

THE PILOT

Southern Pines North Carolina

"In taking over The Pilot no changes are contemplated. We will try to keep this a good paper. We will try to make a little money for all concerned. Wherever there seems to be an occasion to use our influence for the public good we will try to do it. And we will treat everybody alike."—James Boyd, May 23, 1941.

Urgent Need For Water Program

The need for a program of water resource development, indicated in Hugh Haynie's cartoon on this page today, was underlined this week by Governor Hodges who said that more than any other one thing such a program will affect the economic future of the state.

North Carolina has already recognized the importance of water resources by organization of a State Board of Water Commissioners, a Water Resources committee of the Board of Conservation and Development and an advisory committee on water resources. It was to these combined groups that the Governor directed his call for action.

These boards are considering the draft of a bill for the next General Assembly that would create and outline the operation of watershed districts over the state. Functions that would be carried out by the districts include such water conservation measures as flood prevention and control, low flow regulation of streams, water recreation, drainage,

reclamation and others.

As with our other natural resources, we in the United States have been prodigal and shortsighted in our use of water. We have enjoyed it in such abundance that, like the virgin forests that are now all but gone (except for National and State forests created by the interest of a relatively few individuals), we gave little thought for the future. Now we know that water, like timber, must be conserved and cared for.

What can be done by conservation of water in a small way has been learned on hundreds of North Carolina farms where ponds have been built to provide water for crop irrigation, incidentally furnishing swimming and fishing facilities for farm families and their friends.

We are pleased that the Governor has expressed the urgency of a water resources program and will follow with interest the course of proposed legislation up to and through the 1959 General Assembly.

Calling For Praise, Not Scorn

We are pleased to see The New York Times saying: "American education deserves our praise, not scorn."

Thus does the newspaper that gives probably the most elaborate coverage of any in the nation to education put into perspective a subject that has been treated ponderously, hysterically and most every way except objectively since Sputnik I was shot aloft by the Russians.

We noted a few weeks ago on this page: "Americans would do better to approach the matter of improving the schools not so much through slighting comparisons with European systems as through genuine pride in the history of education in this democratic nation—a pride that impels us to take renewed interest in building well on a foundation that is already well laid."

The Times is not asking for a wholesale blind acceptance of American education, nor does it presume that we in the United States have nothing to learn from educational methods abroad. Thousands of words published by The Times in the past few years are testimony to the fact that it is well aware of the shortcomings of schools in this country.

The confidence expressed by The Times in the basic worth of American education is inspired by a report of the United States Office of Education presented at the Twenty-first International Conference on Public Education

in Geneva. No other country in the world approaches the U. S. school attendance record: 96.5 per cent of all boys and girls of high school and elementary age. Over 43 million young people—25 per cent of the nation's population—are in school or college and over 30 million adults are taking part in education programs.

As The Pilot noted in the editorial mentioned above, it should be a matter of pride for Americans that 70 per cent of our children are in school at age 16, as compared with 20 per cent in Europe.

Without elaborating the point, The Times also quotes the Office of Education report as saying that qualitatively, too, American schools are doing a good job. Cited specifically is the fact that school and community health services are joining to improve the mental, physical and emotional health of children.

Of this much we are certain: haphazard, generalized adverse criticism of American education doesn't help make it better and, given the fact that many persons are always ready to see and believe the worst, may hurt the cause.

The American people—and that means the people of Southern Pines and Moore County—can, with constructive and enlightened interest (including generous financial support), get and maintain better schools.

Heading For Horror?

The Administration has long followed an odd pattern of conduct in its manner of receiving what certainly seems like bad news.

When the Russian sputnik was launched, the first reaction was stunned dismay, followed almost immediately by a direct turnaround. The Madison Avenue public relations boys had jumped into the breach to announce that, actually, this Russian sputnik was just fine. Not because it was a great scientific feat on which the Russians should be congratulated. Not at all. It was fine because now that the United States was duly warned this nation would spring to action, at long last. It was almost as if the USSR had done us a favor.

Similarly when Vice President Nixon was booed, hissed, spat at, and rocked on his "goodwill" tour to South America, this, also was hailed, after the first shock, with exclamations of satisfaction. Now, said the government spokesmen, we knew where we stood. Next time we would be all prepared and ready to seize the initiative and really go after this goodwill thing in earnest. Then, too, think what courage had been displayed by the Veep: what an inspiration to the nation to see him standing firm under the barrage!

Now comes the long-heralded, long-awaited, long-avoided Summit Conference. The Administration seems to be playing tar-baby. Perhaps struck dumb, for once, by the approaching ordeal; perhaps simply because it doesn't know what to say. To Khrushchev OR the American people. So here comes the Christian Science Monitor's distinguished commentator, Joseph Harsch, happily picking up the Administration's erstwhile tactics, tongue well-wedged in cheek.

Mr. Harsch opines gently that one good thing might result from the unplanned, unscheduled summit meeting. But this one useful thing has nothing to do with the Marines in Lebanon, or with Iraq, or even with East Germany. Mr. Harsch suggests hopefully that this coming summit conference may prove "such a real horror" that it will never again be attempted to settle foreign policy negotiations on the summit of anything. Mr. Harsch hopes that this will be the summit conference to end summit conferences.

This may be a vain hope, this hope of Mr. Harsch's. Given the Russian leader's temper-

ament, acting ability and aims, and New York City's lamentable delight and acclaim for almost anything so long as it is exciting—not to mention the availability of thousands of telephone books, and other sources of waste paper—and high buildings from which to throw same, it seems only too likely that the Russian leader will receive the usual New York ovation, and go on to win further laurels.

Too bad this summit is New York. Now if it were Cheyenne, Wyo., or Central City, Colo., Lynchburg, Va., Skowhegan, Me., or even Southern Pines, N. C., we have a feeling the reception might be otherwise. At least that part of the horror could be avoided.

Too Much Brains

We are having a hard time keeping up with electronic brains which are getting smarter and smarter—in fact they are so smart now that our ordinary old-fashioned brain is totally incapable of grasping what our fellow mechanical thinkers are up to anyway.

Navy spokesmen assert that they hesitate to call their latest wonder, the Perceptron, a machine, because it is so much like a human being without life. (Our reaction to this sweeping statement is that favored in "Little Abner": "Ugh!").

Perceptron, its (his? her?) designer admits, will make mistakes at first like humans, but then it will grow wiser as it gains experience.

Perceptron can now tell whether test squares are on the right or left. Improved models are expected to remember images and information they receive and eventually, it is claimed, be able to recognize people and call out their names. (Wouldn't THAT be a surprise for the unwary?)

The Navy (and by the way why is the Navy doing all this messing around with robots?) says that the principle of the Perceptron will be used to build a thinking machine that will read and write.

So it appears that the Perceptron is now in about the cave man stage of development. We will be just as happy not to be around when the Navy gets it up to the equivalent of civilization. No telling what it will do then.

"One Of These Days We Really Oughta Start Rowing"



AND THE HOT, HOT SUN BEARS DOWN . . .

Tobacco: Epic Of Land And Labor

One of the best crops of tobacco this area has seen in many years—that's the outlook as reported by farmers and the men who work with them in the production of North Carolina's biggest money crop.

Growing taller daily in the fields of Moore County, tobacco will soon be ready for curing. Then the auction markets open and the fruits of nearly a year's labor are harvested—labor, on most farms, by all the family. And hard work it is, too.

"Tobacco land, U. S. A.," by Bruce Stone, appearing in the Raleigh News and Observer recently, captures impressionistically the tone and flavor of the annual tobacco epic, as taking place in the Sandhills and elsewhere in the flue-cured production area. Excerpts from this item follow:

Tobacco land, cotton land, corn land, timber. Animals, vegetables, fruits, and berries. You name it. We've got it. The land of plenty.

And the people work the lands through the hot summer months. Work it like their parents before them and their grandparents before their parents. The people's children watch and wonder, grow and learn. Someday the land will inherit them and they must know how to please it.

The lands, the lands, anything for the lands.

Tractors; working over the rolling countryside, grinding, pounding, spitting balls of blue smoke through rusty exhausts.

Mules, sweaty, straining, pulling against the heavy tobacco slides.

Here, son, here, you're dicing too shallow.

Git that weight on that disc. But, Pa, it was all right this mornin' over in th' new ground.

That's 'baccer land over there. son. Soft, black, like walking on pillows. This here is corn land. Hard, clay, lumpy.

Git that weight on, son. Yes, Pa.

Tobacco; money crop. Baby it, pamper it, care for it. Cheeker the rolling countryside with it. Watch its sticky leaves wave in the breeze. Tobacco, Tobacco. Money. Money. Money.

Prepare the ground for its bed, sow it, watch it grow. Spread the pretty white canvas over its tender shoots. Protect it, boy, protect it. Pull the weeds from its young roots. Now pull the plant, off to the fields, transplant it, water it, watch it grow.

Sun; hot, merciless, bearing down.

Man; bent, tired, dripping sweat.

Pa, I'm so tard and hot. Can I go play now?

No, son, we got to push on. But, Pa—

Don't sass me, boy. Yes, Pa.

Tobacco. Tobacco. Money. Money.

Plow it, fertilize it, pull its suckers. Look! On the leaves! Cutworms! Poison, poison. Kill the green monsters that would eat your profits, take food from our mouths, rob Ma of her new dress, Pa of his new gun, baby of her new doll. Cutworms, cutworms. Kill 'em. Kill 'em. Kill the green monsters.

Tobacco. Tobacco. Money. Money.

Strip the leaves from the tall stalks, lay it so carefully in the burlap-sided sled. Giddyup, mule, ain't got all day. Off to the barn with the load of sticky gold, lay it on a bench, hand it to a looper in bundles of three leaves, put it on a stick—not too tight, not too loose—pile it on the ground to await the menfolk.

Babies; lying on their backs in cribs under big shade trees, crying and waving their limbs frantically in the stuffy, summer air.

Mamas; oblivious to the cries of their young, too busy fingering the green gold and gossiping to all the other Mamas. Worried about next Sunday's church meeting. She hasn't a thing to wear.

And the hot, hot sun bears down.

Pa, can I go to th' pichur show in town tonight?

No, son.

Why, Pa?

Can't afford it, son.

But, Pa, I ain't been in a month.

You heard what I said, boy.

Yes, Pa.

Lunch time. Menfolk come up from the fields, battered straw hats tipped back on their heads,

know the extent of the ripples.

In a seminar on education in Tennessee I suggested to the Negro parents to make sure that their children study French immediately upon entering high school. We know of course, that there is no vertical segregation, but if the vertical Negro suddenly begins to talk French, he can even sit down without creating any serious emotion among the "whites." I had a fellow try this out on the cashier's line at the A&P store. He suddenly asked the cashier about some product in French, and the "white" folks ahead of him actually broke ranks to give him priority.

Of course there could be too much of a good thing. If the Negroes of the South follow my suggestion it is possible that within twenty years they'll all be talking French; it would no longer be a novelty.

Another 'Golden Plan'

Negroes Urged To Learn French

By HARRY GOLDEN

In The Carolina Israelite

One of the great retail chain stores has put the Golden "Out-of-Order Plan" into operation and with considerable success. They placed an "Out-of-Order" sign on the "white" drinking fountain in most of their stores in the "Upper" South. Within six weeks everybody was drinking the "colored" water without any bad effects, physical or emotional; and all the signs came off, "Out-of-Order," "white" and "colored." There is a problem, however. In most of these stores they made this experiment in the "Basement," and naturally they could not put an "Out-of-Order" sign simultaneously on the other floors. The whole idea would have been given away and made matters worse.

You throw a tiny pebble into a stream and you never really

Grains of Sand

Library Bulletin

Nice to know we aren't forgotten by our good friends, former librarian Dorothy Avery. Mrs. Avery, who was for many years Moore County librarian, with headquarters here, sent us an interesting clipping telling of the growth of the Canton library where she is now in charge. Mrs. Lambourne, town librarian, has posted the clipping on the bulletin board where all who run may read.

And we'd suggest—well maybe not running—not in this kind of weather—but at least a call at the library and a look at the clipping. There are pictures, too. And very well posed and taken.

Margaret Bishop is in Canton, too, and continuing her helpful work with books in that town. But you won't find that shy helper in any of the pix!

Anybody Else In A Temper?

We are. In a bad temper. Nothing too new about that situation, but right now two things in particular are rousing our fury.

One is the upping of postal rates while the mammoth loads of cheap second-class mail continue to fill postoffices and post-office trash baskets. Not to mention all other trash baskets in the nation.

And not to mention all the fine timber going into the making of such waste paper; the effort; the (yes, it's there somewhere) brain power that could be making its mark in things that might not be thrown into the trash basket.

WHY couldn't they make this second class mail pay its share of the postoffice work and time it consumes?

WHY?

Number two is the system of buying "lists" and then letting the "list" run the business.

Over and over you get demands to subscribe to this, that, or the other magazine or newspaper. They aren't always demands: often they are gentle, winning letters, most complimentary. They tell you how you are just the person the magazine or paper has been seeking, just the one to appreciate its subtle humor, charming articles, stimulating political essays.

The joker is: you happen to have been a subscriber for umteen years.

In other words here they had you all the time and apparently they never even knew it.

You write a protesting letter only to get back a note blandly passing over the situation as of little importance. They have their "list," and it would take too long and be too expensive to go over it and put you in the correct cubbyhole—the cubbyhole marked "SUBSCRIBER" instead of the one marked "POSSIBLE SUCKER."

We resent this business, or un-business, almost as much as the second-class mail racket. And, furthermore, it scares us. It's a horrible illustration of the power of the machine.

That story about the lone sheepherder out in Montana who suddenly got 7,000 copies of LIFE Magazine dumped at his wagon-gate because the plate in the addressing machine had got stuck is funny, but it's kind of horrible, too. A scary picture of men doing something close to insanity because of time and the machine.

Look out, Orphan Annie! The machines'll git you if you don't watch out!

Built-in Protection

Ran into a gentleman enjoying a summer drink in his favorite local establishment: beer and tomato juice mixed.

He's enthusiastic about it, too. Says it tastes good, but—best of all—the tomato juice provides built-in hangover protection.

So far, this beverage has no name. Anybody got any ideas along this line?

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