

'We've Got to Stand Together against the West!'



EDITORIALS

Never Forget That These Editorials Are The Opinion Of One Man
And He May Be Wrong

Caribbean Carnival

Another pint-sized Caribbean "republic" has hit the sawdust trail, by kicking out one form of dictatorship and substituting another. The Dominican Republic has buried the leader of the Trujillo Family and chased the rest of his kinfolk to sanctuary along the Florida goldcoast.

Undoubtedly the most revolutionary political principle still running loose in the world today is the American experiment in government. Although some of these newly freed peoples affect the trappings of socialism, and pay lip service to the Kremlin they are seeking, albeit blindly for the pot at the end of the rainbow that the "Yankee Colossus" has found.

Most of all they want our standard of living, without the faintest comprehension of the kind of sacrifice it took to create the American way of life.

Secondarily, they want the freedoms that Americans take for granted, without really understanding the fundamental difference

between freedom and license.

Centuries of tediously slow development and generations of super-human labor have flowered into the American Way of Life. There was no magic wand, no blue print by scientists — either political or economic. America's emergence was after a hectic courtship, an agonizing pregnancy and a tortured birth.

Countries — big or little — who hypnotize themselves into believing that they can have all of this by adopting the slogans, imitating the political set up or importing American limousines are living in a recklessly foolish paradise built on the doorsteps of hell.

The Cubans swapped Batista for Castro, and at this date it is too early to know who will step into Trujillo's boots. Undoubtedly it will have to be some strong man, since the illiterate, greedy halfbreed mobs that make up the people of the Dominican Republic are not capable of governing themselves any more than the Congolese or the Cubans or the Brazilians.

Wonder Why

Some months ago the State Highway Commission was eagerly insistant upon opening up King Street as a route through Kinston for heavily travelled highways N. C. 11 and NC 55. Years ago, before he became director of highways, Bill Babcock recommended this method as part of a thoroughfare plan for the city of Kinston.

When first confronted by this recommendation from the highway commissioner Kinston officials backed off because of their fears about the right of way costs which the city must share.

Then the Highway Commission did a survey of the proposed opening up of King Street route and the widening of East Street route. This survey showed that the King Street route would be \$300,000 cheaper than the East Street routing.

Now the officials of Kinston have completely accepted and repeatedly and unanimously voted for the King Street route over the East Street routing.

But the highway people, including Highway Director Babcock have reversed themselves and say that they will four-lane these

two highways to either Vernon or Washington Streets in Kinston.

How the highway people have been able to so completely reverse themselves in such a short period of time is a minor political mystery, to which we suspect we have the answer.

If this highway routing has degenerated into a political contest rather than a traffic engineering problem then all aspects of the matter should be brought out so that the people who will be paying for the additional \$300,000 cost might be better able to understand what kind of wodd it takes to make highway shingles.

In addition to the East Street route being considerably more expensive it neither serves the immediate or long range best interests of the City of Kinston.

The East Street route may serve a few individuals better, but public projects should be concerned with the general good, rather than the enhancement of individual bank accounts. We recognize how naive this sounds in the light of political reality, but it is true, whether practiced or not.

What Is Urban Renewal

The people of Kinston may quite easily be mixed up on the specific question of What Urban Renewal really is. Although we do not pretend to be an expert on this matter we believe we have been exposed to enough facts about urban renewal to attempt to answer this question.

Urban Renewal is first a program intended to arrest and prevent residential and commercial blight. Blight is the gradual decay of property values and living conditions in a given area caused by either refusal or inability of property owners to standardize or keep in reasonable repair their properties in such areas.

In an urban renewal program in cities of less than 50,000 population the cost of projects is split three-fourths federal government, one-fourth city government, with whatever improvements in utilities, streets and sewers the city may install counting as payments "in kind" rather than in cash.

What does a project cost?: 1. The price of the land, 2. the cost of clearing the land, 3. the administrative cost of supervising the purchase, clearing, and sale.

How is the land purchased?: By direct negotiation between the owner and the urban renewal officials. If the private owner refuses to negotiate, then the property may be acquired through the established procedures of eminent domain.

Who fixes the price in an eminent domain procedure? A jury of men and women in the superior court of whatever county the action may be entered. Naturally, for Kinston it would be a jury in Lenoir County Superior Court that would fix the price.

What happens after the land is acquired? Its re-use is determined by the renewal commission with the approval of the City Council. By re-use the commission determines which areas would be most suitable for residential, commercial or industrial purposes.

After the re-use determination is made the property is cleared and sold at public auction, and the only restrictions are similar to zoning regulations. These restrictions differ from zoning in only one particular: In zoning one may buy a commercial or industrially zoned lot and build a home on it. But in a renewal area one may construct only those type buildings in it that are specifically indicated for it in the re-use plan. In short, if you buy a renewal tract designated for industrial use, you can use it only for industrial purposes.

If the re-use plan of an area determines that an area is to be allocated for residential purposes no standard residential buildings in that area would be acquired. If the re-use plan determines that an area is to be allocated to commercial usage no standard type commercial property in the area would be acquired, and the same pattern follows for industrial.

In an urban renewal project nobody's property is "taken, seized or confiscated". It is purchased at a price generally much more than fair to the property owner, and when a negotiated purchase is impossible the full protection of the courts is available to every property owner. It is the identical system used to acquire lands for road building and everyother kind of public project.

How much control does the federal government have over the project? After a project has been accepted as economically practical and sound from a planning viewpoint, federal controls end. There are no federal controls on the sale of the land.

Between the post office site and urban renewal project downtown Kinston business gossips will have plenty to keep their tongues warm even during a long, long winter.

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PERSONAL PARAGRAPHS

BY JACK RIDER

Currently two situations in Kinston accent the absolute need to create permanent off-street parking areas if the central business district of Kinston is to continue. One is the closing of Montgomery Ward's Kinston store, which has little adjacent off-street parking, while Sears, just across the street is hastily rebuilding its establishment which was badly gutted by a Thanksgiving Day fire. Sears has flourished and it has a large adjacent off-street parking area.

Of course, it may be argued that Ward's has suffered from very poor policy at its top levels, and has not been nearly so aggressive as Sears. But look around at other downtown Kinston instances: Doug Baker's Yellow Front, Caroon's Market, Courie's and Stroud's markets all closed down on the same block of South Queen Street. Neither had any off-street parking. Harvey's super market with plenty of adjacent off-street parking is flourishing.

The automobile is both a blessing and a curse. It brings us great pleasure, broadens our continuing education, makes distances shorter and conversations more frequent. But at the same time it kills us by the thousands, maims us by the millions, bankrupts us by the tens of millions and harasses every official from the cop on the corner to the President of the United States, who has to be concerned with a sufficient network of inter-state highways for commerce and military demands.

The automobile has made Americans the most restless but most lazy people in the world. We are constantly on the go, but we insist upon parking within 20 steps of whatever we have travelled a thousands miles to see. This cultivated laziness has cost city planners and city property owners more sleepless nights and more money than any phenomenon of the 20th century. There are only two answers to the problem of traffic congestion: to provide adequate public transportation or adequate off-street parking. Either is very expensive.

The larger cities are almost forced to provide public transportation, while the trend in cities of less than a million in population is toward off-street parking. Kinston, at present, does not have a single permanent off-street parking space. Fortunately, Kinston does have several hundred off-street parking spaces but all are owned by private citizens, who may or may not continue to use their property in this fashion.

The county owns a considerable tract of land directly back of the court house. This, by all means should be immediately converted into a permanent parking lot. The land was purchased as a hedge against future office expansion needs of the county. But the county already owns a considerable tract of land immediately north of the court house upon which a two, three or four storied office building, with connecting overhead passageway could be built that would easily provide every imaginable office need the county ought to have in the next hundred years.

The Herring Family is currently tearing down the Central Warehouse in the heart of downtown Kinston. I'm sure I have no way of knowing what they plan to do with this extremely strategic piece of land, but I hope that it will be possible to convert the entire area into a permanent off-street parking facility. It is centrally located and would stimulate business in its entire perimeter and lead to rejuvenation of both buildings and businesses in that particular area. And this is an area that badly needs both.

The city is getting ready to vacate its old city hall sometime within the next year or two. Some aldermen feel that it will be necessary to sell that site in order to pay for the city hall. I suggest that this would be unwise economics. No section of Kinston more badly needs off-street parking than this particular area. As it stands the city has very little invested in that tract of land. It would be wiser to issue sufficient bonds to complete the city hall and keep the old city hall site for off-street parking, perhaps flanked by modern commercial establishments.