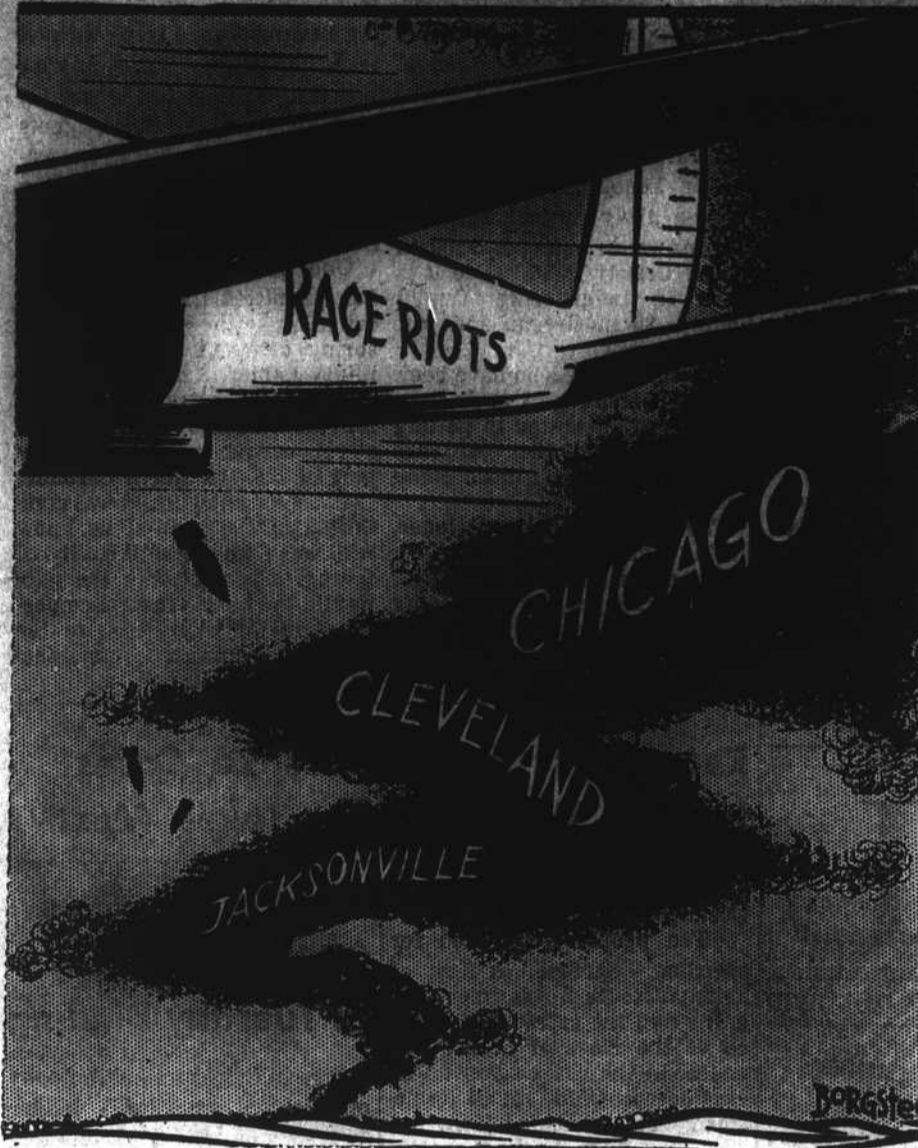


Homefront Escalation



EDITORIALS

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

What CAN Be Done?

In a "free society" what really CAN be done about strikes of key groups?

If "free men" are denied the right to quit the work they surely are no longer free.

There is some archaeological evidence to support the premise that other highly developed civilizations founded on hostile shores not totally unlike this that threatens our complex society today.

In the sense of mechanical technology we have no evidence that any society ever reached the lofty heights we now occupy, but there is plenty of evidence to support the fact that numerous cultures have existed that equalled, or perhaps surpassed the present insofar as the loose term "civilization" is concerned.

The glories of Greece, the grandeur of Rome, the enigma of Egypt are fairly familiar to the average high school student. Less familiar, but perhaps even greater than these story book Mediterranean dynasties are the incomparable sprawl of the Saracen culture, the

Mogul Empire of India, the China of Marco Polo and the almost forgotten grandeurs that left architectural splendors in dozens of hidden jungles throughout Southeast Asia.

And more recently we have known of Napoleon's France, Victoria's Britain and Bismarck's Imperial Germany.

Military defeat ended some of these, but far more died from internal rot than from external attack.

And the central virus that rotted a majority of these previous great empires was the Antoinettean philosophy of "Letting the mob eat cake." The Roman Caesars gave their mob the circus. The Saracen world foundered on an exalted sensuality that makes some of our current high jinks look about like a Sunday School picnic by comparison.

So in the final analysis the death of great powers is a built-in safety valve that protects lesser people from dominance for too long by any nation that climbs to the top of the power dung heap.

Lanier's In Trouble

North Carolina Insurance Commissioner Edwin Lanier has surely made one big mistake and if his statement of last week is correct he has made several more mistakes that have cost the farmers of our general area a great deal of money.

Last week in what he called a preliminary report, Lanier said \$139,884.20 had been stolen by insurance agents, insurance adjusters and farmers in "Eastern North Carolina."

He said this had been going on since 1963.

Lanier's first mistake is in throwing such a blanket indictment over every farmer, insurance agent and adjuster in our entire area. If Lanier knew enough to be specific down to the penny about how much has been stolen he also had

to know who had been involved in this hail insurance banditry.

And if it has been going on since 1963 Lanier is guilty of not having protected the public by prosecuting these thieves much earlier, and now that he is sufficiently concerned to issue such a blanket charge he also ought to be gentleman enough to protect the honest farmers, agents and adjusters by calling names and having indictments issued against those believed to be guilty.

Rumors around this section are ten cents a dozen. This is all Lanier's fault. The honest people who are under this cloud of suspicion generated by Lanier ought to demand that he take the step he surely has to ultimately take, which is to get specific and put somebody in jail.

Everett's in Trouble

North Carolina Senator Everett Jordan had a quiet spring, but his late summer and early fall will be quite different.

The reason is a tall, quiet-spoken Smithfield Manufacturer named John S. Shallcross.

Now Shallcross is just a hopeful gleam in the eye of North Carolina Republicans. He and his supporters know they have a very long row to hoe in electing a Republican to a statewide office in North Carolina. The trick has not been turned in this century.

But Shallcross is a very determined man, and he has some excellent tools to work with in his effort to dislodge the state's junior senator.

Shallcross is 46, hardworking and better than any Republican in this generation he seems to grasp the fact that the plurality that has kept North Carolina in the Democratic Party lives here in Eastern North Carolina, and he says he intends to exert a large part of his effort in this end of the state that Republicans have very largely ignored in the recent past. Jordan will be 70 in September, 76 at the end of his term if he is elected.

Heartened by John East's showing against Walter Jones in the first congressional district, inspired by the bumbling in Viet Nam, the gnawing cancer of inflation and excited by the almost pious services Jordan has rendered to President Johnson in the Bobby Baker white wash job, Shallcross is working early, working hard and he says now in July that he intends to play with every card in the deck to unseat Jordan, since congress is the key to the myriad abuses of our economy, our constitution and our basic freedoms.

B. Everett better pack his bag and think up some good answers to a lot of bad questions he'll be asked between now and November by Shallcross.

The Eternal Question

The eternal question of civilization is: Can we afford it?

Since societies of men began there has always been an urge to keep up with the next-door cave dweller, and this applies at every level of society.

Families, churches, counties, states and national government are spurred on by this same keeping-up-with-the-Joneses philosophy.

Lenoir County is now suffering an acute attack of this social disease. Hospitals, airports, water pollution, schools, streets, colleges, and recreation are all in need of huge chunks of what the taxpayer has less and less of these days.

"Progress," and the construction trades, and the users of each of these facilities make very strong cases for each. In the minds of many nearly all of these mentioned here come in the "must" category.

We agree. We do need a better hospital and all of these other things, but can we afford them?

Federal programs now take close to half of the average person's income . . . and we have all but lost any control over the rubberstamp congress which each year levies more and more heavily on our income.

Over local projects we do still have total control, and so many of us feel that if we can't control the federal bite we can at least lessen or keep under reasonable control the slice of our income that is taken for city and county projects.

But this can be a "robbing Peter to pay Paul" attitude, which might cause the most needful projects to be abandoned.

In the months just ahead Lenoir Counties are going to be asked to decide the future of the county for a long, long, time. So far no workable financial program has been offered by our officials in answer to that question: Can we afford it?

Further burdening of the real estate and personal property of the county with higher ad valorem taxes is both unfair and unreasonable. Use taxes are more fair but no official of the county has suggested what kind of use tax we can levy to foot the huge bills that keeping up with the Joneses entail.

PERSONAL PARAGRAPHS
BY JACK RIDER

There are many remarkable statistics pouring from the bureaus along the Potomac, and it is amazing how little attention the public pays to the glaring discrepancies that exist in the so-called "fair" expenditure of tax monies.

Among the most belabored branches of government is the welfare agency. It has the thankless job of taking care of people nobody else wants to take care of. The people who labor in this vineyard try to do a good job, but the odds are against them and the illogic of national policy is unbelievable.

Consider: In the nation as a whole 123 persons out of 1,000 over 65 draw a welfare check in the category of old age assistance. But in Louisiana the rate is 499 persons — or just a tiny fraction less than half of all past 65 getting a welfare check. Put this beside the District of Columbia where the rate is only 34, Virginia where the rate is 44 or Maryland where the rate is 39. Can any statistician, sociologist, politician or magician explain such a wide variation? I doubt it.

In rich Texas the rate is 280 per thousand. In destitute West Virginia the rate is 84. In oil rich Oklahoma the rate is 321. North Carolina's rate is 129. . . almost four times that of Washington, D. C. and one fourth that of Louisiana. And if you think this situation only involves the aged poor take a further look.

The national rate for aid to the blind is 81 per thousand for people over 18. In Maryland the rate is only 20 and in Mississippi the rate is 230. Why are there three times as many blind recipients in Mississippi as in the nation at large and 11 times as many as in Maryland? North Carolina's rate in this category is 178, while Sister State Virginia's rate is just 44 per thousand.

Aid to the permanently and totally disabled averaged 4.7 persons per thousand between the ages of 18 and 64 in the nation. But Mississippi's rate is 14.7 and in Texas the rate is only 1.

The national rate for dependent children is 42 per thousand for all children under 18. But in West Virginia that rate is 140 and in Texas the rate is only 17.

There is no logical explanation for these variations, but there is even less for the way the money is thrown around. Take a look further at the variations. The national average monthly payment for old age assistance is \$77.94. Yet the average check in Oklahoma is \$95.20 and the average check in Mississippi is \$39.38. North Carolina's average is \$61.67.

The totally disabled nationally average \$78.62 per month. Again Oklahomans get \$110.48 while Mississippians get \$43.47. North Carolinians average in this category \$70.34.

The average check per family for dependent children in the nation is \$132.41. In Washington, D. C. the average is \$155.40. In Mississippi \$39.34 and in North Carolina \$99.89.

The average per child in the nation is \$33.10 per month. In Oklahoma \$34.70, in Mississippi \$9.87, in North Carolina \$24.15. Does poverty and need vary so greatly just across state lines? The dependent child in Washington City gets \$32.66 and over the river in Virginia the average is \$25.49.

Then you can take these same categories of federal aid and break them down within states as between counties and you wind up with equally unexplainable variations. The only thing that is uniform — state by state and county by county — is the tax rate and the people getting the most from these and other federal programs pay no more federal tax than those who get much, much less. Equity does not exist in the egalitarian system. The rule is that of bureaucratic whim, not logic, not need, not fairness. . .

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