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New Bernians who grumble about North Carolina's sale tax--and most of us complain at one time or another--may not be aware that thirty seven of the fifty states have such a tax. In thirty of these states the retail levy is the largest source of revenue.

Only Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Delaware, Alaska, Idaho, Minnesota, Nebraska, Montana, New Jersey, New York (except New York City), Virginia, Oregon and Vermont have steered clear of the tax, and the majority are considering it this year.

Another bit of interesting information should make local citizens think twice before they complain on the next rainy day. Craven county farmers are well aware of the rain's importance, but folks in town who depend in large measure on the farmer's prosperity are apt to overlook this fact.

In order to have one inch of rainfall on a hundred acres of planted crops, Dame Nature's heavenly sprinkling system must drop 2,714,300 gallons of water on the land below. She can accomplish this miraculous feat in just a few minutes, and does it fairly often during a normal growing season.

Complaining is as old as time. Carved on an Assyrian tablet, 2,800 years before Christ was born in Bethlehem, was this recently discovered lament. "The earth is degenerating these days. Bribery and corruption abound. Children no longer mind their parents. Every man wants to write a book, and it is evident that the end of the world is fast approaching."

Moses Mendelssohn (grandfather of the great composer Felix Mendelssohn) wouldn't have put much stock in the gloomy words on that ancient tablet. Known as the "German Socrates" and author of several books on philosophy, this was his own formula for a useful and happy life: "Love the beautiful, desire the good, do the best."

While we're being philosophical and enjoying the last magic days of April, let's compare our lot in life with the dark hours that Lincoln faced with unflinching humor.

Honest Abe failed in business, was defeated for the Legislature, and failed in business again. He was elected to the Legislature, his sweetheart died, and he had a nervous breakdown.

Then he was defeated for Speaker, defeated for Elector, defeated for Land Officer and defeated for Congress. Elected to Congress, he was defeated for re-election, defeated for the Senate, defeated for Vice-President, again defeated for the Senate. Finally he was elected President.

It was Lincoln who said: "You cannot bring about prosperity by discouraging thrift...You cannot strengthen the weak by weakening the strong...You cannot help the wage earner by pulling down the wage payer...You cannot further the brotherhood of man by encouraging class hatred."

He reasoned that "You cannot build character and courage by taking away man's initiative and independence... You cannot help the poor by destroying the rich... You cannot

(Continued on page 8)



AN AWARD DESERVED--It is impossible to imagine a special citation more appropriate than the one given Albert Parker by the Craven-Pamlico Chapter of the American Red Cross and New Bern-Craven County Civil Defense. New Bern's Mayor, Dr. Dale T. Millns,

has the honor of making the presentation to Parker, a ham radio operator since 1919, for his untiring and unselfish service in times of distress.--Photo by Billy Benners.



MAKING IT OFFICIAL Governor Terry Sanford, using a quill pen of the colonial period, signs the charter of North Carolina's Historic Coastland Trail Association at the first meeting of the board of directors of the new travel development organization in Greenville. Seated

with Sanford is Chairman Charles B. Wade of the Advertising Committee of the Department of Conservation and Development. Directors are watching the signing.--Photo by Charles A. Clark.