

COMMENT ON MEN AND THINGS

By The Spectator

Hon. Solomon Blatt, Speaker of the House, in an address to the State Chamber of Commerce, said, in part:

"Men in government need intelligent advice and cooperation from business men. You are the ones who have invested your time, abilities and money in the spectacular economic advance we have enjoyed in South Carolina. Your factories and businesses provide the good wages and jobs for the workers; ready markets for the products of the farms and forests, and the pits and mines; the commerce for this rapidly expanding port (Charleston); the traffic which moves over the railroads, truck lines and air lines; the revenue which finance government, and in every way you have contributed to the phenomenal up-swing we have experienced in recent years, after

nearly a hundred year of economic frustration.

You know that in less than fifteen years the wages of most individual workers have been trebled, and the number of industrial jobs doubled. We all know what this progress has meant in enhancing government services at all levels. Everybody has benefitted.

Only a few years ago, it was appropriate for a speaker at an occasion like this to predict a new era of prosperity. That, indeed, was about all one could do—predict. While there were some things to which we could point with pride, mostly our declaration that we lived in the 'greatest state of the union' had a rather hollow sound.

We can truthfully say that South Carolina has arrived, that South Carolina is in the nation's spotlight as a state of vast opportunity, and that South Carolina has fine people and good government.

South Carolinians were a hungry people for a hundred years, bowed down under the weight of political impotence, much of which was, of course, directly traceable to the War Between the States and its aftermath.

Then eventually, here and there, a textile plant was erected. Families which could no longer make a

living on the farms, came into the mill communities, working at first for what were necessarily meager wages. New England was the dominant textile area. The wealth was up there. So was the political power. The oppressive railroad freight rates imposed upon the South were alone sufficient to shackle industrial development for many years.

There was, however, character, ambition and determination in the blood of our people. They would not be denied.

Competition has always been the moving force of America, competition at all levels, from individual effort through the gamut of the most formidable of all competitions—the great two-party system of government. Competition is our life-blood—the incentive to outdo as individuals or teams, or corporations. You business men rightly base your strongest arguments for private enterprise upon the soundness of this philosophy.

We have emerged as a state of enormous potentiality, envied even by our southern neighbors. There are reasons for everything. It is good from time to time to remind ourselves of the reasons for our gains. They are:

One—The essential resources of a fine climate, diversified raw materials, and a strategic geographical location.

Two — Good people who still know that men are supposed to work for a living.

Three—Good government by people who jealously and zealously have insisted upon managing their own affairs.

There are many other attributes, of course, but these three are the controlling factors, and they should always be kept in mind—never to be neglected or forgotten.

With our economic advances have come the larger responsibilities which always accompany progress. Responsibilities are relative things; they increase as the state becomes more important in the life of the nation.

Let's consider the responsibilities which are related to each of the three major elements of our development.

Point one is the nature of our people. They are still good people because they believe in God; I pity the cynics who scoff at the 'Bible Belt'. They are still good people because they instinctively expect to earn a dollar before they receive one; they asked for and received less of the socialistic handouts from government than anybody else. They are still good people because they are independent in their thinking; there are fewer effective minority voting blocs in South Carolina than in perhaps any other state. They are still good people because they want to continue to improve themselves and the oppor-

tunities for the generations to come; this is evidenced by the wholeheartedness with which they have supported the extensive and very expensive new public educational program. They are still good people because they have known despair and have overcome almost insurmountable odds by the sheer strength of their character.

Point two involves our God-given natural resources. We must carefully guard them through programs of advanced agricultural methods and implements, soil conservation, reforestation, protection of our streams and lakes, the proper use in the future of water underground, the preservation of wild life, and the study and utilization of untapped resources.

In recent years, the responsible men in government have been tremendously encouraged by the more active interest men of your calibre have demonstrated in public affairs. This interest has been reflected in stronger and sounder policies of government.

We have been very fortunate in recent years in having such large majorities of sincere, hard-working and courageous men and women in the general assembly. If you fail to give them your support and encouragement in doing the right things, then the consequences could be very sad indeed.

Don't ever forget the days when the legislative hoppers were overflowing with dangerous proposals, when the average voter had become so confused by the prevailing trends of socialism in the national government, and when so many voters were listening to legislators who kept themselves alive politically by offering everything for nothing.

We must provide our boys and girls, our young men and women with the best of training if we are to continue to carry on the great economic progress which has really just begun. We are in a highly-gear technological and professional age requiring great skills and sciences. The textile industry recognized this in the Textile School at Clemson college. It created a foundation to provide extra income for improving the faculty and facilities there.

The new industries which have selected South Carolina as a location, after having investigated the tax structures and government service of other states, are the best evidence we have that our financial status is more favorable than those of other states. I am told that most prospective new industries of any real worth are as anxious to know whether we have such things as good schools, colleges and highways as they are to know that taxes are reasonable. Our state taxes are reasonable now. I say this not necessarily as any assurance that they will continue to be so, but as solid

proof that as of today we are sound.

And on this score, we find again a genuine responsibility for good citizens—to be vigilant and informed, and helpful in cooperation with officials in discovering what are the real needs. We must take time your legislators and other public and money to see that worthwhile public services are adequately financed. Public funds should be spent wisely and economically, but not skimpily. I contend that a proper amount of money invested in the training of our young people is even more soundly spent than money invested in new machinery. Enough should be invested in both. We are immensely proud of our textile industry. We have the largest and most modern plants in the world. Nearly a third of the nation's spinning, weaving

and finishing of textiles is done by our 135,000 workers."

Interest Shown In Joining Marines

Marine Corps Recruiting headquarters in Greenville state that increased interest in the "Palmetto Platoon," a unit being formed solely of South Carolinians, is resulting in a question and answer forum for recruiting sergeants. Staff Sergeant Thomas Shropshire, who is in charge of the station, says many young men who have been only mildly interested in joining the Marines for quite some time are showing real enthusiasm about serving with the "Platoon."

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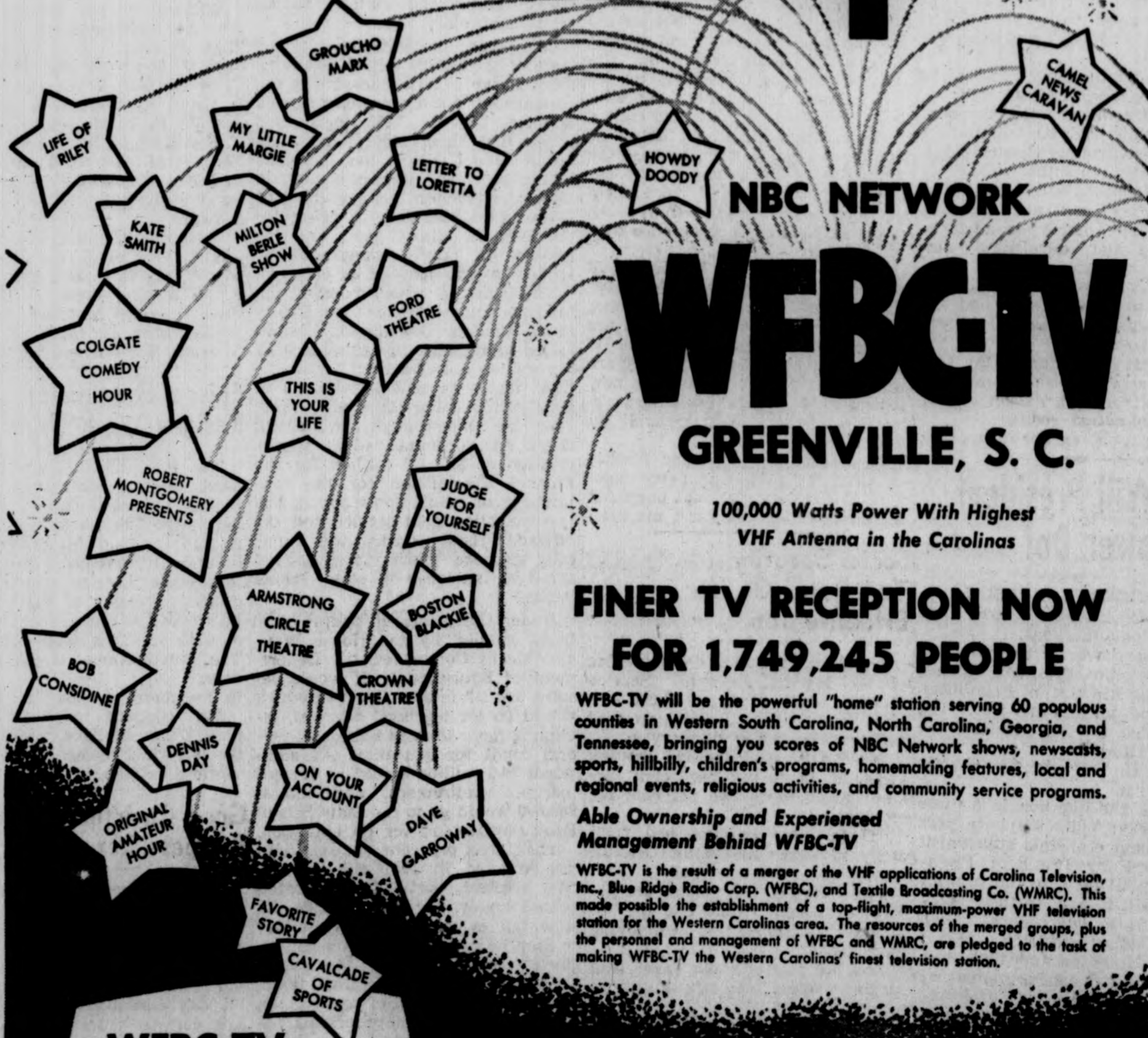
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