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IMPROVED COUNTY GOVERNMENT

UNITY IN FISCAL CONTROL

Last week the News Letter carried a synopsis of the report prepared by the County Government Commission and endorsed by the State Association of County Commissioners at their meeting August 1. This report submitted seven major conditions or functions, which must be safeguarded if county government is to be operated with justice, economy and efficiency. These seven essential qualities of good county government are: (1) Unity in the official family in fiscal management; (2) adequate means of preserving the taxables; (3) collecting the revenue with diligence and dispatch; (4) properly safeguarding the expenditures; (5) proper accounting of all funds; (6) carefully preserving the physical property; (7) providing properly for the administration of justice.

Each of these seven aspects of county government will be the subject of a brief article in the News Letter. This week an attempt will be made to explain what is meant by unity in fiscal management.

Curtailment of Powers

When our present state constitution was adopted it was contemplated that the board of county commissioners should be the sole governing authority in the county. And, for a period, this body had control of schools, roads, elections and every other activity of county government. Gradually, however, the powers of the county commissioners have been taken from them and given to independent boards—the board of education, the road board, the board of elections, and others. These secondary boards are in no sense subordinate; they determine policy in their respective fields, subject of course to state restrictions.

The creation of the separate board of education was, no doubt, an effort to divorce school administration from local politics. The separate road boards, where they exist, have sometimes been a benefit. Decentralization of power, though sometimes resulting in an immediate gain, is contrary to sound principles of business. Divided responsibility means an obscurity of responsibility which defies popular control. The Commission does not urge the elimination of these other boards, but it does believe that they should be subordinated to the county board of commissioners, which alone has the taxlevying power. It is an anomalous condition when the authority which must provide the revenues cannot control the expenditures.

No Administrative Unity

Decentralization does not stop with the several boards. The sheriff, the clerk of Superior Court, the register of deeds, and the treasurer are the political peers of the commissioners. The commissioners cannot compel obedience from them, nor remove them if they are recalcitrant. In the performance of their work for the state (police and court duties) they should be independent, but in matters of county administration they should be responsible to the board of commissioners. Whenever an officer receives or expends county money he becomes a county administrative officer, and as such should become amenable to a unified fiscal control.

The commissioners themselves have been guilty of loose and even illegal governmental practices. Special tax funds have been used for general purposes; the receipts from bond issues have been used to pay current expenses; sinking funds have been depleted; deposits have been made without requiring bond; vouchers are issued without money to cash them; and rarely is there a serious effort to balance income and expense. The monthly audit of claims by the commissioners is no adequate control, for only a control at the time liabilities are incurred can be effective. The commissioners are even more deficient as administrators. They meet only once or twice a month. They have no executive agent to act for them. Except in those counties which have an auditor or full-time chairman there can be neither efficient administration nor sound financial control.

Recommendations

To quote the recommendations of the

Commission:

"Unity in the official family in fiscal management may be maintained in the following ways:

(1) By centering administrative authority in a business manager, who is appointed by and acts for the Board. He may be the chairman of the Board, or he may be the auditor, or some very capable citizen, to supervise for the Board the receipts and expenditures of the several departments of the county government and make reports to the Board of the condition of each department of the county.

(2) By requiring all boards that expend public funds to account to the Board of County Commissioners in a business-like way for all funds received and expended.

(3) By giving the commissioners authority to select all administrative officers, so far as fiscal matters are concerned; such as supervisor of taxables, collector of revenues, auditor, purchasing agent, treasurer, and superintendent of physical property.

(4) By a careful administration of a county budget. There should be centralized accounting of all funds, and centralized purchasing of supplies, so far as possible, and a continuity of business organization."—Paul W. Wager.

THE NORTH CAROLINA CLUB

The North Carolina Club at the State University began its thirteenth year of existence with an interesting meeting Monday night, September 27.

The feature of the evening was an address by Mr. R. D. W. Connor on "The Development of Democratic Institutions in North Carolina. This year the club is considering the 'Problems of Democracy in North Carolina' and Mr. Connor's address furnished an excellent background for the studies which are to follow.

Mr. Connor reminded the members of the club that their papers and discussions helped to mold public opinion in the state, and that in at least a few instances governmental reforms had their inception in the North Carolina Club. He said that he felt that the program mapped out for the current year offered an opportunity to render immense practical services.

In his address Mr. Connor reviewed the development of political democracy in the state. It was a mistake, he said, to think of democracy as an 18th century product. It is rather a 19th century product. The American Revolution was not a democratic movement. The colonists had set up English institutions here; they were imbued with English traditions and ideals. They revolted from England because their constitutional rights as Englishmen were being violated. North Carolina's first constitution in 1776 was written by transplanted Englishmen, and in it the time-honored rights of Englishmen were guaranteed.

That first constitution was far from a democratic instrument. A government was set up based on property rights. Only land owners could vote, and only large landowners could hold office. Furthermore, none could hold office except orthodox Protestants. Atheists, Jews, Catholics, and Quakers were excluded.

About 1830 the democratic movement gained headway throughout the world. In England it resulted in the Reform Bill of 1832. In America we had the Jacksonian era. In North Carolina the democratic movement originated among the Scotch-Irish of the Piedmont. They were mostly small farmers and more democratic in their views than the large landholders of the East. Before 1830 the people of Western North Carolina began to propose internal improvements and public schools, but the East opposed any increase in taxation. Representation in the legislature was by counties, and the West, because of its few counties at that time, had little voting strength. Whenever the legislature created a new county in the west it created another in the east to offset it. All the state officials were elected by the legislature, and the East controlled the legislature. The West was helpless, and not until it threatened to secede did its demands receive any attention. Archibald D. Murphey was the spokesman for the West and a great champion

VALUE OF AN EDUCATION

"The educational advantages enjoyed by the people biographically sketched in Who's Who in America, edition by edition, have furnished a theme of widespread interest and of continuous discussion." There is a deepening impression in favor of higher education as the determining factor in the attainment of the most desirable positions in life.

The recent edition of Who's Who contains the results of an exhaustive investigation to determine the value of an education in enabling one to achieve outstanding success.

"The figures show that the number attending college but not graduated, was 3,022, or 13.69 percent of those giving educational data, and the total number of collegians, graduated and undergraduated, was 17,077, making 77.36 percent.

"In round numbers 77 out of every 100 persons giving educational data, whose names appear in the 1922-23 edition, attended college, and 64 out of every 100 were college graduates.

"Academies, seminaries and secondary schools (regarded as of equal educational rank) are credited with 1,574, or 7.13 percent of those furnishing educational data.

"Normal schools are credited with 1,182, or 5.35 percent, and common or grammar schools 1,880, or 8.52 percent.

"It is interesting to note, in recapitulation, that two persons out of every 100 included in this tabulation completed their preliminary education in normal schools; 5 out of every 100 completed their preliminary education in high school; 9 out of every 100 passed into active life from common or grammar schools; 7 out of every 100 attended academies, seminaries or other secondary schools; 64 out of every 100 were college graduates; and 77 out of every 100 completed their education in college."

Only a very small percent of all people are college graduates, yet 64 percent of the notables listed in Who's Who furnishing educational data are college graduates, and 77 percent attended college. It is incontrovertible argument in favor of a college education.

of democracy. Finally in 1834 the question of having a constitutional convention was submitted to the people. The West voted solidly in favor of it; the East voted solidly against it; but the West won out. The Constitution was thus revised in 1835 in line with the democratic movement. The governor was henceforth to be elected by the people. Representation was to be based on population—or at least in the Lower House. Suffrage was broadened to include all Christians instead of only Protestants. In 1867 the last property qualifications were removed. In 1868 the negro was enfranchised, but that was not an internal development. In 1920 the suffrage was extended to women. Politically the state has been pretty thoroughly democratized. The next steps must be in the direction of social and industrial democracy, and in providing equal opportunities to all.

THE EDITOR'S TASK

It is his desire and his business to advocate that which will benefit his city. He is, in a very real sense, the high priest of service, acquainting his people with new opportunities, not only to build up their town materially, but also to enrich themselves and others spiritually. In his hand always is the axe of the pioneer, and on his banner the proud device of "Forward!"—Selected.

NATIVE STATES OF NOTABLES

AMERICAN NOTABLES

The 1926-27 edition of Who's Who contains the names of 385 persons who give North Carolina as their state of birth. There are now living in North Carolina 305 persons who are listed in Who's Who. Thus North Carolina has given birth to more people of more than local name or fame than are now domiciled in the state. She seems to have been a better seed-bed for breeding notables than a plant-bed for maturing them. Many people who have left the state have later risen to name and fame. Possibly many of them left consciously seeking for greener pastures. However, our own pastures are now verdant, and the ambitious and energetic can grow to full stature here at home.

The table which appears elsewhere shows the states' rank in the ratios of notables born in them, using the 1870 census of population as the base for calculating the rates. The 1870 census is the one nearest the birth of most of the notables appearing in Who's Who. No basis of calculating the rank of the states in this study is without its faults. Manifestly the method chosen is the fairest one. However, the rank of a very few states that were doubling their population every two or three years around 1870, as North and South Dakota, would be very different if based on any later census of population. For the older states there is no important criticism of the method employed in arriving at the rank of their contribution of notable men and women.

North Carolina Notables

North Carolina, the state of birth of 385 notable men and women now living, ranks thirty-eighth, having given birth to 36 notables per 100,000 inhabitants as of 1870. Virginia ranks highest among the Southern states. South Carolina and Kentucky rank just ahead of North Carolina. Nine Southern states and New Mexico rank below North Carolina. The older and more settled states largely predominate as the birthplaces of Who's Who notables. The New England and Middle Atlantic states rank high.

The following table shows the number of people listed in Who's Who living in the larger towns and cities of the state:

Raleigh	45
Chapel Hill	43
Asheville	27
Greensboro	22
Durham	21

NATIVE STATES OF NOTABLES IN WHO'S WHO, 1926

Rate per 100,000 Inhabitants as of 1870

In the following table the states are ranked according to number of notables born therein per 100,000 inhabitants as of 1870. The parallel columns give the number and ratios of each state. The rank of a few states like North and South Dakota and Colorado may be considerably off as their territory was increasing so rapidly in population about 1870-1880, the average time of birth of persons listed in Who's Who. The New England states rank high, as would be expected. Along with them appear Western states that were sparsely settled but growing rapidly around 1870.

North Carolina is the state of birth of 385 persons appearing in Who's Who. Her rank is thirty-eighth with a rate of 36 native notables per 100,000 inhabitants as of 1870. Virginia, South Carolina, and Kentucky in the South rank ahead of North Carolina. Ten states, all Southern except one, rank below us.

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Rank	State	Notables born in state as of 1870	Rate per 100,000 in population	Rank	State	Notables born in state as of 1870	Rate per 100,000 in population
1	North Dakota	11	460	24	Wisconsin	698	66
2	South Dakota	37	308	26	New Jersey	579	64
3	Colorado	79	197	27	Maryland	495	63
4	Massachusetts	2,050	141	28	Michigan	718	61
5	Nebraska	163	133	29	Arizona	6	60
6	Connecticut	606	113	31	Pennsylvania	2,129	60
7	Washington	26	108	32	Indiana	706	58
8	New Hampshire	339	107	33	Virginia	914	54
9	Rhode Island	232	107	34	Nevada	20	48
10	Idaho	15	100	34	West Virginia	196	44
11	Utah	85	98	35	Missouri	726	42
12	Montana	20	95	36	South Carolina	283	40
13	Vermont	315	95	37	Kentucky	510	39
14	Delaware	106	85	38	North Carolina	385	36
15	Maine	633	85	39	Texas	274	34
16	New York	3,655	81	40	Tennessee	419	33
17	Wyoming	7	78	41	Alabama	295	30
18	Minnesota	337	77	42	Florida	52	28
19	Ohio	1,975	74	43	Georgia	325	27
20	California	396	71	44	Mississippi	218	25
21	Kansas	258	71	45	Arkansas	120	26
22	Illinois	1,608	68	46	Louisiana	165	23
23	Oregon	61	67	47	New Mexico	7	8
24	Iowa	788	66	—	Oklahoma	8	—