

Tempest in a Teapot

Beaufort town commissioners met Thursday morning, March 24, in the town hall to discuss the possibility of extending the town limits. They agreed that at their April meeting they would pass a resolution recommending annexation of Piver's Island, Inlet Island, all property on the south side of the causeway between Beaufort and Newport river, and property on the north side of the causeway from Beaufort to Newport river, including the marshes.

This resolution was passed at their meeting April 4. On Tuesday, April 12, the legal notice on the proposed annexation was published in THE NEWS-TIMES.

This whole thing, which, unfortunately, has the potentialities of starting a shooting war between Beaufort and Morehead City began over a month ago when a field representative for the North Carolina League of Municipalities came here and suggested that Beaufort ZONE all the land one and one-quarter miles beyond its present limits. This would have included the area now in question.

A bill to this effect, a standard bill which gives any municipality the right to carry out this zoning, was asked by Beaufort to be introduced in the general assembly. H. S. Gibbs, the county's representative in the legislature, refused to do so, according to reports from Beaufort officials.

It was then that the town of Beaufort hoped to effect the zoning by taking in causeway territory and zoning it under the plan which soon will be drawn up for the town as a whole.

Morehead City cried "Thief!" The causeway citizens cried, "Leave us alone!" And Beaufort suddenly realized it had a lion by the tail.

Monday night a week ago, April 18, causeway and island residents met at the Rainbow inn on the causeway. They were chagrined because Beaufort did not approach them with the annexation proposal before adopting the resolution. They decided to circulate a petition demanding a referendum.

Their objections against being taken into Beaufort were that their tax rate would be doubled; \$2.80 (county \$1.80 and Beaufort \$1.00) instead of only \$1.80 as at present. They claimed that without water mains Beaufort's fire-fighting equipment would do them no good. (Each causeway resident and island dweller uses water from wells). They predict that if they become a part of Beaufort they will not be given a sewage disposal system nor will their garbage be collected "... because Beaufort doesn't collect its garbage in town now."

Morehead City's reaction was this: Morehead City money, blood and sweat had been spent in promoting the port and having the ports bill passed, then Beaufort tries to cash in on their efforts by taking the land east of Newport river which has been designated as area for port expansion.

At the second Monday night meeting, April 25, at the Rainbow inn, causeway residents were presented with a petition by a resident of Morehead City who owns property in the area under dispute. This petition asks that the whole area originally designated by Beaufort, with the exception of the railroad and the marshes, become a part of Morehead City.

Morehead officials say the tax rate will be \$1.80 rather than \$1.80 per hundred—the causeway residents would be exempt from payment of debt service. This would make their total tax \$2.95 per hundred (including the county tax) rather than \$3.80 if they went with Beaufort, or \$1.15 more than they are paying now.

The \$1.15 Morehead City tax rate, broken down, would be \$1 to the town for general expenses, 10 cents port assessment and 5 cents hospital assessment.

It is claimed that 80 per cent of the year-round causeway residents, eligible to vote, have already signed this petition.

Morehead City does not want its ports expansion plans hamstrung by a high tax rate on the shore opposite the present Port Terminal. It claims its hand has been forced to keep the tax rate as low as possible so that large companies planning to build warehouses there at their own expense will not be scared off by the high rate.

Beaufort, attempting to "progress" as it has been accused so often of not doing, thought it had something to offer the causeway citizens; with good intentions, if perhaps, blunderingly, went about doing it.

The causeway residents are, they say, caught between the devil and the deep blue sea.

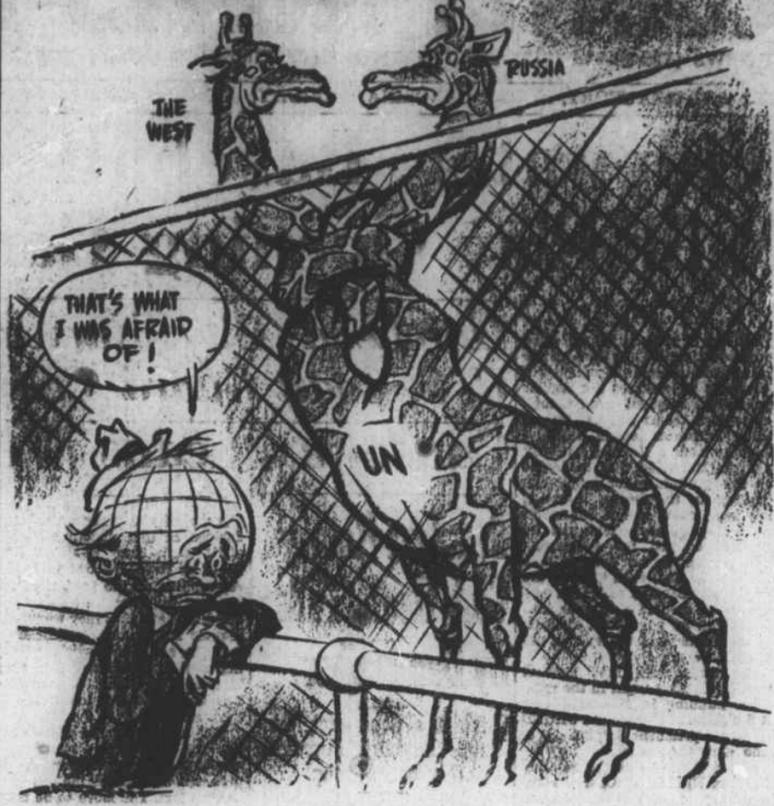
They don't want to become a part of any town, Henry Holt, spokesman says, and they would rather not incorporate a town of their own. But if they must go with one town or the other, they would rather go with Morehead City—probably because the tax rate is lower. (However, as the laws now stand, exempting causeway residents from the 85 cents Morehead City debt service tax is illegal. It is, essentially, discrimination against the present Morehead City residents. To make this exemption legal, a special bill will have to be passed by the legislature or the town charter of Morehead City will have to be amended).

Morehead City has never won any gold medals for expert and regular garbage collection. Neither can it offer causeway residents sewage disposal systems. It's doubtful too if the town can bring enough pressure on Tide Water Power company to lay water mains there.

Perhaps causeway, Piver's Island, and Inlet Island residents, (those who have children of school age) would like their youngsters to attend the Morehead City school. In that case, plans might be made to have Gillikin buses carry them to school.

Town officials of Morehead City claim that actually they don't want the causeway within their town limits because of the high tax rate problem cited above; also that the annexation will cost them money, but on the other hand, they don't want port plans jeopardized.

THERE IS SO SUCH AN ANIMAL



Beaufort admits, too, that the annexation will cost them money.

To us, a neutral observer, it's a tempest in a teapot and we suggest that the lid be lifted and everybody cool off for about 30 days...

To digress for a few moments, this makes us realize vividly how international conferences and the United Nations can become entangled in seemingly hopeless snarls. Nations which have more problems of greater magnitude than Beaufort and Morehead City, have their squabbles. We read about them in the papers and wonder despairingly why the problems can't be ironed out.

If Beaufort and Morehead City don't settle this squabble amicably, we assuredly will think the same thing in this case. This is an opportunity to make narrower the rift between the two towns. Anyone who is too narrow-minded to see that can be put in the same class as Molotov.

Right now Morehead City says, "Beaufort wouldn't cooperate." Beaufort says, "Morehead City won't cooperate." That's the same thing that has been said for years. But nobody has earnestly sought cooperation on either side.

If Morehead City is sincere in saying, "We'd rather not have the causeway part of our town" — if the causeway and island residents are sincere in saying they would rather stay the way they are, and if Beaufort is sincere in saying that annexation of that territory would mean an additional financial burden, there is the basis for an agreeable settlement in which a bright future for the port and Carteret county would be guaranteed.

However, if these claims are merely talk, if spite work is going to maintain the upper hand as it has in the past, then we feel nothing but regret and a lesser faith in those individuals who have in their hands the fate of Morehead City and Beaufort.

their worst and when hundreds of bus-riding children sometimes arrive at school from one to three hours late. It is thought that Scott prefers the joys in good weather, fearing that his rural friends might not be able to get to the polls at all if the election were held in the dead of winter.

NEWGROUND... Although Kerr Scott has played around with various projects, plans, and ideas since becoming Governor, hitting a sprout here and breaking a plow-point there, he has never removed his eyes from the two big poles at the field... \$50,000,000 for schools and \$200,000,000 for roads. Many a long root which he didn't know was there has sprung back to crack him on the shins, but he kept plowing.

THE WINNER... While the Legislature has been cursed a great deal, it has, nevertheless, gone along with Scott to the extent of spending every dime in sight for the next two years. It could not have spent more without raising your taxes. It has permitted the Governor to spend \$7,500,000 for ports. He is also getting his road and school bond votes. He has lost out on some relatively minor matters, but if you have looked on the past three-and-a-half months as a fight between Scott and the General Assembly, then Scott must be put down as the winner. If he fares as well at the hands of the people in the bond votes as he did with the Legislature, there should be no cause for anxiety and further hand-wringing by Scott followers.

BACK HOME... Most of the legislators have gone home each weekend to test the sentiment of their constituents, but North Carolina is a long State and at least one member has been here constantly on the job since the General Assembly convened the first

uptown... Dr. J. Henry Highsmith, veteran school leader, cashing a check in a local bank and asking the cashier for "my quarter's worth of pennies for my grandchild's piggy bank."... Fou Bailey, son of the late Senator J. W. making pedestrians go around him while he laboriously works at a broken shoe string... Charlie Parker rubbing his forehead in deep thought as he throws words together for Governor Scott in a back office in the Capitol... State Secretary Thad Eure looking uncomfortable at a late-hour dimery as two alcoholics sitting on either side tell of their great love... "Boy, we was for you, Thad. We always for one man... and that man is Thad Eure."... Representative J. H. McMullan of Chowan County, brother of Att. Gen. Harry, solemnly sketching pencil pictures of other members as local bills are sing-songed through at the rate of one a minute... Rep. L. A. Martin of Lexington, vigorous and pale and perspiring, feeling pulse and putting hand over his heart as he finishes a tirade against whiskey... Supreme Court Justice A. A. Seawell looking at least 75 of his 85 years as he uses his neck little black cane in crossing Fayetteville Street.

THE CAMPAIGN... After the Legislature adjourns, Governor Kerr Scott will find himself about where he was a year ago; waging a campaign. This time he will be out soliciting votes for the \$200,000,000 bond issue for roads and for the \$50,000,000 bond issue for school buildings.

He told some of his disciples last week that they must fight a much harder battle in putting this across than they did in getting him nominated Governor. You are going to find most of the press agents employed by the various State departments going all-out for the bond issues.

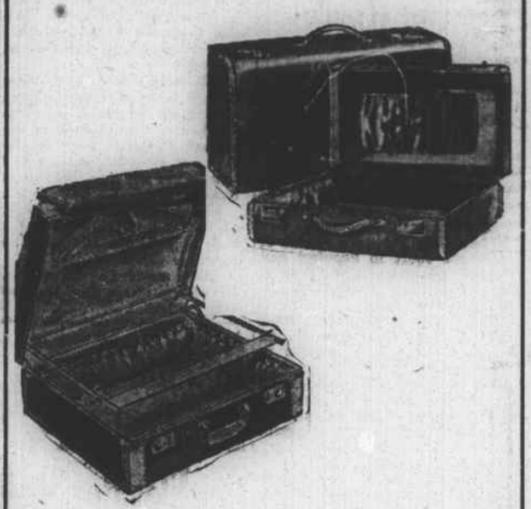
P. S. There will also be two or three good-paying jobs for newspapermen who line up with the opposition.

WINTER BETTER... All along, the Governor has said the balloting should be done this spring. However, the feeling is that the road bond issue, at least, would stand a better chance of passage if voted on about the middle of December — or a day or two before Christmas, when rural roads are at

which started with the little Renfro Herald in Yadkin county in January, 1943, is now being carried in 42 papers from Wayneville to Morehead City... Scott appointments are scheduled to get underway next week, so if you have a man or men you are musing, you had better get the ball rolling as of right now.

OFF THE CUFF... This column.

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Raleigh Roundup
By Eula Nixon Greenwood

IN THE HOLE... The belief here is that the average member of the Legislature has lost in cold cash approximately \$1,000 through serving the people this session. This does not include the money he has lost in being away from his regular work. Put yourself in his position: Suppose you had to leave your law practice, your medical practice, your school, or whatever you are doing, for about four months. Not only have the legislators not drawn a cent of pay for about six weeks now; they have been forced to rent a room here, eat out constantly, and at the same time maintain their residence back home.

Well, you might say some of the legislators get money from corporations, etc., for voting a certain way. This charge has often been made, but has never been substantiated. One fine man who now lives in Raleigh and who has been a member of the Legislature for 20 years says he has never known and never heard of one legislator's having accepted one cent for his vote.

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CARTERET COUNTY NEWS-TIMES
Carteret County Newspaper
PUBLISHED BY THE NEWS-TIMES COMPANY, INC.
Lockwood Phillips - Publishers - Eleanor Dear Phillips
Publishing Offices At
904 Arendell St., Morehead City, N. C.
120 Crown Street, Beaufort, N. C.
Subscription Rates: In Carteret, Curran, Pamlico, Hyde and Onslow Counties \$5.00 per year; \$2.50 for 6 months; \$1.50 for 3 months. Outside of these counties \$7.50 per year; \$4.00 for 6 months; \$2.50 for 3 months. Single copies 10 cents.
Member of
Associated Presses - Greater Westchester - N. C. Press Association
Southwestern of Circulation
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