

We Wish You A Merry Christmas

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Hunt Blames Reagan For Shoe Plant Closings

BY ROBERT KOENIG
The Reagan administration is responsible for the closing of Melville Corporation shoe factories in North Carolina according to Gov. Jim Hunt. The governor charged the administration "left the American footwear industry to the mercy of unfair foreign competition" at a Thursday press conference in Asheville.

Hunt was commenting on the announcement earlier this month that the Melville Footwear Corp. will close down operations at its plants in Hot Springs, Sparta, Boone and Wilkesboro, N.C. and Mountain City, Tenn. The decision to close the shoe manufacturing plants will mean the elimination of more than 2,000 jobs. Hunt charged that the closings were a result of the Reagan administration's failure to renew a 1977 trade agreement limiting shoe imports. The

governor said, "The Reagan administration could have renewed the agreement for another three years in 1981, and the U.S. International Trade Commission recommended such an extension. Instead, the administration allowed the agreement to expire. The shoe industry has no protection whatsoever. Since the middle of the 1981, the country had been flooded by import footwear. Imports are up 17 percent this year alone."

Imported shoes currently account for 65 percent of all sales in the U.S. Hunt said that the closings of the three Melville plants in North Carolina will cut the number of shoe manufacturing workers in North Carolina in half.

Hunt called for the administration to take steps to protect the domestic shoe industry. He told reporters, "I think there should be some

reasonable regulations. We shouldn't be the only country in the world without any. We need some fair protection for our shoe industry or else the day is coming when there will be no shoe industry."

The governor pledged that his office would work with Melville officials to find buyers for the North Carolina plants. Hunt said at his office had not contacted Tennessee officials concerning the Hot Springs plant. While the majority of the workers at the Hot Springs plant are Madison residents, almost forty percent of the plant's 240 workers live in Tennessee. "We haven't contacted them, but we would certainly welcome any assistance they could offer us. Since the plant is located in North Carolina, however, the bonus of the responsibility will be on us."

Hunt also mentioned recent closings of plants in Sylva and

Asheville, but said he did not think that employment had reached its peak in Western North Carolina. Hunt told newsmen, "We're pleased that the economy is picking up, though we're concerned about the growing national deficit."

Hunt also disputed a recent claim made by Lieutenant Gov. Jimmy Green that he was never put in charge of the operation of state government during Hunt's absences from the state or during his hospitalization. "There's perhaps a little bit of misunderstanding," Hunt said. "The constitution provides that the lieutenant governor is the acting governor when the governor's out of state. It's automatic and you don't have to do anything."

Hunt said that his staff normally handles routine business when he is out of state on business.

The governor was also asked his opinion regarding the situation in Clay County and whether he believed that the governor should be given the power to remove convicted public officials from office. Hunt said, "I haven't studied the situation there enough to have formed an opinion. It is my understanding that the sheriff there is still in office. I believe that this is legal. A finding of guilt is not final until the appeals process is finished. I realize that a lot of people feel differently about that."

Regarding the power to remove convicted officials from office, Hunt said that the general Assembly would have to decide if it were necessary.

Hunt, who is still an unofficial candidate for the Senate in next year's election, said he would be happy to debate Sen. Jesse Helms after the May primary.



SANTA CLAUS left his sleigh and distributed candy to children during reindeer home and arrived in Marshall Friday's parade. Saint Nick shall by boot last week.

Hunt: Raise Teacher Salaries, Return Discipline To Schools

North Carolina needs to raise teacher's salaries and reinstitute discipline in the schools according to Gov. Jim Hunt. The governor called for increasing teacher salaries at a Thursday press conference at the University of North Carolina at Asheville.

Hunt was on the Asheville campus to attend a public meeting of the Commission on Education for Economic Growth help Thursday afternoon at Lipinsky Auditorium.

In a prepared statement read prior to the press conference, Hunt said, "To attract the best, I call for a

higher base pay for teachers. To retain the best, I call for a salary structure that allows teachers to earn more as they demonstrate excellence and assume greater responsibilities."

Hunt called for a return to discipline in the schools and said he supported corporal punishment in some instances. "We've got to have stronger discipline," Hunt said. "We need teachers who will be firm and require silence in class. We have to do what it takes to operate our schools and offer students who want to study, the opportunity

to learn. We've got to have principals who will back their teachers and superintendents who are behind their principals."

The governor added that discipline was also a responsibility of parents.

Asked where funds for increased educational spending would come from, Hunt said he believed that additional revenues from economic growth could pay for most of the programs.

Hunt said that North Carolina was not losing potential industrial development because of the quality of

public schools, but warned that the state could suffer in the future if it did not make improvements.

The governor said that education would be a key issue in next year's elections. "The primary responsibility for funding the schools is on the state and local level. All policy decisions are also made on the state and local level, and that's the way it should be. But a great deal of vocational education funding comes from the federal government. I think there's got to be an additional commitment on the federal level."

Commission Hears Suggestions For Improving Education

Higher teacher salaries, smaller classes and better laboratory equipment were just a few of the suggestions of the statewide Commission on Education for Economic Growth heard from speakers at a public meeting held at the University of North Carolina at Asheville Thursday.

The committee heard reports from business leaders, educators and the public during the four-hour meeting held in Lipinsky Auditorium. An estimated 400 people attended the hearing and more than 40 audience members addressed the hearing with suggestions for improving public education.

Harry Clark, president of Western Carolina Industries, Inc., complained of job applicants who couldn't spell the name of the high school from which they had graduated, but said the teachers were not to blame. "The system has made our teachers ineffective," Clark said. "Cut two-thirds of the paperwork and get someone else to do the other one-third and you'll get some teaching done."

Several teachers addressed the committee and called for increasing teacher salaries and further limiting class sizes. Many teachers called for limiting classes in

kindergarten through third grade to 15 students and to 20 students in grades four through nine.

Several public speakers suggested that the state found a western branch of the High School for Science and Mathematics based in Raleigh.

Mars Hill residents Smith Goodrum and Julie Long both spoke to the committee regarding funding for programs benefiting gifted and talented students. Goodrum suggested opening up programs for the gifted to other students in order to help identify gifted students.

News Record Editor Bob Koenig also addressed the hearing, calling for a change in the present system of allotting teachers on the basis of total enrollment.

College Dean, Former Coach Swap Charges

A conflict at the Mars Hill post office on Tuesday afternoon has led to charges against two participants, Robert Michael O'Brien and Claude Gibson. O'Brien is the dean of student development at Mars Hill College and Gibson is the former head football coach at the school.

The Tuesday afternoon confrontation at the post office in Mars Hill apparently started with words exchanged between the two men at a basketball game on the campus on Dec. 19.

On Tuesday following the incident, Gibson took out a warrant with the Madison County magistrate charging O'Brien with assault by pointing a gun. Gibson alleges that O'Brien pulled out the gun and said, "I'm going to shot you" after being confronted by the former coach in the post office lobby.

Questioned about the gun on Wednesday, O'Brien told The News Record, "As far as I'm concerned, it didn't happen."

On Thursday O'Brien charged Gibson with simple assault, assault with a deadly weapon and carrying a concealed weapon. (Continued on Page 1)

News Record Goes To 25¢

Newsstand and subscription prices for The News Record will increase in January, effective Jan. 3, 1984, the single copy price of The News Record will increase to 25 cents.

The one-year subscription price for residents of Madison and Buncombe counties will increase to \$6.50 while other one year subscriptions will increase to \$9.50.

Higher production costs were cited as the reason for the increase.

Car Wreck Kills Mars Hill Teenager

A 16-year old Mars Hill resident was killed Tuesday afternoon when he lost control of the car he was driving on Fisher Lane Rd. Robbie Capps, 16, was pronounced dead at the scene of the accident. A passenger in the car, Jeffrey Lane Flynn, 16 of Marshall was taken by ambulance to Memorial Mission Hospital in Asheville. Hospital spokesmen said Flynn suffered a fractured leg. He was reported to be in satisfactory condition on Monday.

According to State Highway Patrol Trooper T.E. Dudley, Capps was driving a 1982 Dat-

sun 280-Z at a high rate of speed on Fisher Lane at the time of the accident. Trooper Dudley said that it appeared that Capps lost control of the car, which then ran off the right side of the road and overturned several times. Capps was thrown from the car.

The two teenagers were members of the Madison High School varsity basketball team. They were on their way to the school for a game at the time of the accident. Madison High School officials cancelled the Tuesday evening games when they were informed of the accident.

(Continued on Page 3)



ROBBIE CAPPS

Weaverville Town Council Honors Former Members

The Weaverville Town Council honored two former members during its Monday night meeting. The council approved resolutions honoring former councilmen Robert L. Cheek and Bill Shope for their years of service to the town. Cheek completed his sixth term on the council in Nov. and Shope retired after serving five terms on the town board.

After approving the resolutions, the council also approved a motion exempting both the former council members from paying town water charges. Active council members receive free water service in lieu of a salary for performing their duties. The council also approved free water service for David Bell, the town's former maintenance supervisor who retired recently following 20 years service to the town.

Cable television service also occupied much of the council's attention during the Monday night session. The council heard from Ray Miller, operator of Crystal Year Cable Inc. concerning his plan to sell the cable operation to Cencom Cable Inc. Miller asked the council to approve the transfer of the cable franchise. He said that plans call

for Cencom to assume operation of the cable service on Feb. 1, 1984.

While meeting with Miller, the council members asked him about some problems Weaverville residents have reported with the present cable operator, Miller said that subscribers were sent letters asking for reports of problems six months ago with their monthly bills.

Miller told the board, "We tried to follow up on the people who have had problems, but apparently we've missed some." Miller said there were some problems with a contractor the company had hired to install cables to homes, but that he believed the early problems had been resolved.

Barry Babcock of Cencom told the council that his company plans to expand the present service by adding two pay channels, the Disney Channel and the Sports Channel. Both stations will be available to cable subscribers at a premium price.

The council also asked if service would be expanded to areas not presently served by the franchise, particularly the Shady Cove area near Reems Creek.

Miller said that plans call for Cencom to assume operation of the cable service on Feb. 1, 1984.

declined to say which areas would be included. He told the council, "Part of the financing plan for this system calls for expansion. We're planning to add quite a few areas. We're not coming in here lean."

The resolution Miller sought would have given the council's approval to a plan to transfer the franchise to Cencom. Similar resolutions will be required from the Woodfin Town Council and the Buncombe County Board of Commissioners. After some discussion, the council tabled a decision on the resolution until their next meeting, scheduled for Jan. 16.

Ben Clark was reappointed to serve as Weaverville's representative on the Metropolitan Sewer Board.

The council also approved two budget amendments during the Monday session. At the request of town manager Larry Sprinkle, council approved an appropriation of \$7,000 for the water and sewer supply fund. Sprinkle explained that the additional funds were needed because he had miscalculated needs because he used 1982 figures in preparing his budget for the current year. He did not realize that the

not order supplies in 1981, creating the low figure upon which Sprinkle made his budget estimate.

Sprinkle added that the town currently has some \$124,000 in unappropriated funds.

The council also approved the use of \$4351 in federal revenue sharing funds for the purchase of a new copier machine for Town Hall. Sprinkle said that the town's present copier no longer meets the needs of the town. He said that the town now needs a copier capable of reproducing from computer printout sheets. The machine will be bought through a state contract.

Weaverville employees were awarded Christmas bonuses at Monday's meeting. Supervisory personnel were awarded \$100 bonuses while other personnel will receive a bonus of \$50.

The council also approved a resolution reducing the speed limit on Weaver Blvd. from the present 25 mph to 20 mph. The lower speed limit was approved in anticipation of the opening of a new shopping center on the street. The new center is to be developed by the

NOTICE

In Celebration of Christmas Day, THE NEWS RECORD OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED MONDAY, DECEMBER 26.

Deadline for the Dec. 28 issue will be Friday, Dec. 23 at 5 p.m. The News Record office will reopen Tuesday, Dec. 27 at 8:30 a.m.