."

This labored rationalization of the Weathers Commission recommendation only strengthens our belief in the Jones minority position. In the first place, it is difficult for us to imagine any such weird coalescing of rural and urban representation as that projected by our Piedmont colleagues.

It seems to us that the experience of Congress, where one house is based solely on population and the other on geographical representation, serves as the most convincing argument for the soundness of the Jones position.

North Carolinians should think long and hard before amending the constitution to provide for a hodge-podge of representation based in part on population in both houses simply because such a plan is believed to have the best chance of adoption. The easy way is seldom the best way.

When you make your buy-word cash, it's a lot easier to get away from worry.

Letters

Glaring Deficiencies

Dear Mr. Jones:

I am attaching a clipping from the front page of the Dec. 11 issue of The Asheville Citizen for fear that you may have overlooked it, or failed to attach the proper importance to it.

Also enclosed are copies of letters to the Macon County Commissioners and the Macon County Board of Education (copies of which were given to your paper) from the committee of Macon County Parent-Teacher Associations dated June 29, 1956.

These documents are presented to you with the suggestion

that they be printed as a service to the people of Macon County. As a further suggestion I believe the Question No. 3 of your "Post-Election Questions" editorial of Nov. 15 is worthy of being re-printed. It should also be interesting to have a report on the response, if any, you have received to your thought-provoking question.

In your editorial, you stated "These questions are raised as criticism of nobody". As editor of a newspaper this statement was probably a diplomatic necessity. As an independent voting citizen, I do not feel the need for such diplomacy. I firmly believe that every citizen of the county has a right to criticize the county commissioners, the board of education, the superintendent of the county schools, and the board of elections (as well as any other officials responsible) for the glaring deficiencies of Macon County.

If the present county commissioners refuse to announce a percentage of value for which property should be listed for tax purposes, (and take whatever additional steps are necessary to correct alleged inequities) and provide sufficient tax money for the necessary operations of the schools, they should be replaced at the next election. After all, if anyone is being short-changed by the present tax listing methods, it is the small taxpayers and they should certainly represent the majority at the polls.

The idea of replacement should hold true for all other county officials, if they fail to meet the standards expected.

Sincerely,

FRED C. VAUGHN

Franklin.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: The Asheville Citizens news story Mr. Vaughn refers to carried an announcement that the Buncombe County Board of Tax Supervision had set 40 per cent of the current market value as the amount at which real estate in Buncombe County is to be listed for taxes. This action followed and was based on a two-year reappraisal survey of Buncombe County real estate, made by an out-of-county concern. The survey was designed to set fair market value on each piece of real estate in Buncombe County.

The Question No. 3 in The Press editorial of November 15 asked:

"Why must our voting facilities suggest the American pioneer period? Booths made of unpainted boards, the entrances covered with half-curtains of ragged and frayed burlap; and, within the booth, a cardboard shelf—sometimes broken in two—on which to place the ballot for marking. Voting is a sacred privilege and a grave responsibility. It should be a dignified process. Is Macon County so poor that it cannot provide facilities that lend an air of dignity? so poor the facilities cannot be at least neat?"

(Of the two letters of last July from the Parent-Teacher Associations Special Committee, the one to the board of education informed that body that a letter was being sent to the board of county commissioners and included tables of budget figures. The second letter, which was presented to the county commissioners by Mr. Vaughn, made four recommendations. Each of those recommendations was summarized in a front page news story in The Press of last July 5. For the information of the public, however, we are glad to comply with Mr. Vaughn's request that it be published in full. It appears below.)

County Commissioners
Macon County
Franklin, North Carolina
Gentlemen:

1—We have been informed that the Board of Education has instructed the County Superintendent to include an additional amount of approximately \$18,000.00 in the School Budget for the year 1956-1957 under the items of Operation of Plant (Utilities, Sanitation and Janitorial Supplies, etc.) and Maintenance of Plant. The figure for the first item in the 1955-1956 budget was \$9,950.00. Of this amount \$7,900.00 was expected to be required for Water, Light, and Power and \$1,700.00 for Fuel, leaving only the small amount of \$350.00 for all other operational needs. Of the \$14,600.00 figure for the second item approximately \$6,000.00 was for salaries, leaving only \$8,600 to cover repair and maintenance needs of 14 buildings.

In order to relieve the teachers and principals in our schools of the burden of operating candy stores, and the PTA's of raising funds for school operation and maintenance, and to distribute the burden of supporting our schools among all taxpayers, we recommend that you provide these necessary additional funds from County Tax moneys by approving these items of the budget as presented to you.

2—In studying the Audit Reports for the years 1953-1954 and 1954-1955 and the 1955-1956 Budget we note a Contribution To Debt Service in the amount of approximately \$3,000.00 (to cover repayment of loan obtained to build Chapel School) listed in the Disbursement of Current Operating Expense. It is also understood that similar arrangements may be made to repay another \$28,000.00 loan which was obtained to complete the High School Gymnasium.

In order to relieve the Current Operating Expense Budgets of these Capital Outlay Expenditures we recommend that arrangements be made to repay these loans from Capital Outlay Funds and proper steps be taken to prevent future expenditures from Current Operating Funds to cover Capital Outlay Expenditures.

3—In view of the \$16,920.00 figure for Transportation (most of which covers salaries of bus drivers) in the 1955-1956 Budget, we suggest the consideration of replacing the adult bus drivers with student (or teacher?) drivers wherever possible in order to effect needed economies. Student bus drivers have proven themselves to be safe drivers throughout the state and we can see no need for any concern in this respect.

4—In talking with members of the various PTA's in preparation for the filing of these recommendations this committee found a majority of those citizens expressing themselves on the subject to be in favor of providing additional tax money to cover the needs of our school system even if it means an increased tax rate.

However, some oppose an increased tax rate until a re-evaluation of property has been made. Further discussion of this matter developed the feeling that the majority of Macon County Taxpayers are honest and would list their property for some certain percentage of its actual market value (purchase or sale price) if the County Commissioners and/or Tax Listers would establish and publicize some percentage figure to be used by all property owners. Those few people who might insist upon shirking their responsibilities as citizens by failing to list property in accordance with such an established percentage could be encouraged to do so by the Board of Equalization.

As a matter of information, and possibly to point out the need for an increased valuation of property in Macon County, we want to record here the fact that Macon County's assessed valuation of taxable property per pupil in 1954 was \$3,905.00. The average for the State was \$6,162.00, with Macon County ranking 58th among the 100 counties in the State in this respect. We do not feel that the county is as poor as these figures indicate.

We recommend that serious consideration be given to the above possible means of obtaining the money necessary for Macon County's School System. We feel sure that in your position you will recognize these needs and that you will see that our schools are adequately financed by tax money.

Respectfully,
COMMITTEE OF MACON COUNTY
PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS

VIEWS

By

BOB SLOAN



Two things at Franklin High School, recently brought to my attention by irritated patrons, could and should be corrected. The admission charge for high school basketball games of fifty cents for school children and one dollar for adults is too high and should be cut in half. Most schools in the surrounding area charge 25 cents and 50 or 75 cents. Consider the plight of a man who has three or four school children, one of whom is playing on the team. Naturally the whole family wants to see "Bud" or "Sis" play. However, the poor old man of the house has to dig down and produce about \$3.50 for each game. If they only attend the home games, the cost is some \$40 or \$50 each season, and that is too much.

Another sore subject is the way the annual Washington trip for seniors has been handled or mishandled this year. To begin with a large group of young people have been let down. A large group of boys and girls had paid their money to go to Washington, many of them had worked and saved for a year or more, to get the money so that when they became seniors they could make the trip. Now, it's just a broken dream. As one big gawky boy told me with a tremor in his voice, "Last year, when the bus left, I said: 'Next year I am going to be on that bus.' Now, there won't be any bus." This same student pointed out that it was the only chance many of them would ever have to visit Washington.

Perhaps, Principal Harry Corbin had a point when he explained that a majority of the class would not be making the trip. However, we wonder if this wasn't because of the cost rather than lack of interest. Also, we wonder if the class, as a whole, was given the opportunity to engage in a project—and I mean a working project, not begging—whereby enough money could be raised to pay the expenses of the entire group.

Do You Remember?

(Looking backward through the files of The Press)

50 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

During these cold days Cupid has not been entirely idle. As a result of his work, Mr. J. M. Hurst and Miss Elsie Cordan were married today, so we understand. The Rev. P. R. Rickman officiated.—Coweie item.

A small blizzard came Friday afternoon with north wind and flying snow, which continued through Saturday. The thermometer went down to 22 degrees Sunday and was 12 degrees Monday.

Mr. L. M. Johnson killed a hog a few days ago which had one foot with three dewclaws. We know this to be a fact, for we saw it on Friday.

25 YEARS AGO

The Rev. Robt. B. H. Bell has selected Franklin as the site for development of a health and training center for the Life Abundant Movement. He will purchase the Franklin golf course and Camp Nikyasi from Miss Laura Jones for his headquarters.

W. A. McNeil, resident engineer for the State Highway Department, has been transferred to Highlands, effective January 1. Allen Siler, who has worked here for the department the last seven years, will go to Asheville. This is considered a promotion for Mr. Siler.

Born to Mr. and Mrs. Jim Norton, a nine pound son at their home on Iotia Street.

10 YEARS AGO

Miss Virginia Cansler, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jack Cansler, of Franklin, Route 3, who attends Iotia Methodist Sunday School, has been given an award for six years of perfect attendance.

In opening a greenhouse on the Dillard Road, Mrs. M. M. Hopper has begun a new venture for this section. She also plans to open a gift shop in the spring, handling only hand-made articles.—Highlands item.

Charles P. Myers, seaman first class, returned to the naval air station at Charleston, W. Va., after a 10-day leave with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Myers, of Bonny Crest.