

Is a Paper Devoted to the Upbuilding of the Sandhill Territory of North Carolina

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LAND SPECULATION NOT OBJECTIONABLE

It is the Result of Improving Conditions, and Certain Signs of Progress

To the Editor:— Mr. R. E. Wicker's letter in The Pilot on "Speculation" in Sandhill land, presents for discussion on a subject that merits deep thought and exhaustive consideration.

I, for one am very glad he has issued this challenge and sincerely hope that others will buckle on their mental armor, sharpen up their forensic weapons and enter the listed field. But, before proceeding far with such a discussion, it is well to obtain a clear definition of terms and phrases. It often happens that a heated war of words is carried on to a ridiculous length, merely because the "pro's" or "con's" have not taken the trouble to ascertain just what conception the "con's" or "pro's" may have of the meaning of some word or phrase accepted as a premise for the argument.

A sea captain, who had been deprived of the advantages of "book larnin," was taking instruction from a more fortunate mate on board his smack, and was given a problem in arithmetic to solve as follows: "If you sold a ton of cod for five cents a pound, how much would you receive for it?" The captain rescued a piece of board from the galley stove and went to figuring on it. Some twenty minutes later, the mate noticing he was still at it said, "haven't you found out yet how much that cod would bring?" "Oh," said the captain, "did you say cod? I thought you said hake, and I was figgerin' on hake all the time. No wonder I couldn't get it!"

So let's see whether we are figuring on cod or hake to begin with. Funk and Wagnall's Standard Dictionary defines "invest" to "Lay out (money or capital) in the purchase of property, especially for permanent use as opposed to speculation; put (Money or capital) into other forms of property." The same authority gives the following definition of "speculate": "To make a purchase or investment that involves a risk of loss, but also offers a chance of considerable profit; make an outlay in the hope of probable gain." Defining speculation, this dictionary says the word is now often used "approbriously with implication of the impropriety of methods or insufficiency of data."

Now, in his letter Mr. Wicker begins his discussion with the statement that happily most of the advertisements devoted to opportunities to invest in Sandhill land are those which would appeal to the prospective farmer and home owner, but underneath this lies the larger inducement to purchase for speculation. The reasonable inference is that Mr. Wicker uses the word "speculation" in its opprobrious sense. If, in this discussion we must use the word "speculate" in this acceptance, that settles it and I quit right here; but I propose that we learn to use the term without opprobrium, and shall try to show why. All business is based on speculation; in fact, nearly all business affairs are fundamentally speculative. We get up in the morning and plan the day's activities and we are speculating: in a few hours we may be struck down and whirled into eternity! The merchant is constantly studying the markets with an honest and commendable purpose to buy his wares at the best advantage, and sell at a reasonable profit. And if he finds place where he can buy goods so he can make a greater reasonable profit than he could if he bought elsewhere, this is where he will buy. But what is a reasonable profit? It is the maximum amount, which, when added to the cost makes a selling price attractive to the purchaser, or at least, makes a price which the customer will pay rather than go without the article he needs or desires. The hotel proprietor purchases or leases his hostelry, buys his supplies and equipment, and opens his house in the hope that he can make

his place so attractive that guests will pay a rate sufficient to return him a profit. And so on through every line of business. This is all speculation and there is nothing infamous or ignominious about it.

Mr. Wicker says the fact that some one has refused an offer of 100 per cent profit on his investment is not much of an argument to a man who wants a farm. I say it is. It is the most potent argument that can be presented and should be given first place in his consideration of the purchase of a farm or a home site. It is proof positive that the productivity of the soil, the attractiveness of the locality or the combination of the two, makes others willing to pay more for the possession of the property than the original purchase invested, and unless a purchaser can convince himself that he can make a profit when he gets ready to sell, he had better not buy and should go elsewhere. There is surely something wrong with the locality. Farms can be bought in some parts of New England now at far less than they cost twenty years ago. Values have been constantly going down, because those who formerly lived there have become disgusted with the long, dreary winters, the short, hot summers and the lack of congenial surroundings. Nobody is speculating in New England farm lands now, because nobody wants to live on a farm there.

On the other hand, Florida farms have consistently increased in value during the same period, because people do want to live there, and a great deal of money has been made in purchasing and improving them. The same is true of Sandhill land and this is as it should be.

Mr. Wicker says, "nothing interests the prospective farmer so much as production and marketing facilities." I refute this. The farmer's first thought inevitably is and should be consideration of climate, water supply, schools, roads, churches, social environment and all that goes to make life for his family and himself worth living. Given a choice between a locality that excels in these things and

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COURT GOING ON THIS WEEK

Judge Thomas J. Shaw, presiding—Other News Around Carthage

That the crowded criminal docket for the January term of court was evidence of lax enforcement of the law in the county was a statement made by Judge Thomas J. Shaw, of Greensboro, presiding over Superior court here this week in his charge to the grand jury. Recalling several years ago when he practiced law in this county he said that at that time very few terms of criminal court lasted more than two or three days, while it would be impossible to try all the cases on the docket at this term of court. This change had been brought about, he said, by the failure of the good citizenry and proper authorities to swiftly and justly prosecute violators of the law. Law violators, he declared, if not penalized for the first offense, were encouraged to commit other and more serious offenses, and furthermore, the non-punishment of these offenders gave encouragement to others to break the law and so on.

The great progress in material things the county has made in the

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HOW'S THIS?

* The Pilot, * Vass, N. C. * Dear Mr. Editor:— * Please do not allow our ad to * appear in your paper this week. * We have sold out all our pigs and * could have sold many more. It * pays to advertise in The Pilot. * Yours truly, * LESLIE FARM, * By F. W. Taylor, Mgr.

FERTILIZER TO BE LOWER IN PRICE

The Increased Use on Cotton, Tobacco and Peaches Will Make Big Business

The farmer will pay less for his fertilizer this year than he has for a considerable while. Edwin McKeithen of the Blue Fertilizer factory at Aberdeen talking with The Pilot says his folks are making material cuts in prices as compared with last year, and he looks for reduced prices to stimulate the use of fertilizer to an extent never known before in the county. Other conditions also point to a much larger tonnage of fertilizer. The cotton crop that has been harvested in the county is the biggest ever raised. And Mr. McKeithen believes that the high prices the farmers have received for cotton will lead to a big acreage again this year. Another thing that will encourage the farmer to plant cotton was the unexpected escape by serious damage from the weevil last year. Whether to plant freely this year is wise or not may be a debatable question, but there is no doubt that the success of the 1923 crop gave cotton a popularity that is not to be forgotten until conditions change for the worse.

The tobacco crop was not as satisfactory on a general scale as cotton, yet it has brought the farmer a lot of money. And tobacco will be planted again extensively throughout the territory. Tobacco men will buy a lot of fertilizer, especially with the price reduction as an inducement. Then comes the orchard man. Although the peach man got his jolt last summer, he is going to dig up every dollar he can to help his trees along to a good crop this year. Trees that made no crop last year made an excellent growth. And with a lower price in fertilizer as an incentive, it is thought the orchards will be in the market this spring for a generous supply. It seems the way the fertilizer people figure the thing out they look for the farmer to buy much more of their goods at the lowered price so that the reduction in price will be followed by a much greater production of fertilizer, a greater prosperity to the farmer, and in the end, more profit to the factory from the larger volume of business, and the greater ability of the farmer to pay for the stock he buys.

In financial circles it is said that the farmers are in better shape financially this winter than ordinarily and that they will be able to buy and pay for their fertilizer, more nearly on a cash basis. The good prices for tobacco and the high prices for cotton have given a different tone to the farmer's affairs. Then the arrangements of the co-operative associations are making to lend financial assistance to the farmers will have an influence. Weather conditions have been such that the roads to all parts of the county are in good condition and unless rain or snow later on in the winter should affect the roads the farmer will get his fertilizer out with less difficulty, than in the past.

SUCCESSFUL REVIVAL COMES TO A CLOSE

A revival that was, from our viewpoint, the greatest ever held in Vass, came to a close with the Sunday night service. For ten days the Rev. Leonard Gill, Synodical evangelist, of Charlotte, preached twice daily, giving of his very life for the cause he represents. Mr. Gill is a man of power: a wonderful worker whose attractive personality draws people to him. One cannot help being inspired by the zeal with which he goes about his Father's business.

The attendance was good from the beginning, and as the meeting progressed, the crowds increased. By the third day, the church was filled to its capacity, and from that time on, the interest was unabated. The pity of it was that the building was not large enough to seat the people who came from far and near.

A noticeable thing about the meeting was the beautiful spirit of unity, the hearty co-operation of all the people. The business men of the town, regardless of denomination, closed their doors, and attended the services; the school attended in a body each afternoon; the pastor of the Methodist church called off his appointments in order that he and his congregation might not miss the Sunday services. Mr. Gill stressed the fact that he was not conducting a Presbyterian revival, that his purpose was to win souls for Christ and that the denomination was a matter of secondary importance, and the people seemed to feel that this was the case.

A feature which added much to the success of the services was the good music, and Mr. J. M. Tyson, choir leader, and Mrs. N. N. McLean, pianist, are to be commended for their faithfulness.

On last Saturday night, Mr. Gill preached especially to the women. Sunday morning, the most beautiful and soul-thrilling service of them all was held, the subject being "The Home." Sunday afternoon the church was filled with men and boys to hear the special message to men, and on Sunday night the final sermon was preached for the subject, "Heaven or Hell, Which?"

One hundred and sixty four people signed cards for church membership, the number being almost equally divided among the three denominations of the town. In this number were boys and girls in the tender years of life, young men and young women with years of useful service before them, and mothers and fathers who need the help of a Higher Power that they may guide aright the little lives intrusted to their care.

Yes, it was a great meeting, and the community is a better place in which to live because of it. At each service, Sunday an offering was made and the sum of three hundred and forty dollars was given for home mission work in the synod of North Carolina. So, while we are enjoying our blessings, we hope that this offering may help to carry light to dark places and cause other hearts to rejoice.

WHY HE LIVES IN NORTH CAROLINA

Lakeview Man Has Three Reasons, And Either of Them is Enough

The Raleigh Times has been asking prominent men in different sections of the state why they rate North Carolina a good state to live in. Among the answers none is better than that from John R. McQueen, of Lakeview, who says:—

"If I were going to move into a dif (Continued on page 8)



DUSOLINA GIANNINI, who is coming to the Carolina Theatre, Pinehurst, on Thursday, Feb'y 14th, for a recital.

* Don't miss the Greatest Picture * of the year—Rex Ingram's * "SCARAMOUCHE" * at the Carolina Theatre, Pinehurst, Monday and Tuesday, January 28 and 29.

GOOD CONDITIONS FOR PEACH CROP

Winter is Holding Trees Back in Shape, and Weather Favors Pruning

Before the holidays the peach men were somewhat concerned over the mild weather, and they wondered if the trees might be encouraged to put forth a growth too soon in the spring to stand the late frosts. But the hard cold snap the first few days of this month, and the continued low temperature since has been of the kind to harden the trees and check all premature growth and put the trees in the most satisfactory shape. Since the first of the year the average daily temperature had held very near the normal. A few warm days show a higher temperature than the average and the few days that started the cold snap were about as far down the scale. It is useless of course to gamble on the temperature of the next eight weeks which will put the trees well towards the end of March. But there is nothing now to indicate abnormal influences from the weather. As far as The Pilot has heard the trees are not showing any damage from the extremes.

As the Sandhills came through a frost last spring which was the most disastrous known to this section and as damaging frosts come only at intervals of several years the reasonable expectation is that this will be a crop year. In that case it will be a real crop. Two years ago the yield was around fifteen hundred cars. Last year enough new trees came of bearing size to look for twenty-five hundred cars. This year another lot of new trees will come in and it need not be surprising if the Sandhills loads three thousand cars.

The ordinary citizen does not realize what this means. But if the peach crop should reach three thousand cars the months of June, July and August will be the busiest summer the Sandhills has ever seen. The railroads will be taxed to handle the moving fruit. Taking two years ago as a basis, when the maximum shipments exceeded a hundred cars a day, it is reasonable to look for two hundred cars a day this year. To work that amount of traffic, which will pass very largely through the Aberdeen yards, means a half a dozen extra freight trains in and out. To handle such a quantity of freight, assemble and make up the trains, load the cars, receive the incoming empties, have them iced, and dispatched to market, will be a job for the railroads, for the truck men, for the boarding houses, and everybody. To harvest such a crop of peaches will require an army of hands, and to move the stuff from the tree to the pack house is going to call for a lot of executive ability. Every siding from Hamlet to Cameron will be busy. For dewberries will add to the volume of fruit that must be moved. Up and down the Norfolk-Southern and on the Aberdeen and Rockfish equally busy conditions will prevail. The hotels will be full of representatives of commission houses and buyers. The banks will be overwhelmed with business. The stores throughout the belt will be crowded.

Already orchard activity is becoming pronounced. The younger orchards have made a growth that requires a lot of cutting, as the older ones require more each year. The orchards set last year must be handled to shape them for their proper growth for the coming season. The acreage that must be cultivated has largely increased. The biggest job of spraying ever known in the Sandhills is soon to be tackled. Hands will be in demand from now on until the last peach is harvested. A guess has been made that the crop this season will bring close to three million dollars. Of course this is largely a guess, but everybody familiar with the orchards at the present time looks for a highly prosperous year in the peach belt.

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