

Mr. Taylor Arraigns County Boards For Failure To Work

Where is Hertford County drifting? When and where will she strike bottom? Progress seems to be on the wane. Reaction seems to hold full sway of the county administration, being led by the chairman of the board of county commissioners. The devil seems to be turned loose unbridled, led and is running riot; apathy has taken possession and the trend of things seems to be everybody for himself and the devil for us all, with everybody living in the present and no one living a day in the future. The idea of the county administration at large seems to be that the present generation is the last that will ever live in this good old county of Hertford. But not so gentlemen. There will be people who will live after us, who will be more enlightened than we. (God grant it.) They will rise up and call us blessed if we prepare a decent county for them to live in. Contrarywise they will call us cursed.

Any man that lives but a day at the time and lives that in a selfish way is not a fit subject to hold any office. Any man that does not desire or strive to make the community in which he lives a better place for the future generation to live in, or who cannot be traced by his tracks as having made the community better off by his having lived in it, the community would have suffered no loss if he had never been born.

The downward trend began early last fall, the first prominent step being the attack on road superintendent Hines, to oust him from his job, just at the time when he had about succeeded in getting the road work of the county organized and systematized. Apparently they did not take into proper consideration the fact that he had only been on the job a little over a year; that he began work in the county without any equipment of any appreciable value and practically without funds being provided with which to carry on the road work; that it was in November, 1921, before the proceeds of the bond issue began to be available; that the winter months were then on, when it is always impossible to do any road building, maintenance work only being possible; that the spring and summer months following, up to the very time he was attacked, was an unprecedented wet season which played havoc with all road building. Maintenance being about all that was possible to do. No one can dispute the fact that the road business had progressed up until that time and that the future was bright for the county.

Had the working plans of the road board then in vogue been continued, conditions now existing would not have been as they are, but reaction set in, the board became divided against itself and down, and down, and down the trend has been until this day. "A house divided against itself cannot stand."

To cap the climax, while not casting any reflection on the gentlemanly qualities and unimpeachable character of Hertford county's recent representative, and not doubting his sincerity, but his ability and judgment as a legislator, it is known that he was adverse to the issue of the county road bonds, and belongs to the reactionary group and that an equal share of the responsibility for the downward trend of the road administration rests directly on his shoulders, due to the fact that he made changes in the road law which cut the very heart out of it. It rendered it worthless, leaving it entirely within the discretion of the road board as to the abolition of county road superintendent and as to whether or not they should continue to operate under the county unit system or return to the township unit system. Everybody knows the result and that practically speaking, nothing is being done of any appreciable value. Not even maintenance work is being kept up with, the old winter mud holes are still in the roads, dry to be sure at present, and we can manage to drive over them by going a snail's gate at the expense of our machinery, but they are there waiting for the rains to come and fill them up, and the return of mud and impassible roads is sure.

The future looks dark to me. It now looks as though we are not going to receive any appreciable results from the sale of our bonds, all due to the fact that the road board has no working head. I do not wish to cast any reflection upon any member of the road board; they are all gentlemen and men of good business qualifications so far as their line of experience is concerned, but they are absolutely without experience and know nothing about road building. Neither do I, but I know what a good road is after an experienced man has built it, so do they. I know how to operate an automobile after exper-

enced mechanics have built it but I do not know how to build one.

I previously said the road board had no working head. Yes, it is so. How can they do any appreciable work without some one of experience to direct? It is a matter of impossibility. Let me illustrate. I picture myself as going into the drug business and attempting to run a first class drug store without the use of any experienced pharmacist to show me what I need to do and how to do it and what to have done. How could I succeed? I would be without a working head and, as a fish out of the water, so is the road board at present. I plead with the gentlemen of the board to wake up, before it is too late, to put their working head back, and to get a man of experience to take full charge of the county again. Let him furnish the experience and they advise with him, furnish him the money to operate, and keep tab with him so as to render an account before the people.

I suspect Mr. Lawrence will say that he is in no way responsible for the existing conditions, that he so arranged the law as to leave it discretionary with the board, as to the matter of doing away with the office of road superintendent and choosing the manner in which they operated. But he cannot get from under it. He knew as well the temperament of the board and what it was going to do, when he threw the law open, as he knows Christmas is coming if time lasts. His actions in this one instance at present, is liable to cost the county more money than any act that has ever been placed on the statute books.

The second prominent step downward by the county administration was taken on first Monday in last December, by the county commissioners, when two of them with Chairman Dr. Mitchell's two votes, repealed the action of the former board in making provision for the maintenance of an all-time health officer for the county, an office which no county can afford to be without. The duties of this officer have already been outlined in a previous article.

I cannot conceive how a man or set of men with normal minds can afford to register their votes against such an important, humane, and progressive movement towards the preservation of health of the people of the county, and in turn vote to spend thousands of dollars annually towards the preservation of the health of the lower animals. Moreover, one of them being a medical doctor, and the leading spirit, was so filled with enthusiasm, directed towards stamping death on the movement, as to prompt him to deal it two death blows. There can be no excuse offered for these three wilful minded officials. They have plenty of intelligence and knew better, yet they dealt the fatal blow, for the time being, under the disguise of trying to save the poor people of the county from the burden of a trivial tax they would have to pay to maintain a health officer worth while.

Every man with normal mind knows full well that an all time health officer properly conducted would be an asset to the county rather than a liability. It is a matter of foregone conclusion that it is impossible for the individual, county, state or nation to economize at the expense of the health of our people. Let people who are afflicted with any contagious disease go free, mingle with well people, and the malady will run riot.

An example if you please: At the time of the county school commencement, there was not a case of measles or chickenpox in my township, but both were in other parts of the county. Now then, there was a large number of people in attendance at both colored and white commencements. Evidently somebody was there out of infected families who ought to have been under quarantine and who were, at the time, slightly infected themselves, but just fit subjects to broadcast the disease. The result was that within ten days both diseases were here, and confined to children who were in actual attendance. Since then both diseases have run riot, with heavy doctor bills, loss of time, sickness, and death in their wake. Since then the local doctors have been kept busy and the end is not yet.

One large family, from both parents down to the babe, is infected, the mother at this date being seriously infected with chances slim for recovery. The local doctors are doing what they can to stamp out the epidemic, but what can they do with no backing? I have in mind two families who have measles, both brothers living within one hundred yards of each other. Messrs. John F. and Lackey T. Worrell are the gentlemen

to whom I refer. Dr. Burbage is attending Mr. John F. Worrell's family, and has set up a quarantine. Dr. Railey is attending Mr. Lackey T. Worrell's family and has not set up a quarantine.

I am informed through a reliable source that Dr. Railey has done what he could to do likewise. But being a Virginia doctor naturally did not have the necessary North Carolina papers. He wrote to our so-called health officer for same, but had not received them. I believe every word of that statement. Now, think of it. Two brothers, both with measles, attended by separate doctors, both living so close together, held over one and none whatever over the other, who is to blame? Certainly neither doctor is. My answer is the chairman of the board of county commissioners, (Dr. Mitchell,) and his two associates, who stabbed to death with their votes the all-time health officer movement, must bear the burden. Furthermore, there are plenty of cases which do not come to the attention or under the observation of the local doctors, that travel at will to and fro throughout the county at the expense of the health of the county, sowing doctor bills, loss of time, sickness, and death in their path.

Furthermore, Chairman Mitchell not being satisfied with the dealing of the death blow herein referred to, has sought to deal another blow at the dead, for the time being, to prevent its resurrection, in furthering an intrigue with other members of the health board to oust and did oust a charter member of the health board who has served continuously on the board since its organization in the county and with Chairman Mitchell a number of years ago, (Dr. T. I. Burbage is the victim) who he knew to be an ardent advocate of the whole time health office. He set forth as his excuse for ousting his brother member and physician, that he was too old, when the facts are that Dr. Burbage was the second youngest man on the board. Dr. Mitchell himself being chairman and an older man than Burbage.

Now to feed Dr. Mitchell with his own medicine or doctrine, I ask should he not be ousted on account of his age now? Dr. Mitchell need not deny what I have said, for if he does I will introduce testimony furnished by as good and honorable a gentleman as Hertford County possesses as to the truth of my statement.

The third prominent step of a downward tendency is the stubborn fight the former chairman of the county board of education, now chairman of the county board of commissioners, and by virtue of his office, chairman of the county board of health, made on May 28th in the courthouse at Winton in a joint meeting with the Board of education in session for the purpose of forming a budget for the maintenance of the schools of the county the incoming scholastic year. His ultra speeches in advocacy of retrenchment before that body and again on Monday, June 4th before the commissioners against the present school system, denouncing the value of education, saying that he knew only three young educated men in the county who amounted to anything, will be remembered by the people of the county, especially by those of limited means who must necessarily depend on the public schools to assist them in educating their children.

I trust that my purpose in writing this article will not be misunderstood. I have dealt in personalities as little as possible, in order to place the burden where it belongs. I have no fight against any individual. Be it remembered that I am at peace with all men. It will be remembered that early in the spring of 1922 I, while on the board of commissioners, advocated an all-time health officer. On first Monday in November the board of health of which Dr. Mitchell was then chairman, made Dr. Burbage its spokesman and came before the commissioners and asked that an appropriation or provision be made for maintenance of an all-time health officer. On that day I supported the movement with all of my might. I am supporting it to this day, hence the purpose of this article.

The ousting of Dr. Burbage as a member of the health board and the manner in, and purpose for which it was done is an outrage and offense against the health movement which should not be allowed to go unnoticed. Where is Hertford County drifting? When and where will she strike bottom?

JOHN C. TAYLOR.

A Correction

Since the above communication was put into type, the HERALD has received a letter from Mr. Taylor asking us to correct that part of his article which says Dr. Mitchell had been serving on the Board of Health prior to his becoming chairman of the board of county commissioners. Dr. Mitchell was never a member of the board until he was elevated to it by his election as chairman of the other board.

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The undersigned has qualified as administrator, with will annexed, of Mrs. Agnes Ward Askew, late of Hertford County North Carolina. All persons indebted to said estate must make prompt payment of the amount due to the undersigned. Persons holding claims against said estate must present the same to the undersigned within twelve months from date of this notice, or it will be pleaded in bar of any recovery.

This May 28, 1923.
J. D. ASKEW, Administrator
of Mrs. Agnes Ward Askew.
6-1-23-6t.

NOTICE

Having qualified as executor of the estate of Brodie B. Hall, notice is hereby given to those that are indebted to said estate to please make immediate payment. All those holding claims against the estate will please present the same to the undersigned on or before the 25th day of May, 1924, or this notice will be plead in bar of their recovery.

NORMAN HALL, Executor.
JNO. E. VANN, Attorney.
6-1-23-6t.

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