

Carr Calls Impeachment Talk: It Vanishes

AUSTIN

In a low-key, at times hushed-voice talk that lasted ten minutes, Speaker Waggoner Carr confronted impeachment rumors that had blossomed into newspaper headlines. He told an assembled House of Representatives, "If it be your desire to oust me, then be at your work," retired from the chamber, and was minutes later welcomed back by a standing ovation from roughly a third to a half of the members.

The drama, enacted on Wednesday morning, drew a variety of reactions from the membership, none of which the Observer was able to record for "on the record" quotes.

Carr's prepared address opened, "Yesterday (Tuesday) it was reported that several of you secretly met together for the purpose of

devising a plan to oust me as Speaker of the House of Representatives. The plans devised in this secret meeting were carried in all the newspapers throughout the state last night and today. In most instances, the newspapers carried large and bold headlines proclaiming that some members of this House met at this secret rendezvous and planned my removal."

In an interview with news reporters, Carr blamed the impasse on taxes on "an alliance between liberals and sales taxers." "When I say liberals, I don't mean all liberals, many are conscientious, I mean the radicals—the far left group," he said.

The House was besieged by "personal privilege" speeches after Carr returned to the chair. Rep. Charles Whitfield, Houston liberal, paused to salute Carr "for the classic manner you met the challenge," then criticized Carr's statements to newsmen that the impeachment rumors were the work of "a left-wing liberal." Said Whitfield, "Nothing could be further from the truth, Mr. Speaker. As a matter of fact, the original suggestion came from a member of the rock-ribbed East Texas conservative group, but we all talked about it."

The day before, when impeachment rumors were common talk in downtown Austin hotels as well as on the House floor, newsmen, following speculation as to who started the rumors, questioned Rep. Jerry Sadler of Palestine. Asked if there was anything to the rumors, the veteran East Texas conservative told newsmen, "Where there's smoke, there is the possibility of a gorgeous flame. Nine million people are involved in this tax fight, it's bigger than the political ambitions of any one man."

Rep. Hughes of Dallas rose on personal privilege after Whitfield. He criticized Carr's "secret" inference in an indirect way, saying he and "another member of the House signed a letter inviting members to discuss the tax bill—not personalities, not parliamentary procedures concerning anyone in this House." Hughes criticized the subsequent press coverage, particularly a story appearing in one paper which he did not identify, as "one of the poorest examples of journalism I've ever seen. There was no connection between the headline and the story, no names, just inferences. That story was just an example of what poor journalism can do to this Democratic body."

He suggested the House get on with the tax problem.

On Secrecy

Rep. Byron Tunnell, Tyler conservative, spoke as chairman of the East Texas delegation. "We have conservatives, moderates, and liberals in the East Texas delegation," he said. "But we share two beliefs—in segregation and in states' rights. Now this rumor may have come from someone who was geographically located in East Texas, but it was not an effort of the East Texas delegation. In any event, there was a member of the press at that meeting, and if that's private, man, everything is private," Tunnell said.

Jerry Butler, Kenedy conservative, said he had a secret meeting with three representatives "last night on Bob Bowers' boat in the middle of Lake Austin. ... If we can't meet secretly ... then we'd better take the locks off the doors to the Speaker's office."

Sadler rose briefly to say he was "not aggrieved ... but I don't want anybody pushing me around, and I know the members of this House don't either."

Sadler and Carr had tangled two days earlier after the Speaker named the East Texan as one of five House tax conferees. Carr was quoted in the press as saying he was going to "let the obstructionists see what they can do." Sadler had promptly responded in a speech to the House condemning Carr for "branding 80 some odd of us as 'obstructionists' because we did not agree with you. I am happy and proud to be appointed to that committee whether they call me a rebel, an obstructionist or what. We (con-

ferees) agreed on a tax bill in thirty minutes that can pass this House. ... Whether a third special session is necessary depends on the Senate, the Lieutenant Governor, and the Speaker of the House." That speech, made by Sadler on Monday, got a cheering ovation from about half the House.

'Anonymous Challenge'

Carr's prepared address read in part: "These headlines, together with the radio and television broadcasts, have caused grave concern and worry among members of my family and my friends. ...

"I have the unusual honor of having ruled on many close points of order and presided through many closely fought debates without even in one single instance having my decisions appealed or challenged. This is a record which can be claimed by very few Speakers in our modern history."

"Although I have had strong convictions as to what would be the fairest and most equitable way to levy the new tax burden on our people, I have now for weeks exerted every minute of every day and on weekends in trying to find areas of agreement among the various warring factions existing in this House on the tax question. This session I have not been to my hometown one single time. I have gone three weeks without seeing my wife and son for no other reason than that I felt it my duty to remain in Austin to find a satisfactory solution to this problem."

"These efforts have now been rewarded by some sort of anonymous challenge from some of you

that I should be ousted and publicly condemned before the people of my beloved state. I have been in politics long enough to expect such attacks. I recognize that this move has been prompted by those who seek the opportunity to politically kill me because they envision me as a possible state-wide candidate some day who does not share their political philosophy."

"If it be your desire to oust me, then be at your work. If you feel that I am the reason we have not passed a satisfactory tax bill to date ... then move and move now. The people of Texas, my friends, my wife, and ten-year-old son have a right to know whether in your opinion I am worthy of the trust you have placed in me. ... I am going to the Speaker's office and I am going to remain there alone until you have made your final decision."

No One Makes A Move

Rep. Max Smith, San Marcos conservative, took the chair and after a long pause during which no one moved to impeach the Speaker, Rep. Joe Burkett, Carr's opponent in the Speaker's race, moved that a committee of ten be appointed to welcome Carr back to the chamber. Smith appointed them, they fetched Carr, and part of the membership gave him a standing ovation when he returned.

One moderate, apparently stunned by the starkness of these events, confided to this reporter, "Gosh, I was at that meeting. I didn't know anything was going on. All I heard them talk about was taxes and women." L.G.

Negro Named 'Texas Admiral'

AUSTIN

A Negro farmer has been named an Admiral in the Texas Navy by Gov. Price Daniel, Rep. Jimmy Day of Atlanta, who nominated him, confirmed to the Observer.

Day submitted a list of about 30 nominees from his district, including Willie Melton, a farmer at Kendelton and past master of the Masonic lodge, to Gov. Daniel. Day's list did not specify Melton as Negro. Daniel named all 30 admirals as a routine matter.

"I was very serious," Day said. "He has done an outstanding job in helping the Negro population in that area through welfare work. He has been one of the county health officers of Fort Bend County grand jury. I certainly felt that any person who had done as much as he has for the population of Fort Bend County should certainly deserve the honor."

Day is a segregationist but said he "varied from 'em" on several House votes.

George Christian, aide to Gov. Daniel, said, "We don't know who these people are. We just run 'em through." He said there is a "blanket invitation" for people to "join the Navy"; often they write in and ask to be commissioned, and are commissioned by mail. "I don't think we've ever turned anybody down," Christian said. Admiral, he said, is "the only rank."

'The Way a Rumor Can Change'

AUSTIN

"The way a rumor can change!"—thus sums up Rep. Jerry Sadler the course of the rumor he started.

Although substantial hostility has developed toward Speaker Waggoner Carr in some quarters in the House of Representatives, it is the Observer's clear impression there has never been a serious recall movement.

How, then, did this week's Carr brouhaha come about? Several representatives agreed that it started with a remark by Sadler at a party and meeting of 50 or so representatives at Rep. Don Kennard's West Avenue house Monday night.

Although Carr alluded to press reports that the meeting was "secret," some 90 members of the House had been invited by typed invitations laid on their desks Monday, Kennard said. He and Rep. Bob Hughes, Dallas, were the hosts. House members who voted for the Hinson tax bill the first called session or against the Carr-backed conference report last Saturday were included.

What, exactly, had Sadler said at the party? "What I said exactly was, 'If they made a motion to reconsider a vote on H.B. 18 (the tax bill), that the way to kill it was to make a motion to reorganize the House.' The way a rumor can change! Of course, what I was thinking about was a new revenue and tax committee," Sadler said.

A POKER GAME was in progress the same night at the Driskill Hotel. As the Observer has it, Rep. Browning Dewey of Bryan left the West Avenue party and dropped in on the game long enough to report a move to oust Carr. All Dewey would say about this: "I knew where one was (the

poker game) and I went there and told the rumor I had heard." Dewey didn't join the game and left at once.

Rep. Doc Blanchard of Lubbock, a close friend of Carr's, was playing in the game, but he denied a report that he left to call Carr about the rumor.

Carr was attending a function of beer lobbyist Homer Leonard's to present legislators of ten years' service or more with tie stickpins. A legislator present said Carr, evidently receiving the word of the rumor about him, left the meeting and did not return.

In any case, "the fat was in the fire." The rumor spread to such an extent, reporters were greeted with it when they walked into the Capitol Tuesday morning. Ernest Bailey of the Scripps-Howard papers reported in his afternoon editions that Carr "may be removed" and that about 50 House members held "a secret meeting last night to discuss such action." This, of course, made black-type headlines.

THE REPORTS upset Carr. He approached at least two liberal representatives to ask them about the talk of his impeachment.

Rep. Bob Eckhardt, Houston, confirmed on inquiry that Carr had approached him to talk about "this business about my impeachment." He said Carr had said to him, "Why don't we get together and decide on a time when this vote can be taken."

Eckhardt continued: "I said, 'I don't think there has been anything definitely formulated.' Both parties laughed during the interview, and it ended with the Speaker towsling the back of my head."

Rep. Kennard was another Carr approached.

"I was at the front desk talking to Read Granbery (the House

parliamentarian) and Waggoner called me over and laughingly discussed it with me," he said. "He just wanted to know when the impeachment proceedings were going to be. I said 'What?' 'The impeachment proceedings,' he said. 'It's a mystery to me,' I said. 'Do you mean the reorganization of the House?' He said, 'Well, in order to reorganize the House, you'd have to impeach me.' 'Waggoner, I've heard nothing serious about that,' I told him. He said, 'Well, we might as well get down to it.'"

"This was Wednesday morning," Kennard said. "I think he was being facetious—but I'm not quite sure, and I don't think he was, either."

Later that morning Carr challenged the House to impeach him or endorse him.

ALLEN DUCKWORTH of the Dallas News stumbled in on the Monday night confab after the conferring was over. This fact gave Bailey extended delight, since Duckworth had not had a story about the impeachment talk. Duckworth was inclined to regard Bailey's story as an overgrown rhubarb. Forthwith the Observer interviewed Duckworth, who said:

"It was a very secret meeting. The first I heard of it, I was at the Driskill Hotel and heard a disturbance. I thought there was a riot, but I found there was nothing happening except the Texas-Oklahoma game. Rosas (Rep. Mauro Rosas, El Paso) poured me a beer out of the keg. We couldn't get it out of the keg fast enough, and he poured one out of a pitcher. We discussed the relative merits of keg and pitcher beer, and the thighs of (a representative's) date. Women, whiskey, that was discussed. End quote." R.D.

The Week in Texas

● The Texas Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the state urban renewal law which lets cities contract with the federal government for slum-clearing and private redeveloping of low-cost housing. Main question: Can land be condemned for this use when the Constitution prohibits condemnation except for "the use of the state"? The Court, in a unanimous decision written by Justice Joe Greenhill, ruled that legislative intent made clear the private low-cost development of the condemned land was "public use."

● Firemen with water hoses put down an outbreak in Bexar County jail by prisoners protesting discontinuation of a "floor boss" system which gave some prisoners privileges.

● La. Gov. Earl Long came to Fort Worth on a vacation, held forth on various subjects to a

ga-ga press, said he'd like to see Gov. Daniel and address the Texas legislature, was not invited, and drove off toward the West.

● William Blakley, 1958 U.S. Senate candidate and three-month interim senator, suffered "a massive coronary occlusion similar to the attacks which struck President Eisenhower and Sen. Lyndon B. Johnson," his doctor said. He was reported "doing fine" after a period of critical danger.

● Two men identified as members of the International Assn. of Machinists Union in Dallas which struck Security Engineering March 19 have confessed being involved in plans for vandalism against workers at the firm. One of them and another man not in the union admitted they were paid off by an "unknown person" for vandalism, including a fire bomb tossed in a driveway.

The Gas House Gang Of 1959

The people of the state may thank and re-elect 76 members of the House of Representatives, the Gas House Gang of 1959.

Eight years have passed since their predecessors outstayed the Texas Senate and the gas lobby to pass a severance tax on the natural gas that is pumped out of the state by the Eastern majors.

To be valid the 1959 gas tax must be protected against provisions which favor Texas users of natural gas over out-of-state users. Written to apply evenly to Texas and interstate beneficiaries of gas contracts, the bill will be constitutional and still obtain fair revenues from the Eastern oil companies.

Who is weakening in the legislature? From 71 votes, the House members in favor of the pipeline tax have increased to 76. A poll by Rep. Malcolm McGregor showed 82 pipeline taxers. The variables affecting this week's vote—pressure to quit and some reluctance to instruct conferees on any subject—argue that the Gas House Gang will increase beyond the present 76 members.

Sen. Charles Herring believes now that if he can get another vote on the Senate floor, he can carry the day there for the pipeline tax. Whether this turns out to be correct or not, it is evidence that the Senate is weakening.

Three sessions now the Texas House has refused to give in to the Carpetbaggers across the aisle. Three sessions the majority of the Senate purportedly representing Texas people voted for taxing the things Texans buy and against taxing the companies trying to buy Texas. Three sessions—betrayed by their own Speaker, deserted by some of their colleagues, jeered by the Carpetbag Business Press, tempted by the socially skillful lobby, traduced by a few but vocal reactionaries in their home districts—these men have looked up into the gallery, studied the men hired from the East sitting there, and turned back to their desks and voted for their own people.

They are not all pure men, they are not all idealists, some vote right for the wrong reasons, some may not care enough—but these 76 are as good a group of men who ever pulled together for the enrichment of our common heritage.

The gas tax is not a final solution to the state's problem, but it will help expand our continuing public endowment to replace the natural riches being sucked away from the state through the pipelines. Politics have meaning in the way the world is. The Gas House Gang are called to their duty now when the people need them.

The people are stirring. This



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week one member asked another who had not been sure, and he replied he was voting against the Senate—for another session—because he had been home and “no matter what the papers are saying, the people know the House is right.” Senator Lane implored one set of House conferees not to make any more speeches against the Senate. They must run for re-election, too: their feet are to the fire!

In 1939 fifty-six men saved Texas from a general sales tax. Governor O'Daniel was against them. Governor Daniel's vacillation now is at any rate essentially favorable to the 76 who are standing firm for some taxation by ability to pay. We may hope Governor Daniel remembers his historic models and recovers his ideals before he is shrouded in their desertion. But whether he does or not, will not matter. These men of the Texas House, this new Gas House Gang, heard him say, Give Up, and did not. They are men for the books. Let us call their names then, and join them in the ancient combat for political justice:

James V. Adams, Mount Pleasant.
James S. Bates, Edinburg.
A. J. Bishop, Jr., Winters.
Stanley Boysen, Yoakum.
Ronald W. Bridges, Corpus Christi.
Steve Burgess, Nacogdoches.
Jerry Butler, Kenedy.
Joe Cannon, Mexia.
Max D. Carriker, Roby.
Joe N. Chapman, Sulphur Springs.
Jamie H. Clements, Crockett.
E. J. Cloud, Rule.
Criss Cole, Houston.
Harold H. Coley, Conroe.

Sam Forse Collins, Newton.
James M. Cotten, Weatherford.
John T. Cox, Temple.
Roger Daily, Houston.
B. H. Dewey, Jr., Bryan.
Virginia Duff, Ferris.
Bob Eckhardt, Houston.
Wilson Foreman, Austin.
Don Gladden, Fort Worth.
W. W. Glass, Jacksonville.
Howard Green, Fort Worth.
Lloyd M. Guffey, El Campo.
D. Roy Harrington, Port Arthur.
George T. Hinson, Mineola.
Bill Hollowell, Grand Saline.
J. C. Hooks, Livingston.
Reagan R. Huffman, Marshall.
Charles E. Hughes, Sherman.
Maud Isaacks, El Paso.
Robert C. Jackson, Corsicana.
Alonzo W. Jamison, Jr., Denton.
Dean Johnston, Houston.
Obie Jones, Austin.
Don Kennard, Fort Worth.
Bill Kilgarlin, Houston.
Rufus U. Kilpatrick, Beaumont.
Tony Koriath, Sherman.
Yale Lary, Fort Worth.
Truett Latimer, Abilene.
Oscar M. Laurel, Laredo.
H. A. Leaverton, Evant.
George W. McCoppin, Texarkana.
Frank B. McGregor, Waco.
Malcolm McGregor, El Paso.
Grainger W. McIlhenny, Wheeler.
Abe M. Mays, Jr., Atlanta.
Clyde Miller, Houston.
Bob Mullen, Alice.
Ted W. Myatt, Burleson.
Harold B. Parish, Taft.
C. W. Percy, Jr., Temple.
W. H. (Bill) Pieratt, Giddings.
George Preston, Paris.
Mauro Rosas, El Paso.
Charles Sandahl, Jr., Austin.
Sanford Schmid, Brenham.
O. H. Schram, Taylor.
Will L. Smith, Beaumont.
Franklin S. Spears, San Antonio.
Ted Springer, Amarillo.
Vernon J. Stewart, Wichita Falls.
W. A. Stroman, San Angelo.
L. C. Terrell, De Kalb.
James A. Turman, Gober.
Murray Watson, Jr., Mart.
H. G. Wells, Tilden.
Bob Wheeler, Tilden.
J. Charles Whitfield, Jr., Houston.
George Truett Wilson, Newcastle.
Joe Ed Winfree, Houston.
Herman Yezak, Br emond.
J. C. “Zeke” Zbraneck, Liberty.

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