THE PILOT

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THE COUNTY TAX SITUATION

Last week the county commissioners heard the appeal of a considerable number of people who were not satisfied with their rating on the tax books. It may be thought that fixing values of property is a simple matter, but the man who listens a few minutes to the discussion that follow an appeal will see that it is one of the most complex things in the world. Probably no two men would make lists of property values in this or any other county and have them correspond at very many points. And probably the figures would not be any more accurate than any other figures made by any other men, for property values are temporary at the best, up and down, and always nothing more or less than what some man will offer who wants to buy, and worth nothing at that unless the man who owns wants to sell. Equitable assessments of property are so complex that it is only natural that many differences of opinion should arise.

So the commissioners have studied the situation carefully, and they have undertaken to deal as justly as they know how in encouraging equalizations. Yet it must be remembered that they can not look over every piece of property presented to them, and that they must rely greatly on the assessors who have given the matter personal investigation and comparisons of one holding with another. Also it is to be remembered that commissioners, assessors, owners, and everybody else are lacking in that profound wisdom that knows everything. An equitable assessment never was and never will be made on anything.

However, it is safe to say that assessors, tax commisioners, the county commisioner and all concerned have undertaken to arrive at the most reasonable conclusions in spite of the fact that some of the conclusions strike other folks as ludicrous. It is reasonable to assume that when the final report is completed it will be about as equitable to everybody in the county as the limitation of human judgment can arrive at. Taxes and death have a way of paying little attention to individual ideas of fitness.

A HELPLESS PROPOSITION

The suggestion to the farmer to plaw down his third row of cotton and pick the other two is so funny that it is more laughable than pathetic. It is the climax of the impressive philosophy that the world works for the sake of work.

No doubt the whole world has made more cotton this year than is to be needed. We have been doing that for several years, basing our hopes on the delusion that high prices set in war days were to be permanent, and forgetting that high prices are invariably followed by low prices because men want to share in the high figures. So around the globe as well as in this country folks planted more cotton, and more cotton released the urgent call for cotton and prices fell. They will fall and stay down until less cotton is planted and then they will go up again to induce another increase in production. It is useless to attempt to control price in any commodity of easy production, for the price is the incentive to produce or not to produce. The present low price will effectively plow down the third row next year. Farmers now realize that a large crop will not sell. That is the whole condition and the only one that is workable. Some farmers might plow down the third row this fall, and many would not. But why plow down cotton this fall and plant a lot more next year? It is simpler and less expensive to harvest the third row and put it in the barn and have it next year rather than to plant another crop next year.

In spite of anything meddlers attempt to do prices will adjust themselves to the world crop. If the American farmer plows down his third row the European, Asiatic and African farmer will profit by the market if any change is effected. The American farmer will be the sacrificial goat and the old world farmer will get the benefit. Then next year everybody will plant more cotton, and the trouble will be up again. If the farmer wants to work on thirds he can put away a third of his crop and have it ready for next year rather than plant again. But even that will not work, for the farmer will do what he wants to do any way.

THE MEASURE OF HARD TIMES

An old philosopher who makes a practice of observing what he sees was asked a few days ago about the prospect of an end of the hard times. "Never," was his answer. And he suggested that the old man Einstein, who talks about the relativity of things, had the idea of hard times and other times.

"Look down the street," said he, "and you can hardly see the end of the cars lined up against the curb. A few years ago that would have indicated a degree of prosperity that we could not have comprehended them. We are paying more money now for gasoline than we used to pay for flour and meat and clothes and chewing tobacco and a lot of things that we still buy along with our gasoline and silk neckties, and land only knows what.

"People on the farms have more to eat than they ever had. They raise a wider variety of things, more good butter and milk and better chickens and fruit, more good schools, good roads, more of everything. The whole thing is comparative. Radios, picture shows, refrigerators, water in the kitchen and electric lights, papers, magazines, until the world is reveling in abundance. But we compare everything with two years ago when we hit the highest mark the universe ever saw. If you want to know when I think will hit that clip again I would say may be never in my life time, or may be we will in yours.

"You don't have these big climaxes very often or in very close succession. But if by hard times you mean anything as hard as we came out of a few years ago I don't think we will ever go back to that condition. We may flounder around a little would say may be never in my life time, or may be we will in getting our feet and adjusting ourselves to things as they are shaping up now. May be take six months, a year, two years, five years to get accustomed to the change, but it is all depending on how much we can compare things by two years ago, ten years ago or twenty years ago. We will go forward on a surprising scale, and things will look good in a year or so because we will make real progress, and also because next year we will compare with this which will look better than compared with two years ago but it's all comparative."

Probably he is correct.

THE COST OF CARELESSNESS

In a radio address last Friday Senator James J. Davis told of a proposition to introduce in the next congress a measure to provide a small fund of $50,000 for the purpose of impressing on the people of this country by printed matter and especially by moving pictures the fierce destruction of life through accidents of various kinds. He mentions that the entire war of the American revolution resulted in the death of 1,856 soldiers and the wounding of 4,227 in the five and a half years of the struggle. But on Fourth of July this year, in the one day that is set aside to commemorate that great war and its victory, the death toll was 483 and the injured 2,408, a record of half as many injured as in all the years of the war, and more than a fourth as many killed. At that rate three or four celebrations of the victory will show greater disaster than the six years war.

Senator Davis proposes to distribute moving pictures that the people may be made more familiar with our unparallelled and unconsidered slaughter and injury through modern carelessness and indifference. We are killing now a larger average daily by automobiles than was killed during our engagement in the war with Germany, and our bloody record is mounting up day by day until right now there is nothing in our history to compare with our present slaughter except previous automobile records. War has ceased to be deadly enough to serve as a comparison for our automobile deaths and accidents. War has ceased to be a comparison by which to measure the terrific destruction of property and costs that result from automobile slaughter and destruction.

Senator Davis hopes that by spreading picture information of this condition the inconceivable apathy of the American people to their ghastly record may be overcome to some extent and the record lowered. Traffic accidents last year entailed the destruction of over two billions of dollars' worth of property and costs, to say nothing of the vast costs that followed accidents of other types. If we could avoid the tremendous cost of automobile accidents for eight years it would pay off the entire national debt. The losses from automobile accidents in two months more would more than pay the entire debt of North Carolina. We are destroying our prosperity by our carelessness in accidents, to say nothing of our lives and the long list of hospital and surgical costs that are entailed.

The pity of it all, and the difficulty is the calm indifference of all the people to the situation. If Secretary Davis can by the appropriation of a few thousand dollars bring the situation to the minds of the people he will do the best job congress has undertaken in many a year, bar nothing, for anything that is a bigger hell than war is fit game for a big undertaking.

GRAINS OF SAND

"We ain't so bad off with our cotton as we might of been," said Dink Willock. "When cotton was up to 15 cents gasoline was about thirty and it took about two pounds of cotton to buy a gallon of gas. Now it takes a little more, not counting the gas tax, which we would hafta pay on something else if we didn't pay it on gas. Our cotton this year will sell for about forty million dollars, not counting the seed, which will sell for enough more to pay the gasoline bill of about forty-six million dollars, and I claim if a state can git enough for its cotton to pay for its gasoline it aint doing so bad. How'n the dickens would we git the gas if we didn't have the cotton?"

This world is designed on a mighty broad basis. In a short time we will have so much complaint against the frosty fall nights and the price of coal that we will entirely forget all we had to say about the heat of July and August.

When business is quiet, advertise. Perhaps its quiet because you're not telling them what you have to offer.

So far nobody has suggested that instead of plowing down the third row of cotton it would be wise to pick it and sell it for what it will bring. That money will help some to buy the things the two other rows will not have to be spent for.

The sun is falling into the common habit with some of the rest of the folks of not rising quite so soon in the morning.

When you can buy a big watermelon for ten cents it is hardly justifiable to kick too much about financial conditions.

They used to say that to go swimming in dog days would make you sick, but folks around here are not much afraid of dogs.

In the good old days we hear about folks when Orgust came along went to camp meetings. Now we go to bridge parties and necking parties and to moonlight sonatas out along the road. While the camp meeting afforded considerable action these days of a seventy-mile speed limit want more variety apparently.

One Sandhills salesman won a prize last week for exceeding his sales quota for July. He says "Pilot advertising helped me win."

At the CAPITAL

By M. R. Dunnagan, The Pilot's Raleigh Correspondent

The State Corporation Commission has issued an order calling on all public service corporations operating electric, artificial gas or telephone property in the State to file, under oath, on or before September 30, copies of all written contracts and statements in full of all agreements, arrangements, understanding and practices in effect during 1930 and the first half of 1931 with all holding, managing or operating companies or those engaged in the selling of service of any kind.

The order is under authority of an act passed by the 1931 General Assembly, giving the commission power in its discretion, to call for this information, the object being to make certain such companies are not paying to holding or service companies an undue proportion of the revenues, thus depriving the State of its just amount in taxes imposed.

Companies are required to file statements of all fees, commissions or other compensation paid or payable by the companies operating in this State, to any holding, managing, operating, constructing, engineering, financing, purchasing company or agency, including subsidiary and affiliated companies, for services or property during the 18 months, with the character of such services and the basis of payment.

* * *

July, for the first time this year, showed an increase in number of motor vehicles and an increase in license plate receipts over July of last year, Sprague Silver, supervisor of the Motor Vehicle Bureau, reports. Vehicles increased from 16,886 in July 1930, to 24,953 last July, the license plate fee increasing from from $135,278 to $193,544.26 for the two months.

Motor vehicles dropped from 425,144 for the first seven months of last year to 379,516 for the same period this year, a decrease of 37,561. Fees for the license plates dropped from $6,378,955.37 to $5,814,067.34, or $565,888.03 for the same period.

Of the automobiles to August 1 this year, 5.48 per cent had been bought since January 1, while 5.83 per cent of those registered at the same date last year had been bought in the corresponding seven months. New cars bought this year number 22,184, as compared with 25,777 for the same period last year. However, new cars bought last July numbered 4,815, as compared with 4,161 bought in July, 1930, an increase of 554 for the past month.

* * *

Revoking the commission of C. W. Foster as justice of the peace of Guilford county because of substantiation of charges that he had made a "racket" of his office, brings intimation that Governor Gardner will have practices of the justices looked into a little closer generally, and have solicitors check up on those named by the Governor, elected by the people, or appointed by the General Assembly.

Foster, it was charged, and in part admitted, in company with a deputy sheriff, would snoop around side streets and secluded parking places watching for petting parties. Finding one, he would agree to receiving certain supposed fines and costs without bringing the couple to trial and avoiding publicity. It worked well, because of the dislike of the couples so caught for publicity. Greensboro, it is predicted will be a safe petting party place, for a time.

* * *

Clem Wrenn, serving a sentence for embezzlement and other irregularities as president of the Bank of Wilkes, Wilkesboro, had his sentence commuted by Governor Gardner to five and a half years, and has been released. Wrenn had charge of the State's Prison print shop and made a splendid success of it, otherwise proving himself a model prisoner. He hopes to settle down with a little shop somewhere, with a business sufficient for a family livelihood.

His parole was recommended by Executive Counsels, N. A. Townsend and O. M. Mull and then by Tyre Taylor, but Governor Gardner held out for five years' service, probably as a sort of object lesson to bankers generally. In fact, Wrenn's service was beginning to look more like persecution, since many believe he was made the "goat" of the bank organization, and it was beginning to see, that he was also becoming the "goat" and example for all bankers of the State.

* * *

Sam P. Christy, paramour and codefendant with the State's most noted woman prisoner, Ida Bell Warren, like the woman, has been paroled, after serving about 15 years of a life sentence, commuted from the death penalty, for murder of the woman's husband in Forsyth county. Sentiment against exacting the death penalty from a woman saved his life, as well as hers, and her parole several months ago doubtless had its effect on his release last week.

POULTRY CLUB MEMBERS TO GET PUREBRED MALES

The use of better males to head up the farm flocks is the outstanding need of the poultry industry in North Carolina. To offset this need, the Poultry Department at State College will distribute at cost, through the extension service, pedigreed males of known performance to 4-H club members who are conducting poultry projects..

"To be eligible to secure these birds," says Proffessor R. S. Dearstyne, head of the Poultry Department, "club members must have kept records on their flocks for at least one year and must agree to keep records for two years after the male is issued. The price of these birds will be figured at actual cost to the Department."

Choose the MEAT DISH first then Meal Planning is EASY

Let the Meat Decide the Vegetables

Here is an idea or two:

Lamb and Peas
Pork and Green Beans
Ham and Spinach
Beef and Beets

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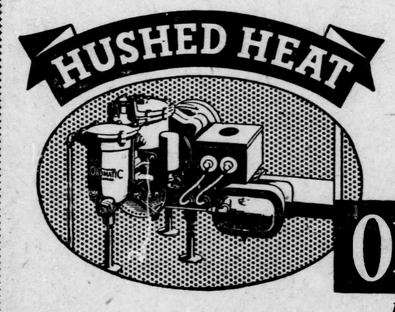

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