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"If the choice were left to me whether to have a free press or a free government, I would choose a free press."—Thomas Jefferson.

THURSDAY MORNING, AUGUST 6, 1931

POPULATION DATA

CITIES AND TOWNS			
Salisbury	16,951	Gold Hill	156
Spencer	3,129	Granite Quarry	507
E. Spencer	2,098	Rockwell	696
China Grove	1,258	Faith	431
Landis	1,388	Kannapolis	13,912
TOWNSHIPS			
Atwell	2,619	Morgan	1,327
China Grove	8,990	Mt. Ulla	1,389
Cleveland	1,445	Providence	2,589
Franklin	2,246	Salisbury	25,153
Gold Hill	2,642	S. Irish	1,251
Litaker	2,562	Steele	1,142
Locke	1,904	Unity	1,406

THE RAILROAD RATE INCREASE

The principal difficulty besetting the railroads was well set forth in their recent application before the Interstate Commerce Commission asking for a general 15 per cent increase in freight rates.

"If the carriers were permitted to participate in periods of prosperity equally with other business, they should equally sacrifice in periods of adversity," the application said. "But they are denied such participation by law. Even in periods of prosperity the return on railway capital has been meagre and inadequate . . ."

Under such conditions, it is not strange that the lines have been wondering for a long time how to make ends meet. The present business depression has naturally further reduced rail rates, but it can't be expected to bring about a return to normal. Not since the return preceded by law . . . No one, of course, would enjoy being in a position where they could keep rates well down and secure a reasonable profit for their services. But as we over-tax and over-regulate the industry to the point where its very existence is in danger, we must pay the fiddler—in unemployment, business recession, higher freight rates. The 15 per cent increase may work a hardship on some—but it is necessary to keep one of the most essential of all businesses from ruin.

THE MAN AND THE PARTY

Appointment of Cal Miller to fill the unexpired term of Sheriff McKenzie by the county commissioners has met with the approval of an overwhelming majority of the people in Rowan County. However, in some circles, it has been termed a piece of politics.

Mr. Miller is one of the outstanding farmers in Rowan County. He is also a leading business man. His reputation is above reproach. He is a fine gentleman, a Christian, an active church member, and a man of clean habits. He has the qualifications of a sheriff. He is trustworthy and capable. He is diligent and fearless. He is experienced in the operations and management of the county government.

It is true Mr. Miller has long been identified in politics in Rowan County. Is that to his credit or discredit? It is the privilege and duty of every citizen to be an active participant in politics. It is also true he has held office in Rowan County. The voters gave him handsome majorities. Is that an honor or dishonor? He has also held an office with the state. He has served his party and the people well. Further, he is a political power. He has many friends. He knows every pigpath in the county and he knows most of the people in the county. Shall these things be chalked up against him?

It is our opinion Mr. Miller is entitled to credit for these accomplishments; for these honors conferred upon him by the people. It is our opinion these services have better qualified him to hold the office of sheriff. It is our opinion few men in Rowan County could conduct the office as efficiently as Mr. Miller.

If the appointment of Cal Miller is politics, then let us have more of it.

WHAT ABOUT BUSINESS?

It is this time of the year when people instinctively turn their minds along the line of future business prospects. It is the planning and harvesting time of the year, and business indications are, therefore, of significant nature. Financial, mercantile, and business agencies of all varieties are making a survey of the field to ascertain what future probabilities are and the reports that are being made are of a decidedly hopeful tendency.

Unemployment and the collapse of our export trade are undoubtedly two of the outstanding causes of our present slump. These conditions emphasize the absolute necessity of intensifying domestic trade and predicating all expansions and developments upon this home business. Foreign trade, almost ruined by our tariff laws, falls out of the scope of anticipation and what we do will have to be done largely among ourselves.

But American business is cheered in this mid-summer season by a prospect of good harvests and a promise of renewed industrial activities. In the government's latest report on crop conditions, the wheat yield for the year is more than satisfactory although the price paid is indeed disappointing. The forthcoming yield of corn, cotton, tobacco, and oats, according to government estimates, will show increases, while the outlook for other food crops is favorable. It is hoped that the prices for these crops will be such as to properly reimburse the farmer for his labors with a profit to which he is entitled.

The vigor of industrial conditions is again being evidenced, after a long lapse. Iron and steel are active. Textile mills, in many sections of the country, are running on part and full time. Building operations show increases over the past year. These and sundry other advances in industry and trade are reflected in bank clearings, which must undoubtedly be accepted as a barometer of the times.

With bounteous harvests and renewed industrial vigor, let us hope the United States is on the road to its accustomed prosperity, and that the reports continuously sent out by government officials is not merely hodgepodge and camouflage.

UP TO ALL OF US

Statistics compiled by the National Board of Fire Underwriters, covering the first five months of the year, show an improvement in the fire loss ratio as compared with 1930. April losses were 4.88 per cent below last year and May 1.5 per cent lower.

We must not, however, become too sanguine because of the decrease. During May some \$37,000,000 worth of property was destroyed—and it is safe to say that at least \$30,000,000 of that could have been saved by reasonable attention and care. In these days of good fire building construction and fire prevention the unavoidable fire is a rare article. Few have building codes as rigorous as they should be—and few builders go to the little expense that would make their structures fire-resistant to the highest degree. We have yet to learn that money spent in guarding against fire is a good investment, paying a high rate of return.

Real progress in lowering fire loss will not be achieved until there is a general public realization of the duty of the individual to make his property safe. Laxness and ignorance and a false sense of economy are responsible for the annual destruction of thousands of lives and hundreds of millions of dollars in property values. A number of private and public organizations have done their best to instruct us in fire hazards and means of guarding against them. The rest is up to us.

WORK FOR PUBLIC SAFETY

Every state should officially inaugurate a "Save-a-Life" motor vehicle campaign this year.

Such campaigns have been tried in a number of eastern states with splendid results. Brakes, steering and lights are inspected and corrected and the need for safe and sane driving is brought home to the motorist. It is the common experience that the accident rate declines during the campaign and the period following.

Only organized effort can make progress against the increasing danger of our highways. The incompetent and the reckless have become genuine menaces to the lives and property of all. The sad toll of deaths and injuries mounts day by day, in spite of modernization of traffic laws in many states.

We must, through rigorous examination, make sure that the driver is capable of safely operating a car. Then we must, through "Save-a-Life" campaigns or similar movements, make sure that the car he drives is mechanically safe. Thereafter the problem comes down to individual responsibility and understanding. Education must be unremitting. The motorist, as an individual, must accept the responsibility that is his when he uses the public highways.

THE WATCHMAN TOWER

Mr. R. L. Rankin,
Chief of Police,
Salisbury, N. C.

My Dear Chief:

Recently, I have noted a perceptible reduction in the number of automobiles operated in the streets at night with only one head light, or none at all. I take it that this improvement is a result of the activities of your department, and I congratulate you and your men.

GOVERNOR MATTHEW ROWAN.

Mr. W. G. Yeager,
Master of Rowan Grange,
Salisbury, N. C.

Dear Sir:

Few organizations in Rowan County have shown a unity of purpose, or have accomplished as much through co-operative work, as the Rowan Grange. I know of no farm organization of recent times that has answered the call of the rural sections as has the grange.

This fact was evidenced on no uncertain terms at the picnic held at Peeler's lake last week. It was an inspiration.

To you, as master of the Grange, and to your capable, efficient and active set of officers, goes the lion's share of the praise, although I am not overlooking the 1500 members who have made your success possible and secure.

I anticipate a continuation of this fine work.

GOVERNOR MATTHEW ROWAN.

County Commissioners,
Rowan County,
Salisbury, N. C.

Gentlemen:

Please allow me to congratulate you upon a further reduction of the tax rate for Rowan County. I understand from Raleigh the tax rate of 57 cents on the \$100.00 assessed valuation is probably the lowest in the state; at least, Rowan will have second or third lowest tax rate in the state. This will mean a 33 1/2 per cent reduction for 1931.

For the benefit of my readers, I quote herewith the figures as prepared by you gentlemen:

County general fund	\$141,872.75
County debt service	121,717.50
County levy for	
eration of schools	109,842.67
School debt service	46,479.54
School capital outlay	5,600.00
School current expenses	8,215.00

Total \$433,727.46

Comparison between 1930 and 1931 is indeed interesting:

The tax rate for 1930 was divided as follows:

County general fund	.15
County road fund	.16
County debt service	.08
Schools, current expenses	.37 1/2
School debt service	.07
School capital outlay	.01 1/2

Total85

The new low rate for 1931 is as follows:

County general fund	.15
County debt service	.17 1/2
School levy for state	.15 7-10
School debt service	.06 1/2
School current expense	.02 3-10

Total57

The tax payers trust you can stay within the budget you have prepared and assure you of their appreciation of your action in lowering the tax rate.

GOVERNOR MATTHEW ROWAN.

Hon. Clyde E. Gooch,
Judge Rowan County Court,
Salisbury, N. C.

Dear Sir:

Permit me to say a word of commendation about the manner in which you have conducted the County Court since you were inducted into office.

You placed the court on a high plane and have maintained this policy. You have known neither rich nor poor. You have known neither white or black. You have not convicted a man because he is poor or inflicted a severe punishment upon a man because of his wealth, and the same is true of race or color.

Your decisions have been guided by the evidence. They have been tempered with mercy. It is good to see a man on the bench who believes in the "gospel of the second chance."

The other night the following lines were called to my attention:

In men whom men condemn as ill,
I find so much of goodness still;
In men whom men pronounce divine,
I find so much of sin and blot,
I hesitate to draw the line,
Between the two, where God has not.
While it may be true that poetry

CATAWBA SHERIFF RECEIVES LETTER FROM HONEST MAN

Hickory, Aug. 5.—According to an old saying there are two things a person can't escape, death and taxes.

Sheriff O. D. Barrs, of Catawba county, has just heard from a man who escaped his taxes, but he apparently failed to get away from his conscience. The note, written on a shipping tag and mailed from Lenoir, read as follows:

"I lived in your county a few years ago and did not list or pay any taxes. I had an old car. I guess five dollars will pay it for me.

(Signed) "A Child of God."

There was a five dollar bill enclosed.

"I'd certainly like to learn who this fellow is," Sheriff Barrs remarked.

A freckled face and red hair were once political assets. Now-days any color hair and any sort of face will do.

and justice may not mix, they are closely akin to each other. They both smack of that certain thing called justice.

GOVERNOR MATTHEW ROWAN.

AUTOMOBILE DESIGNS TO BE REVOLUTIONARY

New York, Aug. 5.—Automobile design is in for a radical change, recent reports to the Society of Automotive Engineers indicate. Through all the years of automobile history, the car has been before the horse, many engineers think.

Here is what they say is going to happen: The engine will be put at the rear, possibly crosswise; the body will be streamlined with a rounded blunt nose at the front, tapering to a point at the rear.

Results: Because of reduced wind resistance less power will be required and less gas used; a car of the same length will have more passenger room; the driver will be at the front where he can see better; the engine and transmission will be more compact and accessible.

Engine cooling and control connections are said to present two of the most difficult problems in the way of the change.

CAUTIOUS

Secretary—A man has just called. He wishes you to tell him the secret of your success in life.

Financier—Is he a journalist—or—of a detective?—Humorist.

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