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THURSDAY, OCTOBER 23, 1958

Dollars And Sense

Some interesting and pointed questions about the reliability of federal statistics on per capita income are raised by The Tarheel Banker in a piece reprinted at the bottom of this page. They are questions, incidentally, this newspaper has raised repeatedly.

The bankers' magazine, it seems to us, makes the point so well it needs no elaboration. There are two other points, though, that might well be made:

1. Income, per capita, is not an intelligent index; for it tends to show not how much workers earn, but how many people work. Thus, the per capita income obviously is higher in the states where a larger proportion of the women work. In other words, if every North Carolina mother of small children were working on a job outside her home, this state would have a much higher per capita income—but does anybody think it would be a better state? Or we could raise our per capita income by repealing our child labor laws and putting all the children to work in factories. The only really intelligent index of economic progress in a state is the income per worker.

2. How important is per capita income? Even if we assume the statistics are accurate and that North Carolina is near the bottom in per capita income. So what? To be sure, certain physical things, bought with dollars, are necessary. But do we measure civilization in terms of dollar income or of such things as character and citizenship, kindness, the intelligence to use leisure well, and useful and happy lives? Would anybody pretend there is a necessary relation between dollar income and these intangibles? Suppose, to take an extreme example, the average per capita income in the United States were \$1,000 a week. Would North Carolina be disgraced if it had less? The question is not how much is earned, but is it enough for a good life?

N. C. And Virginia

North Carolina's attorney general, Malcolm Seawell, has been forthright in stating his views on the segregation problem. He has said the Supreme Court decision is "the law of the land", and must be obeyed. He has said that repeatedly, and with no strings attached to the statement.

For a public official to so speak takes courage, and nobody, no matter how much they may disagree, can fail to admire such courage.

But Mr. Seawell spoke once too often, the other day, when he attacked the approaches of both Arkansas and Virginia to the problem. After all, he is an official of this state, and it is little, if any, of North Carolina's business how the other states meet the situation.

That appears to have been the attitude of Governor Hodges—who last summer appointed Mr. Seawell, following the resignation of Franklin's George B. Patton. The governor was prompt to disavow this latest Seawell statement; and was quite correct in so doing, it seems to us.

At best, the criticism was gratuitous and unnecessary. At worst, it was not too far from the pot's calling the kettle black. Because North Carolina's Pearsall plan is hardly perfect enough to put us in position to throw stones. It is yet to run the gauntlet of the U. S. Supreme Court. And as for our self-righteous attitude about it, the Pearsall plan has the appearance of an expedient—a way to comply with the letter of the Court's ruling on segregation, with the minimum of compliance with its spirit.

"What is so rare as a day in June", wrote Lowell. But what about a day in October?

Add similes: As obsolete as a hickory switch in a school room.

"No Fighting Here, Anyone! Hit 'Em Again, Dickieboy"



Gnashing Of Teeth

Down in Greensboro, a group is seeking a writ of mandamus to compel the city council to call an election on the question of putting fluorides in the city water system. In an election on the same question, a few years ago, the voters turned the proposal down.

We do not pretend to know the merits of the demand for an election. Furthermore, it is none of our business whether such an election is held or how, in case it is, Greensburghers vote.

We find ourselves wondering a little, though, about this matter of fluorides. Nobody, it seems, claims artificially administered fluorides are actually necessary to health; the most that is claimed is that they are desirable. We wonder about the wisdom of forcing something that is merely desirable, even by majority vote, in the face of bitter opposition. After all, many things are desirable—church attendance, for example.

We wonder, too, about the economics of putting fluorides in everybody's water—their washing and bathing and industrial use, as well as drinking water—when it is admitted its value in preventing tooth decay applies only to children. After all, many persons still consider castor oil highly desirable for children. But would anybody recommend putting it in the public drinking supply just to make sure the children get it? Ugh!

Then there's the great principle of class legislation. We raise the banner of that growing minority—those who have dentures, and who surely would be paying for something that could hardly benefit them. Some day that group might become a majority, and the rest of us might find ourselves paying for something highly desirable for them—the powder that's supposed to hold the dentures in place!

There's going to be a lot of gnashing of teeth, real and artificial, we suspect, before this thing is settled.

'CAN'T EAT STATISTICS'

Figures On N. C. Per Capita Income Are Misleading

Tarheel Banker

One of the most disconcerting reactions we've noted recently among Tar Heels came in the wake of last month's announcement by the U. S. Department of Commerce that the per capita income in North Carolina ranks third from the bottom in the United States.

Some of the brethren became almost hysterical, somewhat like the Irish mother of two children up in Boston who decided to have no more children because she had seen some statistics showing that every third baby born last year was a Chinese.

Governor Hodges said the Commerce Department's report was a "blow to the solar plexus." Our newspapers sadly concluded that the state apparently is going on the rocks. Nobody, far as we could tell, was willing to use any great degree of logic.

Instead, most of our newspapers and many of our public officials appeared to be underwriting the

Commerce Department's unstated conclusions that North Carolina is in serious economic distress.

The Charlotte Observer, which certainly should know better, came forth with an editorial headed, "The State's Place in Poverty." The editorial was unwise, not in what it said, but in what it failed to say. But, the Observer was not alone. Many another newspaper followed the same line.

We've done a lot of traveling around these United States, and nowhere have we seen a better place to live than North Carolina. We wouldn't swap our state — nor its standard of living — for a dozen states exactly like the one which leads the list in statistical per capita income.

The Department of Commerce statistics are fallacious because the department's only measurement of income, and thus living standards, is the total number of cash dollars earned within a state's boundaries, divided by the

number of people, including women and children with no dollar income.

The statistics, for example, do not show how many hundreds of thousands of North Carolinians live on farms and grow most of their food. Remember: North Carolina has more families living on the farm than any other state except Texas.

If the breadwinners of these families worked in factories, as the breadwinners in the so-called high per capita income states do, and had to earn dollars for their eggs, chickens, vegetables, meat and milk, we'd be a heck of a lot higher up that statistical per capita income ladder. But our people wouldn't be nearly so well off — and they wouldn't enjoy life nearly as much.

That's just one example of how distorted the statistics are. But in pointing to the distortion, we do not contend that there isn't room for improvement in North Carolina. Of course there is. But

STRICTLY PERSONAL By WEIMAR JONES

If this little story has a moral, I don't know what it is. I pass it along simply to illustrate how your mind, sometimes, will trick you.

I have, it seems to me, more than my share of experiences that are embarrassing or funny, or both. And in the field of public speaking, I thought I'd made every blunder possible, in the scores of talks I've tried to make during the past 15 years.

Well, I was wrong. There was a brand new one I hadn't made — until the other day.

I'm told many people have the same experience, occasionally. Since misery loves company, I take comfort in that. At the time, though, there was no comfort, from any source.

I was to make a little talk at a meeting down the state. The subject was one I'm supposed to know something about, the weekly newspaper. And because that's a subject I'm so full of, I was afraid I might talk too long.

So I prepared this talk more carefully than any I've ever made. I knew exactly what points I wanted to make, and arranged them in logical order; I knew exactly what incident I was going to use to illustrate each point; I knew exactly what words and phrases I was going to use to make each point. I spent days preparing that talk, and I've never known one better.

But when I got up to talk, what happened?

You think you've guessed it? Well, I'll bet you haven't; you wouldn't guess this could happen to anybody.

My mind went blank.

I couldn't remember what I was supposed to talk about, much less what I was supposed to say. I couldn't remember a single one of those points I had carefully selected. I couldn't even remem-

ber the opening sentence I'd so painstakingly worked out. At that moment, if anybody had asked me my name, I doubt if I'd have remembered that.

A complete blank! I just stood there!

At last, I knew I must say something; so I stammered that I was glad to be there. There was another pause. Then I said it was a pleasure to be there. There was another pause I had to do something about; so I said I was happy to be there. (Three bald-faced lies in a row! I'd have given anything I possessed to be somewhere else.)

That seemed to pretty well exhaust that subject. So I turned to their inviting me. I told them I wanted to thank them for inviting me. I said I was grateful for it. I added I appreciated it.

And that was about as far as I could go on that straw.

I still couldn't remember a single point, a single sentence of what I'd planned to say. Suddenly, though, I did remember that the person who had introduced me had said I was going to talk about the weekly newspaper.

So I said: "I'm going to talk about the weekly newspaper." I immediately realized that had just been said by the introducer, so I tried to put it a little differently; I explained a weekly newspaper is one published weekly. That didn't sound very original or profound; so I added, "that's the kind I work on".

That word "work" rang a bell. I remembered a sentence, down in the middle of the speech, about working eight days a week, on a weekly, instead of five. That got me going; and I went along fine, for a few minutes. Then I suddenly realized that what I was saying didn't make sense without

what I had planned to say first. By that time my mind was waking up, so I went back to the beginning. Again I got along fine till I found myself repeating that middle part I'd already said.

Once again I hesitated, and once again I was lost.

Then the last paragraph, that I'd written out with such care, came to me, and I said it.

It was a strong paragraph, and I'd intended to say it with emphasis and conviction. Well, I didn't.

I didn't because I wasn't sure whether I was going to stop then or go back and pick up some of the things I'd left unsaid; consequently, I said it lamely. Then I hesitated, trying to make up my mind whether to go back to those points I hadn't made or sit down.

I finally decided to sit down. So the speech ended just as it had begun, on a long, embarrassing pause!

Why did I do it? I don't know. If I was suffering from stage fright, I wasn't conscious of it. All I was conscious of was blankness.

And all I'm conscious of now is a sense of deep gratitude to learn I am not wholly alone; for I'm told the same thing happens, occasionally, to everybody.

UNCLE ALEX'S SAYIN'S

Human society is suffering acute indigestion from an overdose of science.—Lord Boyd-Orr.

How a fool and his money get separated is no puzzle compared with how they ever got together in the first place.
—Traer (Iowa) Star-Clipper

Ever'body runnin', runnin'; nobody gittin' nowhere. Some calls it progress.

Feller that's got all the answers most generally ain't got none of 'em right.

Folks is funny about sellin' their votes. Some sells 'em straight out fer cash money; others fer a favor — to them, or their families, or some second-cousin-once-removed.

NOT COW MILKERS — BUT REMEMBER

When I become terrified at the realization that this country now has millions of teenage boys who cannot milk a cow, I have to remember when I was the same age millions of boys could not drive an automobile.—Matador, Texas, Tribune.

DO YOU REMEMBER?

Looking Backward Through the Files of The Press

65 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK (1893)

There is no excuse for any man to appear in society with a grizzly beard, since the introduction of Buckingham's Dye, which colors a natural brown or black.

Messrs R. L. Porter and C. W. Slagle left for Washington last week to go before the Senate finance committee as witnesses in the case of Senator Z. B. Vance against Collector Kope Elias. Mr. Vance opposes the confirmation of Mr. Elias, of Franklin, as U. S. collector of revenue.

25 YEARS AGO (1893)

C. H. McClure, former county commissioner, gave an old fashioned corn shucking party at his home near Otto Tuesday night.

Three daylight moonshiners on the headwaters of Ellijay Creek outran two deputy sheriffs last Friday afternoon, proving the old saying that a scared man's legs will move faster. The deputies, Frank Leach and Jack Moore, surprised the shiners while they were "making a run".

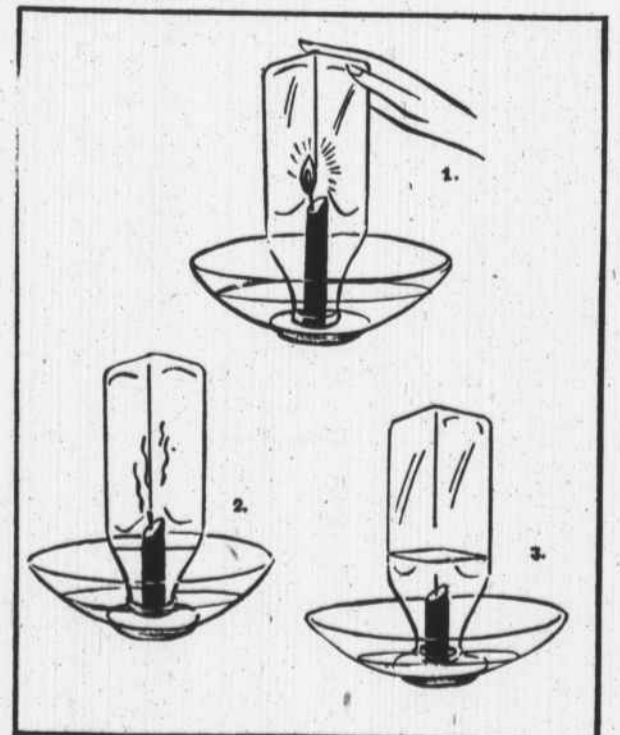
10 YEARS AGO

Miss Zena Pearl Rickman became the bride of Clarence E. Brogden in a candlelight ceremony October 19 at the home of the bride's parents, Mr. and Mrs. T. M. Rickman.

Miss Ann Teague and Jerry Potts were declared the county winners in the Better Farm and Home Methods contest sponsored in this area by the Nantahala Power and Light Company, and will receive free trips to Raleigh to compete for area and state prizes.

Science For You

By BOB BROWN



PROBLEM: Raise water up into an inverted bottle. NEEDED: Milk bottle, bowl and candle. DO THIS: Light candle, and drop wax into bowl so candle will stick there. Pour water into bowl, but do not cover candle. Invert bottle over the lighted candle. Water will rise as shown.

HERE'S WHY: The flame heats the air in the bottle, driving some of it out. Remaining oxygen is changed by the flame into carbon dioxide, much of which dissolves in the water, lessening the pressure, which allows the atmosphere to press water up into the bottle. When flame goes out, the remaining gases inside cool, contract, thus reducing the pressure more and allowing more water to be forced up. Copr. '58 Gen'l Features Corp. TM-World Rights Rsvd.