

The State's Voice

A PAPER FOR THINKING PEOPLE

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More Meandering And Scribbling

Two weeks ago when the Voice came from the press and the Dunn Dispatch followed upon its heels bearing a batch of his editorials, the editor felt as dry as his old ad-valorem cow of 1931 fame. He told his wife that he didn't know whether there would be another issue of the Voice or not. But unlike the ad-valorem cow during the past two years, the real cow, milked dry goes busily about her grazing and to at the next milking (or is it milching?) time, without thought or worry the udders are again full. The journalist must be that kind of beastie.

That ad-valorem cow which we described as dry in the spring of 1931 but which the legislature would persist in trying to milk, or milch, didn't so readily fill her udders. Half of that fifteen-cent levy is still uncollected and the state has the bag to hold to the extent of two million dollars of non-existent school funds. The former Chatham Record editor can well say "I told you so." The recent legislators went to Raleigh at last aware that the ad-valorem cow was dry and decided there was no use in trying to get a single speen from her. But they still shied clear of the vaulting power and tobacco heifers, and turned to another cow that is not giving enough milk to keep the calf thriving. Two years ago there was a much larger well fed salary group that should have been milked with a luxury tax than now. The net income group has almost dried up too. But the poor simps of legislators think they can take three speens of the hundred light ones that have been going to the calves. It is fixed so that the merchant milkmaid must get those three speens or suffer the consequences. Poor milkmaid and poor calves!

One Angry Merchant

My last trip down into Robeson revealed more of the feelings of the merchants than we had formerly discovered. At St Paul we found Mr. L. L. McGoogan sizzling. He had worked like a Trojan against the levy of a sales tax. The event had left him sore and grieved at what he foresees as the consequence. He cannot see himself taking three percent of the poor washwoman's dollar and he cannot see how the merchant can survive and not pinch the poor, already black and blue from the pinchings of cruel circumstances.

Mr. McGoogan knows how to express himself vigorously and we have asked him to write an article for the Voice when he shall have discovered the real contents of the sales tax bill. He was not sure, nor was I, whether the limit of ten dollars upon any one article was retained in the bill or not. If it is, such a limitation is enough to make any fair-minded man s i z z l e as Mr. McGoogan was sizzling. For instance, imagine a poor woman staving to buy a ten dollar coat and having to pony up her three per cent tax while the rich lady invests in a \$500 coat need pay only a ten dollar tax; or the purchasers of a Ford or a Packard having to pay the same sales tax! Both of us hoped that that discrimination had been omitted from the latter measure. But if Mr. McGoogan does send us an article be sure to read it, if it doesn't burn the leaf before it reaches you.

St. Paul Then and Now

St Paul, or St Paul's, is no new burg to the writer. Yet it is difficult to identify the fine little city of nearly 3000 people with the village of thirty years ago. "Sandy" McEachern is the only link left between the old and the new.

Thirty years ago, St. Paul's consisted of the stores of "Sandy" McEachern and Lauchlin Shaw and the Presbyterian church. I left Robeson just as Wilton McLean and his group of promoters were about to start the construction of the railroad through St. Paul's to Hope Mills. That railroad, busted as it probably is, was the making of St. Paul's and possibly of Elizabethtown—if that old county seat has yet been "made". For during those sixteen years since the sojourner's return from Louisiana he has not laid eyes upon Queen Elizabeth's North Carolina memorial. The McLean railroad forked at St. Paul, one branch going to Lumberton and the other to Elizabethtown. St. Paul immediately became a cotton mill town and "Sandy" McEachern the cot-

ton mill mogul. I found him busy watching the ticker. Cotton was going down that day. Cotton prices mean much to the great cotton producing and manufacturing county of Robeson, as they do to Harnett and Sampson, which produce more largely than they manufacture. Give Robeson, Sampson and Harnett 12 or 15 cent cotton and see them splurge. Let cotton go to six cents and see the "bustested" people in North Carolina, except when the huckleberry crop saves Sampson.

While "Sandy" McEachern was the only surviving citizen of old St. Paul's, it was not difficult to locate the sons of a number of old Robeson friends—such as the Powers and Howards, and there was a former principal of the Pittsboro school now a fixture at St. Paul, where there are actually three schools for the whites, all of which Mr. Franklin superintends. For several years he has had one of his old Pittsboro pupils with him as a teacher, Miss Lucille Farrell, whom it was a pleasure to greet.

And there, as at Red Springs, we ran up with another of the numerous brothers of Dunn's well known druggist, Mr. Geo. K. Grantham. Both the St. Paul and the Red Springs brothers are druggists also. We had Mr. H. Grantham at Red Springs to give us a list of the numerous Grantham brothers and sisters. There are eleven of them surviving. If there were enough of them and we kept finding them, we should have no difficulty in making a go of the State's Voice. At Smithfield, St. Paul, and Red Springs we registered members of the family, while at Chapel Hill Mrs. Pugh, a niece of the tribe, was enrolled as a subscriber. There is one away down in Louisiana. We must send him a copy and see if he can get a turpentine dollar, for he quit the drug business forty years ago and pursued the turpentine industry in its westward flight from Georgia, through the western off-shoot of Florida, through Alabama and into Louisiana, the most western of the pine states, except the southeastern corner of Texas.

At St. Paul I find Attorney John S. Butler, son of that former stalwart Sampson citizen Robert N. Butler. John S. has represented Robeson in the legislature. And in the wife of Cary Powers I discover that former buxom and fine spirited Miss Mabel Rivers, a resident of Clinton during the war period. She was Mrs. Peterson's partner during the influenza epidemic. They went out into the woods to the poorest and most wretched homes and Mabel scoured floors and worked like a negro and seemed to enjoy it. Now she has a nice little home and two fine children. Cary Powers was a lucky youngster.

At Red Springs

A night spent in the old Red Springs hotel revived memories of auld lang syne. It was in that old resort that our good friend Sheriff George McLeod had that notable barrel of "books" during the Robeson "homecoming" about 1904, which homecoming afforded the incentive for that famous "Fly in the Ointment" editorial that is still remembered both by the Scotch and non-Scotch of Robeson county. O those were lively old days in Robeson! Those biting Argus editorials of thirty years ago make it possible to get Voice subscribers in any town in Robeson county. Fifty of the leading citizens of Lumberton had subscribed three months before the first copy came from the press. I riled the Scotch; they boiled for a while but were soon as friendly as ever and I count them, among my greatest friends in North Carolina. It was good to see either the old fellows or their sons. I sat and talked with J. N. Buie for an hour. He introduced me to the younger group and to the new comer as the "meanest" editor in North Carolina. That cognomen would not have been far amiss in those old days. Something just had to be done in the old Argus to make people want it. If it were only a three-line sizzler it was there and did the work.

I didn't get to talk with Mr. Ben Townsend as I desired and expected to do. Ben has been one hustler. He is probably the biggest farmer in Robeson county, and, what may surprise you, he still is buying farms and making money on them. Mr.

Thrower, the biggest merchant in Red Springs, was just launching his business thirty years ago. Martin McKinnon, who then was one of the big merchants of the town, like his brother Sandy of Maxton, has long passed over the river.

A. P. Spell, a son of our old friend Sheriff J. M. Spell of Sampson county, had come as a young lawyer to Red Springs. He is now older than his father when I first knew him. It was a genuine pleasure to be with him and his good Sampson county wife at dinner. A visit to Mr. Rufus DeVane showed him older too. He married a Clinton lady, Miss Ashford, a sister of Col. Ashford and of the genius Tom Ashford, who spent his latter days in Kinston, where his sons now thrive. One of his daughters has been teaching right here in the Dunn schools. Joh A. Oates' mother was a sister of Mrs. DeVane, who died two years ago.

But a Red Springs without D. P. McEachern, Hamilton McMillan, J. E. Purcell, George Hall, and other old-timers doesn't seem the Red Springs of old. We did desire to renew acquaintance with Dr. Vardell, but he and his successor as president of Flora McDonald College were both out of town. The tough little editor Branch of earlier days is replaced by a Mr. Benson. Dr. Frank McMillan was ill, but has a son following on in his footsteps as a minister to the ill, and another who is solicitor, in Judge Buie's court. Ernest Graham was back from his long stay in the General Assembly and probably considers that two five-month terms is enough for any Robeson county merchant.

There is one thing to the credit of the Robeson members. All three of them—Senator David Fuller and Representatives Graham and Thompson, the latter formerly the Maxton editor but who was succeeded by Mrs. Thompson during his stay in Raleigh, all knew their minds and stuck to their prescribed course. No other county delegation voted more consistently than Robeson's.

Liquor Gets in its Ruinous Work

J. N. Buie, who held down the job of register of deeds during our sojourn in Robeson, has served as Judge of the Recorder's court in Red Springs for a score of years. Robeson is generous in the matter of recorders courts, having six of them, each with a county-wide jurisdiction. There are as many rural policemen. Two of them, Messrs. Pete Chason and Smith were on the job that morning. The court had an annoying case—a man who should, from his heredity, be a decent man and good citizen, had allowed liquor to ruin him and his home and was charged with shooting at his poor crippled wife. The fellow tamed down when he got a year's sentence to the roads, finding that he really would have to suffer for his cussedness. He was finally let loose to support his wife and several small children on the understanding that he would go to the roads for the year the first report of his drinking or other misbehavior. Judges these days have more real problems to solve than ever before. It is as Judge Webb says—liquor does not hurt the drinker worst, but his family.

When Red Springs Was a Resort

Red Springs and Jackson Springs were long North Carolina resorts. The mineral waters are still there and of medicinal value. The old hotel which used to afford a Southern hospitality to many summer visitors is still in use and is kept by Rev. and Mrs. W. D. Pridgen, poor health having forced the former from his pastoral work. Mr. Pridgen had just had calls from his two preacher sons, both of whom are pastors in the city of Charleston, who were on their way to the Southern Baptist Convention in Washington City. It is unique for one poor country preacher to furnish the same city two pastors. That old hotel building, constructed of heart lumber of long-strawed lines, will apparently stand indefinitely. Changing times, however, have eclipsed its former glory, as they have that of Jackson Springs and probably in a less measure Seven Springs in Wayne county. The waters of Seven Springs have too much medicinal value to be entirely neglected. From the seven springs a water may be found for

(Continued On Page Three)