

A. J. MAXWELL'S PLATFORM RINGS WITH MAXWELL SPIRIT, STRIKING PUBLIC WASTE

(Continued from page one)

conditions that permit normal employment of labor, we must summon the wisdom to direct and the courage to undertake and perform a substantial readjustment of public burdens. This is the paramount issue before the people, and to the achievement of this goal I pledge the utmost of my ability and experience in public affairs. The market value of our three principal crops of corn, cotton and tobacco in 1928 was \$214,000,000; in 1931 it is now estimated at \$109,000,000. Our total tax bill of \$102,000,000 is nearly equal to the combined market value of these three principle crops. It would take the entire crop of cotton produced in the state for four years to pay our tax bill for one year, according to the present market price of that commodity. Our annual tax bill in this state is greater than the entire annual income of all domestic and foreign corporations earned in this state. In a delusion of wealth and prosperity that is ours no longer, and in our ambition to provide the broadest possible program of public service, public expenses have reached a scale that cannot reasonably be maintained. To attempt to carry the full weight of this burden is to invite disaster to our whole structure of social service. To delay readjustment while our burdens accumulate will be disastrous. This is not a fleeting fancy; it is a reasoned and deep conviction, based upon an intimate knowledge of North Carolina and its taxable resources.

"It is not a question of method and form. We cannot meet this situation by devising new and ingenious methods for pumping water from dry holes, or adding pennies to our purchases. There must be a frank recognition of our limitations and a courageous readjustment of our total spending to meet them.

"Neither actually nor relatively can we continue to meet the full measure of our present annual tax bill. It is not merely a question of our inherent inability to maintain it. On relative grounds it will be disastrous state policy to continue the effort to do so. Our annual tax bill is one third greater than that of our next door neighbor, Virginia, which has more actual wealth than North Carolina. To continue a tax load so far out of line with neighboring and competing states will inevitably shake our future growth and shrink our sources of revenue on which we depend to meet it.

How?
 "But how can it be done? It can not be done unless the people, in full understanding of this problem, will that it be done. There is abundant difficulty in the way. There is a short-lived tradition of pride and grandeur in the way. Unless sound judgment prevails in guiding the process, there is also in the way a real danger of going to the extreme in some directions, to the injury of essential services.

"But to say that there cannot be a substantial readjustment in the cost of public service that was multiplied four times in ten years, to meet radically changed economic conditions, is a confession of bankruptcy in statesmanship and a disregard of the necessities of our people.

"I believe that it can be done. I am convinced that it ought to be done. And if it is the will of our people that it should be done, I am ready to undertake my part in a genuine effort to give constructive direction to this kind of program. I suggest here enough of particularity to indicate some of the possibilities.

The General Assembly
 "First, it must begin in the minds

and hearts of the people, and must find reflection in the membership of that branch of government that more nearly and directly represents them—the General Assembly. The General Assembly is the fountain-head of government in the state. It is, within the constitution, supreme. It sets the fashion and fixes the standards of public service. While expenses were being rapidly increased for state purposes there gradually developed a custom of placing on legislative pay rolls a large number of employees who had no useful service to perform. To illustrate, the salaries, wages and transportation paid the employees of the General Assembly, exclusive of the salaries of Representatives and Senators, has increased from less than \$25,000 in 1909 to \$116,000 in 1931. The Legislature cannot carry on its own operation on an extravagant basis and consistently impose economy upon all the other agencies of the state.

"As a champion of the patriotic purpose and the constructive acts of the last General Assembly, I believe this proposal will be approved by a large majority of its members and accepted as a fair criticism of a growing legislative custom that ought to be abandoned. If we are to undertake in serious purpose a return to the simpler and more economic ways of performing public service, we ought to begin with a General Assembly that limits its employees to those who have some necessary service to perform. And the General Assembly itself, while it should give full, free and open hearing to every interest concerned in legislation, should demand the right to legislate in an atmosphere free of persistent lobbies. Readjustment should begin within the General Assembly itself.

Higher Education
 "A second point of approach in readjusting our tax burdens to fit economic conditions, should be in the total cost of higher education in our state institutions of higher learning. In this suggestion I do not want to be misunderstood. While I know that we can reduce the cost to the public of higher education, I also know that it can be done without lowering the standard of this service to our own boys and girls. For example, out of a total enrollment of 6,321 students at the University, State College and the Women's College, for the last fall term, there was an enrollment of 1,124 students from other states and countries. They are here for different reasons, of course, but mainly for two reasons, namely, the national reputation of our University and colleges, and the very small tuition fees we charge. We must continue our policy of subsidizing a college education for our own boys and girls, but we have no right to continue to subsidize the college education of this army of non-residents, greater than the total enrollment of the University a dozen years ago. The payment of fees by these non-resident students was \$228,730 less than a per capita average of actual cost to our taxpayers to operate these colleges. This cost does not include any capital cost for facilities furnished. These facilities are furnished by our taxpayers. Our annual debt service requirements on debts now outstanding for these three colleges, averages \$18 per student, or an additional \$132,632 as a proportionate part for the non-resident students. This covers only the part of facilities for which bonds are still outstanding and that our taxpayers are still paying annual interest on. Twenty-six per cent of our investment and annual expenditures on the University are used for the benefit of non-residents. With its 2,044 resident students it has 720 non-residents, and ninety per cent of these are from states more able than ours to subsidize their education. One hundred and seventy-six are from New York State. Ten blocks of Manhattan represents more wealth than the whole State of North Carolina. Our taxpayers owe no obligation to them, and we have no right to levy this tax on our taxpayers. Our colleges should, of course, be open to non-residents, but they should be charged a tuition fee that covers substantially the cost to the state of the service rendered them.

"The consolidation plan, adopted with practical unanimity by the last General Assembly, if carried out in its full spirit and purpose, offers further opportunity for a substantial saving in cost, while maintaining each of them in full vigor and usefulness, in eliminating unnecessary duplication, and in providing stronger consolidated departments.

Public Schools
 "It is not surprising that extravagances should have crept into the rapid expansion of public school costs. It was a part of the trend of the times through which we have passed with respect to all public spending. Extravagance is both actual and relative. It is actual in the six thousand vacant school rooms, more than half

of them in our modern school houses, built beyond the need of their time and place, and representing an investment in excess facilities of about twelve million dollars. It is relative when, however meritorious in plan and purpose, it pushes the scope and cost of education beyond the reasonable ability of taxpayers to meet. Whatever mistakes may have been made, they have been mutual on the part of both people and educational leaders. Frank recognition of economic conditions ought to force a mutual effort, in a spirit of full cooperation and devotion to this supreme aim of our social democracy, to work out this problem without friction, without stinting youth's opportunity, without injustice to those who give their lives to this noble cause, and without oppressive cost and taxation. The cause is too sacred—to close to the hearts of all our people—to permit approach to its solution in any other spirit.

"The cost of operation of the public schools will be lowered this year by at least three million dollars. This saving has been effected without a necessary lowering of existing standards. The fact that it has been generally accepted by the teachers without complaint, shows that the teachers of North Carolina as they come in contact with the children of taxpayers have a sympathetic understanding of existing economic conditions in their communities.

Public Office A Public Trust
 In something more than oratorical fashion there must be a reassertion of the ancient Democratic faith that public office is a public trust. Undoubtedly due in part to the untiring sweep of the universal tide of depression, it is still true that a large part of our tax burden today is due directly to bad management and misdirection of public funds, and to an alarming frequency of actual defaultation. Public funds of all kinds must be protected, and violations of this sacred obligation involved must be punished. Public office must be held to the highest accountability as a public trust.

No Shortened Vision of Service
 In maintaining that there should be a readjustment of cost in every unit government in the state, I am thinking in terms of penurious pay for honest labor. I am not thinking of abandoning or crippling any form of public service that is worth its cost. I am thinking that we ought to develop a psychology that regards the waste of a public dollar as a hurt to our social order and a hindrance to our broad program of social service. I am thinking we ought to demand efficiency in every branch and unit of government. An administration devoted to a practical readjustment of pyramided public expenses should not mean a leadership unsympathetic with the higher aims of a socialized state. In progress that is sound and enduring we can go forward only in proportion as we can eliminate waste and extravagance in the process, and build a tradition of supreme allegiance to the public welfare.

Taxation
 In support of our increasing program of public expenses we have, in session after session of the General Assembly, ransacked the whole range of tax possibilities—in income, inheritance, corporate franchise, privilege and license. By almost common consent the last Legislature went to extreme limits in imposition of these taxes to support its program of property tax relief. It should be our constant aim to improve the text and administration of our tax laws, to keep abreast of changing conditions, to attain a higher degree of equity in our tax levies, and to provide necessary revenue. But the taxes now imposed on business and industry clearly reach the danger point. I thoroughly believe that emphasis should now be given to an adjustment of spending, rather than to a further search for new forms and methods of taxation. Almost every form of taxation, in its last analysis, reaches back to those who toil and produce wealth. More taxes is not a remedy for too much taxes.

My opposition to any form of sales taxation that definitely adds to the price of articles of common purchase and general use is well known. It was stated in the report of the Tax Commission before the Legislature met: It was renewed when the fight was on and when the result hung in the balance. I have not changed my views about this form of taxation. It puts an unreasonable burden on every business, already overtaxed, and puts a new tax on every citizen, added to the cost of his merchandise, and a new burden upon those who have the hardest time in life's unequal struggle. It would add to the distress of reduced incomes, of the partially employed, and of the unemployed.

Permanent Reduction of Property Taxes
 Under the far-reaching program presented by the present administration and enacted by the last General Assembly, the rising tide of governmental costs has been stopped and turned backward. Both in shifting of taxes, and in reduction of costs, a substantial reduction of taxes on property has been made this year. But unless the people are intelligently alive to our tax situation, and are ready to demand this program of readjustment and rigid economy with respect to both state and local governments, they may expect property taxes to be gradually but surely restored to the former high levels because of demands for increased spending. The shifting from property taxes to some other form of taxation has never been known to result in permanent reduction of the tax burden on property. Witness the history of this movement in any state that has tried it. Witness our own experience ten years ago when we succeeded in adopting the income tax, adding the gasoline tax and increasing license taxes, and taking all taxes off of property by the state. It was immediately availed of to increase local spending beyond the previous total of both state and local property taxes. In two years property taxes

were higher than ever, and were continually increased until they became unbearable. If the transferring of the county roads and the six months school term entirely from the counties to the state merely means that we have provided another opportunity for local units to start on another program of increased spending for the services left on the locality, we shall have increased the difficulties of our problem instead of having solved it.

Local Self-Government
 I believe in local self-government that gives the broadest powers to the people themselves in every county and city in the state to control their local affairs. I believe in maintaining as close contact as possible with the people in each community in the control and management of schools and roads under state responsibility. I also believe in protection against abuse of power by all public officials. Experience is conclusive that there must be a wholesome restraint upon local government in contracting debt and issuing bonds without a vote of the people.

Quadrennial Re-Assessment
 I have always believed in the quadrennial reassessment of real estate, and in making this regular state inquiry reflect the variations in actual value, and as between particular classes of property. I was actively engaged, under official responsibility, in organizing for this work this year when the General Assembly interrupted it. It finally left responsibility with every local board to hear complaints and make adjustments. Perfection is impossible, but equality in valuation should be our constant aim and diligent pursuit. It is the most vital point in property taxation. Glaring inequalities and favoritism breed contempt for the law. The custom of quadrennial valuation was handed down in wisdom by our fathers, and should be maintained.

But let no one make the mistake of thinking that in reassessment itself there is relief from our excessive burden. If valuations are reduced, rates will be correspondingly increased. The only actual relief is in actual readjustment and reduction in the size and volume of our spending.

Other Issues
 There are, of course, other issues that will find their way into the campaign. But, for my part, I would concentrate the thinking of our people on the one major issue—how far can we in reason go, and how much relief for a distressed time can we find, in a readjustment of the total load of public expenses—state, county and city—that in prosperous times were pyramided beyond the reach of our present stature?
 I have tried to present a true picture of our condition, with its demands for courageous action. But if I did not have confidence in the constructive capacity of our people to solve these problems, with our faces to the future, and with a continuing and a more enduring progress as our goal—for people, state and party—I would be unworthy of this responsibility.

PENROSE NEWS TOLD BY CORRESPONDENT

The Penrose P. T. A. met in the school auditorium Thursday night, September 10 and elected the following officers: President, Mrs. Carl Talley; vice president, Mr. W. A. Williams; secretary-treasurer, Miss Fleeto Freeman. A program committee was appointed with N. L. Ponder chairman and the officers of the organization as assistants. A social committee was also named with the following members: Mrs. M. H. Holiday, Mrs. N. L. Ponder, Mrs. W. A. Williams and Miss Fleeto Freeman. The needs of the school were discussed, and another meeting set for the evening of Thursday, Sept. 24.

The B. Y. P. U. members of Enon church will present a special program at the Little River church on the afternoon of Sunday, Sept. 20. It is reported that six churches will be represented at this program, and an interesting and helpful afternoon is expected.

Penrose school is going along very nicely. Some are out helping their parents in the fodder harvest. Parents should get these boys back in school very soon or they will probably get behind and lose interest. Boys of Penrose Graded school have a baseball game scheduled with the Little River school. This game will be played on the regular league diamond in big league style at Penrose Friday afternoon, beginning at 4 o'clock.

It is reported that the Penrose boys and girls attending Brevard High school are making an excellent showing. We hope they keep this up and be an honor to themselves, the school and their homes and community.

Penrose Graded school has a new pupil this week, Ralph Hibbard, of Kentucky, who is staying with his aunt, Mrs. Ralph Woodfin. Mr. Mrs. Ralph Woodfin visited Mrs. Woodfin's people in Eastern Kentucky, returning last week.

Frank Woodfin, who has been operating an active business in the filling station line, is building an annex this week to take care of a meat market and a line of groceries. Frank has already developed a good trade, not only in gas and oils but in staple groceries, which makes a very convenient place to trade for many people of this community.

Back to school again: This week Billy Middleton leaves for Furman University at Greenville, S. C.; Randall and Leon Lyday leave for A. & E. College at Raleigh; Misses Ethel Williams and Marie Case for The Normal and Collegiate at Asheville; Glenn Miller is at Kingsport, Tenn., in college, and Wilson Lyday and Ernest Brown are at Mars Hill. These young folks make a good representation for this community.

TRY OUR WANT ADS.

BREVARD SCOUTS ELECT OFFICIALS

The Boy Scouts of America, Troop No. 1 of Brevard elected officers for the fall term Friday night at their regular meeting.

Officers elected were: Secretary, Mack Allison; treasurer, Sandy McLeod; monitor, Ralph Galloway; librarian, Craig Misenheimer; doorkeeper, Harold Misenheimer; flag bearers, Mark Taylor Orr and Craig Misenheimer.

Ralph Galloway automatically became Monitor since he passed more merit badges during the past term than any other scout in the troop.

The officers elected will serve for the ensuing three months and their duties cover the full routine of troop activities.

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SPECIALS THIS WEEK

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