

Editorial Board: E. C. Branson, S. H. Hobbs, Jr., L. R. Wilson, E. W. Knight, D. D. Carroll, J. B. Bullitt, H. W. Odum. Entered as second-class matter November 14, 1914, at the Postoffice at Chapel Hill, N. C., under the act of August 24, 1912.

IMPROVED COUNTY GOVERNMENT

PRESERVING PROPERTY

One of the most obvious means of economy in any business, public or private, is to carefully preserve the physical property. To wear out a machine in three years which, with proper care, would last five years is equivalent to paying 66 percent too much for the machine. To neglect to repair a public building when the defect first appears is to invite a heavy expense later on. To have public property out where it can be stolen is just as costly to the taxpayers as if the officials did the stealing themselves. These are only a few of the losses which result when no particular official is made responsible for looking after the physical property of a county.

Large Investments

Every county in the state owns several hundred thousand dollars' worth of property—the courthouse and its furnishings, the jail, the county home, the county farm with its stock and implements, expensive road machinery, small tools, and sometimes mules, harness, and supplies of hay and grain. It is apparent that the depreciation item is one which figures heavily in county expenses. To reduce the ratio of depreciation is to save thousands of dollars annually.

Every one knows that the life of tractors, automobiles, trucks, and road machines depends largely on the treatment which they receive, both when in use and when idle. Naturally the laborers who operate them are not financially interested and are inclined to be careless. The same is true to a lesser extent in the use of courthouse furnishings, supplies and equipment at the county home and elsewhere.

No One Responsible

The taxpayers can be protected only by a definite representative whom they can hold responsible. It is true that the county commissioners are responsible in a way but how can three or five men living in different parts of the county, and devoting only one or two days a month to county business, perform this duty adequately? Responsibility must be centralized. This does not mean that a new office need be created; it is only necessary that some particular official be charged with the responsibility. This work could very properly be delegated to the purchasing agent or to one of the county commissioners. He should keep a constant inventory and make a periodic appraisal of all county property. He should examine and check the delivery of all new purchases. He should see that all tools and machinery are properly housed. He should keep a check on the consumption of coal, oil, feed, and all jail and courthouse supplies. He should observe the condition of the plumbing and the heating systems, and the state of preservation of all public buildings, and should join the grand jury on their trips of inspection.

School Property

I believe the jurisdiction of such an official ought to extend over school property, for the investments are large and the neglect is deplorable. The abuse which some of the schoolhouses receive during the summer months is disgraceful—window lights broken, pipes leaking, doors found open, books and furniture strewn about in general disorder. Probably more damage is done to the average schoolhouse during the four months of idleness than during the eight months of use. The care of school trucks is sometimes just as much neglected. During those scorching days of last July several school trucks in one county stood out unprotected. One man, in another county, was using a school truck to haul wood.

A Major Function

The County Government Commission in its report recognizes the care of physical property as one of the seven major functions of county government and the need for centralized responsibility. The report states as follows:

"The failure to preserve physical property results in decline and loss of property and an additional tax burden in the following ways:

1. Property may be lost or stolen and not detected, because no one is held responsible for the same, and there is no regular or systematic inventory.
2. There is no frequent inspection ex-

cept occasionally by the Grand Jury. As a result there is rapid depreciation of road machinery, trucks, etc., abuse of schoolhouses, court houses, and other public buildings.

3. Few counties take an adequate measure of their capital assets and set up depreciation reserves in any business-like way."

The suggestions for safeguarding this major function are that one of the commissioners, or some other officer of the county, be selected as the custodian of all physical property belonging to the county, that he make frequent inspection of all physical property belonging to the county, that he make frequent reports to the commissioners and to the several boards that have the use of county property, and that effective measures be adopted for placing responsibility for the preservation of the property belonging to the county.—Paul W. Wager.

THE FOUR HUNDRED

The 400th application for a monthly grant from the Mothers' Aid Fund has just been signed by the State Director. By a moderate monthly sum, given at a fixed time, coupled with a reasonable amount of supervision by state and county, four hundred mothers, mentally and physically capable, have been helped to keep their children in their homes, and to give them freely of their love and care. When the man of the family dropped out, by death or some other cause, the state and county have stepped in to help the mother raise her family. A financial value has been set on a mother's care and she has been made to feel that she is doing the state a real service by rearing her children in a normal healthy way.

These Four Hundred are healthy, fine and straight-forward women. They are alive to their responsibilities and grateful for the aid. There is little chance of finding their children out of school when they should be there. They are by no means made more dependent by the help since large numbers of them have become entirely self-supporting by following out some special occupation in which they engaged to augment their monthly pensions.

North Carolina's Four Hundred are being brought to renewed vigor and economic independence. The state and county are not pouring out money, they are investing it in the greatest crop North Carolina has—her children.

Their spirit is expressed by a letter written by one of these 400 mothers who has succeeded in regaining her health and obtaining a place as post-mistress. "I like the work very well. The best of it all is depending on self for a living. You know we all feel better to make our own way, although I sorely do appreciate what the county and state did for me."

Mothers' Aid is a plan by which such worthy mothers are helped to make their own way. May the ranks of the Four Hundred be increased!—Public Welfare Progress.

THE PUBLIC SERVICE

The subject under discussion at the last meeting of the North Carolina Club at the University was that of training for public service. Mr. Robinson Newcomb introduced the subject with an excellent statement of the requirements for a public official and the opportunities in this country and abroad for securing the necessary training.

A public official is primarily a servant, not a master; and his first duty as a servant is towards his master, society. Unfortunately, and all too often, this master has dissociated personality, and speaks with as many voices as there are particular interests; but the public servant must turn a deaf ear to these rather discordant voices—save as they help him understand the command coming from society as a whole. He must understand this public opinion because he must interpret it through many detailed and rather technical policies which the public will never know, nor understand, but which should nevertheless be in harmony with its desires. And he must understand and follow this opinion as far as possible if democracy is to be more than a shibboleth.

A government official, says Mr. New-

NON-STANDARD TEACHERS

There are 3,116 school teachers in North Carolina who have not received as much as a high-school education. However, remarkable progress is being made in reducing the number of non-standard teachers. In 1919-20 one-half of the school teachers of the state were classed as non-standard, that is, they did not possess the equivalent of a high-school education. In 1925-26 only 13.61 percent of our public-school teachers were classed as non-standard. Two-thirds of them are negro teachers, one-third are white, and all but 102 teach in rural schools,—further evidence that the rural children of the state receive the short end of the deal, educationally.

comb, should understand the basic principles of the social organism he is trying to serve. He should understand something of their complexity, something of the interdependence of groups, and something of the conflict of interests. The viewpoints of a movie director, for instance, filming salacious stories, and of a welfare director may be, and often are, directly opposed. One is interested in a policy which will yield profits, the other is interested in social well-being. The public official must be able to detect and understand trends, for tomorrow's needs cannot be fully met unless they are anticipated today. Finally, the civil servant must be able to act as well as think. He must be a master of technique, be able to get the most out of his office, his tools and his men. He must be efficient, as well as representative, socially minded and alert.

Element of Training

This requires broad and thorough training. The training must include a study of social situations and social trends. It must include an intimate knowledge of government as an agency of society. But this knowledge of society, this sympathy for social needs, and this knowledge of the inner workings of government, cannot come from books alone, nor from professors who know naught but books. It must come from active contacts with the society which is to be served.

The student should visit factories, slums, jails, courts, libraries, council meetings, political gatherings of all sorts. He should, himself, undertake a specific task in social control. Finally his training should include a period of apprenticeship in which he proves himself competent to work with governmental agencies as they are.

Training Schools

Europe is far ahead of this country in its training for government service, but a few opportunities for such training here are appearing. There are thirty-three colleges and universities in this country giving work in government administration, and several professional schools giving training in particular phases of government service. In these institutions theory is given from the standpoint of the community, not the individual, and is supplemented by practical training in the field. In Syracuse, for instance, the student is not discharged from the School of Citizenship and Public Affairs until he has done research in the field as well as within the college walls, and until he has proved by actual service in some government department that he is master of his technique as well as his theory. The New York Training School for Public Service is the outstanding institution of its kind in this country, and its graduates receive good positions. The number of such schools will increase with the demand for efficient, well-trained administrators in our municipal, county and state governments.

COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEMS

A recent book, Library Extension published by the American Library Association, an exhaustive report on public libraries in the United States and Canada, contains a section on county libraries. It has listed by states the counties in which public funds are appropriated for county library service. Two hundred and twenty-three counties are listed, with the amount of public

funds appropriated for county library service.

California stands head and shoulders above all the other states, with forty-three (now 45) out of fifty-eight counties appropriating public funds for county-wide library service.

North Carolina has twelve counties appropriating public funds for county library service. In California it is an out and out county wide library proposition. With us it is a small fund appropriated by the county to the town or city library. The twelve counties in North Carolina appropriate a total of twenty-four thousand dollars for county library service.

There are eighteen counties in California each of which appropriates more public funds to county-wide public library service than the twelve counties of North Carolina appropriate all told. California has twenty-six counties that appropriate more than one dollar per inhabitant annually for county library service, and several other counties just under one dollar per inhabitant. The following are a few typical cases: Alameda County Free Library, \$47,889 for 43,074 population; Colusa County Free Library, \$10,956 for population of 9,290; Kern County Free Library, \$94,142 for 64,843 population; Madera County Free Library, \$21,268 for 12,203 population; Plumas County Free Library, \$10,549 for 5,631 inhabitants; Trinity County Free Library, \$4,427 for 2,551 inhabitants.

The following, taken from Library Extension, is the record for the twelve North Carolina counties that appropriate public funds for library service for county people.

Barke County. Contract with Morgan County Public Library. \$300 for rural pop. of 10,430.

Chowan County. Contract with Edenton Memorial Library. \$110 for rural pop. of 7,872.

Darham County. Contract with Durham Public Library. \$4,000 for rural pop. of 20,500. (County also appropriates \$240 to the independent Negro Library at Durham.)

Foreyth County. Contract with Winston Salem Public Library. \$1,500 for rural pop. of 28,874.

Guilford County. Contract with Greensboro Public Library. \$4,000 for rural pop. of 59,411.

Mecklenburg County. Contract with Charlotte Public Library, 1925. \$5,000 for rural pop. of 34,357.

New Hanover County. Contract with Wilmington Public Library. \$600 for rural pop. of 7,248.

Rowan County. Contract with Salisbury Public Library. \$1,800 for rural pop. of 10,178.

Stanly County. Contract with Albemarle Public Library, 1925. \$1,200 for rural pop. of 24,738.

Vance County. Contract with Henderson Memorial Library. \$2,000 for rural pop. of 17,677.

Wake County. Contract with Raleigh Public Library, 1925. \$3,000 for rural pop. of 50,737.

Warren County Memorial Library, Warrenton. \$500 for rural pop. of 20,666.—Library Extension, American Library Assn.

In California the motor truck takes the books to the country people. In North Carolina the country people must come into town to borrow the books from the town library. It is doubtful if the country people in the counties listed above make much use of the library service provided for them. California's county unit travelling library service seems to be the best means of providing reading facilities for country people. The plan should be tried out in North Carolina, first because she is predominantly a rural state, and second because she ranks almost at the bottom as a reading state. Our dense rural population could be reached over our splendid highways at a minimum cost per inhabitant. What county in North Carolina will lead off?

COOPERATIVES GAIN

Business to the amount of \$2,400,000,000 was transacted during 1925 by the 10,800 farm associations reporting to the U. S. Department of Agriculture, according to a preliminary report by the Division of Cooperative Marketing. This was an increase of more than \$1,700,000,000 as compared with 1915 when the 5,424 associations reporting to the Department handled a volume of business estimated at \$636,000,000. The largest gains, measured in dollars,

were made by the twelve North Central states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, North and South Dakota, Iowa, Nebraska, Missouri, and Kansas. The increase for the ten-year period amounted to more than a billion dollars. Heavy percentage gains were made in the southern cotton and tobacco producing states.

Cooperative business for the three Pacific Coast states fell a little short of doubling for the ten years. California was the leading state in regard to volume of cooperatives business in 1915. Iowa was second in importance, Minnesota was third, and New York was fourth. In 1925, according to the preliminary estimates, Minnesota led in volume of business, California was second in importance, Illinois was third, and Iowa fourth.

The change in relative importance of the states between 1915 and 1925 was caused largely by the great increase in the number of livestock shipping associations and in farmers' grain elevators. The development of large-scale cotton, tobacco, wheat, and milk marketing associations was also an important factor. The big increase in membership of associations marketing dairy products, particularly fluid milk, was another reason for big gains in amount of business transacted in 1925 as compared with 1915.

About 30 percent of the business handled in 1925 was reported for associations engaged in the handling of grain, including rice and dry beans. Over 22 percent of the total business was credited to associations marketing dairy products, including butter, cheese, fluid milk, cream, ice cream, and condensed and powdered milk. Total estimated business for the associations handling grain was \$750,000,000; for those marketing dairy products, \$635,000,000; and those marketing livestock, \$320,000,000.

Sales by cotton associations amounted to \$150,000,000, and by tobacco marketing associations to \$90,000,000. The associations handling fruits and vegetables are credited with a total business of \$280,000,000.—Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

HOW GOOD ROADS PAY

The owner of a bus transportation company operating a number of busses, partly over hard-surfaced and partly over gravel or top-soil roads, expresses the opinion that it costs at least three cents a mile more to run a bus on a gravel road than it does on a concrete road. This of course takes into consideration wear and tear and upkeep of car as well as the cost of tires, gas, oil, etc. The total mileage operated by busses every day by the bus executive quoted is 2,300 miles, one-half of which is over gravel roads. This man estimates that if all the roads over which his busses are operated were concrete his saving would be \$31.50 a day. In a year this would amount to \$12,600, a sum which is actually greater than the net yearly profit from the eleven busses operated by the company in question. Many authorities are agreed that for heavy cars a saving of three cents a mile is a conservative estimate, while the average motor would save two and one-half cents a mile by travelling on smooth instead of ordinary roads.

There are approximately 400,000 automobiles in North Carolina. Assuming that each of these cars travels 5,000 miles a year and that one-half of this mileage is on dirt roads our motorists are losing \$25,000,000 a year on account of having to travel half the time over ordinary roads. Conversely they are saving \$25,000,000 a year because one-half the time they are travelling over smooth-surfaced roads.

The automobile license tax and gasoline tax in North Carolina amounts to approximately \$12,000,000 a year. Our motorists therefore are saving approximately \$13,000,000 a year above all forms of taxes imposed on autoists in the cost of gas, tires, oil and automobile upkeep. This does not take into account, of course the saving of transportation time and expense.

Highway experts generally agree that the saving to the motor vehicle owners in America, through smooth-surfaced roads, in the course of five years would be sufficient to rebuild the roads. And this does not take into account the saving of time and other advantages that result from good roads. Nor do any of the savings already mentioned take into account the better distribution of farm and other products as a result of the increasing mileage of good roads. The indirect economic advantages of good roads to the community as a whole, some apparent and some not, are tremendous.—Charlotte Observer.