

THE STATE'S VOICE

O. J. PETERSON, Editor and Publisher
Published Twice-a-Month at Dunn, N. C.

FOR STATE-WIDE CIRCULATION
SUBSCRIPTION PRICE: \$1 a Year; 3 Years \$2.25

Entered at the Postoffice at Dunn, North Carolina,
as Second-Class Matter.

Either Reduce Sales Tax to Two Percent or Take It Off Staple Foods Entirely.

The sales tax as incorporated in the finance bill is an indefensible hardship upon the poorer people of North Carolina. The staple foods should be excepted as during the last biennium or the tax reduced to two percent.

The *State's Voice* is convinced that the tax in the proposed form will work hardships upon tens of thousands of the people of the state that they should not be suffered to bear.

Tens of thousands of families buy sugar, say, in two-pound lots. The tax wouldn't be a 3-percent tax, but a 10-percent. That is only one example. A pound of stew beef, which at present prices will be as much as many a family can buy at a time, will pull a six and two-thirds percent tax. Anything purchased between ten cents and 33 cents, inclusive, will tax the purchasers at rates from 3 to 10 percent. Any purchase from 35 to 65 cents will likewise levy a tax of from three to nearly six percent. Purchases of 66 to 99 cents will pull taxes of from three to four and one-half percent.

That leaves only purchases of less than ten cents, purchases of 34 and 35 cents and purchases of exactly a dollar which do not pay more than 3 percent. After passing the dollar price, the tax approaches more nearly the 3-percent level.

This is an outrageous situation. The purchaser of goods coming to less than a dollar will, nine times out of ten, have to pay a tax averaging at least, I believe, five percent, if not more. When the tax was assessed two years ago nine cents, which has no tax levy, would buy something. Now it will not buy even a half-pound of white side.

Hundreds of thousands buy, from necessity, in quantities priced less than a dollar. These families, the poorest people of course, are under the proposed levy to pay a five percent tax upon their food purchases, while the people who buy in quantities priced over a dollar pay more nearly on the three percent level. This is an outrage.

A two percent tax upon foods, with the same starting and rising points, 10, 35, and 65 cents, would cause purchasers of quantities priced less than a dollar to pay an average of something like four percent, or more than the 3 percent bill calls for upon more than dollar purchases. If it were possible to place a 1-2 percent tax upon purchases under a dollar, the tax would be fair and just upon the poor, if such a tax can be justified at all. It would not make that class of purchasers pay the highest tax rate charged any group. But it would be difficult to levy the 1-2 percent tax. Two cents also makes the tax on under-dollar purchases too high.

The removal of the tax from food products seems the fairest solution. *The State's Voice* insists that no such outrageous burden be placed upon the poorest people of the state—not the ones upon the relief rolls but the ones who have lived hard, even skimped, perhaps suffered, in order to keep off the relief lists. And there are thousands of such people.

The State's Voice insists upon the prevention of this threatened outrage. And in this case, at least, I believe that *The State's Voice* echoes the voice of the State—certainly of those people who understand the injustice threatening the tens of thousands of people who are on the verge of constant hunger, but decline to ask for aid. They are brave; they deserve consideration. They do not deserve to be penalized. Let them pay their proper rate, but let them not be charged a double tax rate.

It is much fairer to take \$1,000 from a net income of \$16,000 than to take one cent of a poor washerwoman's 16-cents when she goes to buy a pound of the cheapest meat on the market.

Slandering Honest and Efficient Officers.

Any charge against enforcement officers without exception is a slander against hundreds of men who have labored faithfully to enforce the prohibition laws. There are doubtless some who have not done their duty, some who have proved venal. But hundreds of officers, including sheriffs, deputies, constables, and policemen, have done their full duty as far as circumstances

Swapping \$36,000,000 for \$3,600,000.

Senator Hill may be a financier, but his proposition for the people of North Carolina to spend \$36,000,000 for out-of-state liquors to stock liquor stores from which a tax fund of \$3,600,000 may accrue to the state, appears more the proposition of a crazy man than that of a financier.

The finance committees have toiled two months, seeking sources from which to secure \$31,500,000 for state purposes—to support the schools, the eleemosynary institutions, to build and maintain roads, to support the courts, feed prisoners, to support the state government proper and provide funds for a thousand and one different things.

Here comes the Hill bill with the proposition that the people of North Carolina expend more than that sum for liquors manufactured out of the state—a sum which would mean the taking of a third of a million dollars a year from the average county for liquor to produce relief funds for the alleviation of the poverty which the expenditure and the demoralization resulting from the drink would have helped produce. The gross receipts from the next cotton crop—selling for 12 cents a pound would scarcely pay the sum that the Hill bill supporters propose for North Carolinians to spend for liquor. The net receipts for the cotton crop would pay scarcely half the bill.

Everybody knows that it is easy to get tax money when the people have money. Sending \$30,000,000 out of the state a year is hardly the way to create a prosperity which affords tax funds a plenty. What fools we mortals can be!

Easy to Make Errors.

Wonder if anybody caught the word *fornication* turned into *formification* in the previous issue of *The State's Voice*? And in an earlier issue what should have been *apiary* came forth, and through the writer's own fault at that, as *aviary*. It is lucky that we writers get by with so few mistakes. In that off-hand debate in the senate Thursday I heard two senators make errors worse than the average newspaper man, writing off-hand at top speed, would make in a month, and one of the speakers made his at least a half-dozen times. The other merely used *good* when *well* should have been used. The more serious offender against construction used *that* instead of *in which* time after time. But that wasn't a bad score for a half-dozen men making off-hand speeches.

Carl Goerch Has a Dictionary

The first time I heard Carl Goerch pronounce *Catawba* as Cat-a-wa-ba I thought that he glanced at his notes, caught the *cat* and didn't bother to correct. The second time it came out too big and definite to be a slip. I take it that somebody had guyed Carl about the first slip and that he emphasized the error for fun. I guess that was the way of it, but it was an amusing slip when I detected it and wondered if others did. And, by the way, Carl has taken our suggestion and bought him a book—a dictionary—and has reported that he is finding it interesting to glance through it and note the pronunciation of words. We suggest that he look up *border*. It may surprise him to find that it is not "boarder counties"—But Carl is one of the most interesting and versatile institutions in the state. It may be that the New Yorker from Irving's Tarrytown really has never caught the pronunciation of *Catawba*, though "Catawba grapes" should be a phrase of more than state-wide familiarity.

Liberty Magazine Two Years Behind The State's Voice

Mr. E. W. Price, secretary of the Industrial Commission, sends us a copy of Senator Owen's article in *Liberty Magazine* on "How to Pay the National Debt," with the following comment:

"Liberty is two years later than *The State's Voice* with this article—you carried it first." Assumably, Mr. Price means that *The State's Voice* carried the essence, not the wording, of the article.

Incidentally, you may expect many things that have appeared in *The State's Voice* to make appearance elsewhere later.

By the way, *The Liberty* article is as long as any that has appeared in *The State's Voice*, or longer, being rated as requiring twenty-two and one-half minute for reading. It takes space to carry a man-size discussion of a man-size subject.

would suffer them to do it, and to include them in a wholesale indictment is unjust and unfair.

It Is Time For An Offensive.

The Hill bill has little chance of passing the senate; none, we believe, of passing the house. In case it should go to the people, its chance of gaining their approval would be even less than that of passing the two houses.

Senators Horton and Gravelly expressed the proper sentiment in the debate Thursday. If we are to retain the prohibition law, as is practically assured, it is time to awaken to conditions and put an end to them. Senator Horton expressed his willingness to vote for an appropriation of \$250,000 for an enforcement fund, provided the people favoring prohibition will help to create a sentiment for its enforcement. Senator Gravelly expressed a similar sentiment.

It is time for an offensive. For years prohibitionists have had to take the defensive against assaults upon the laws. That gets us nowhere. Prohibition can be enforced. In fact, I believe it more easily enforced than any control law. Let the Hill bill pass and it is certain that the blind tiger would still remain in his lair until driven out. If he is to be driven out after liquor stores are established, the sensible thing is to drive him out before they are established.

It is foolishness to undertake to provide the funds for enforcement of any liquor law by spending \$36,000,000 with out-of-state distillers as a preliminary. It is better to save the expenditure of that sum, or any other sum, for liquor and vote directly from the treasury a sufficient sum to provide real enforcement. All factions in the senate bewail the evil of drink. Legalized liquor, even if we had that alone, is as damnable a curse as blockade liquor. Then, why not accept the suggestion of Senators Horton and Gravelly and vote a sufficient enforcement sum? No other sum appropriated by the general assembly would afford more valuable results than money spent to secure real enforcement of the liquor laws.

The savings in the cost of crime would more than repay the cost of enforcement. Besides, the savings in the purchase of liquor, whether blockade or legalized, would amount to several times the sum needed to afford a real enforcement. And the reduction of the amount of liquor drunk would diminish the disgrace, disruption, and the impoverishment of families, and as an economic proposition would repay the cost of enforcement by the lessening of the funds needed for relief.

Preventing the need of relief funds is much better than providing a relief fund by a process which creates the need of relief.

Senators Horton and Gravelly have suggested the real solution of the state's problem. All, professedly, desire to see the evil of drink eliminated. All deplore the dominance of blockaders and bootleggers. Real enforcement, then, should satisfy all who sincerely deplore the curse of strong drink. Enforcement, as indicated above, would increase the wealth of the state, diminish crime and suffering, reduce the cost of relief, and in every other way work for the welfare of the people of the state, even of the youth, who are said now to be so largely the victims of the bootleggers and who, by the very terms of the Hill bill, would still continue to be their victims, since they would be forbidden to buy from the state stores.

It is time for an offensive against the law-violators. North Carolina cannot afford to surrender to the coterie of rascals who have trampled her sovereign law under foot and menaced the morals and the bodies of both old and young.

Let's see a real enforcement law pushed through the legislature. Tens of thousands of people who have the welfare of the state at heart will applaud the man or the group which introduces and pushes to the front a bill which will end the shame that all factions deplore.

Commends Article on Moral Education

We have the following note from Father Gallagher of Dunn:

"I congratulate you upon your recent article about the Moral Training of the Young, so greatly needed in our day.

"The Roman Catholic Church has always held that there are three distinct parts to the human being, the soul, the body, and the mind. To neglect the spiritual while training the mind and body results in a developed barbarian—a very dangerous result, both to the individual and to the State. Hence, *The State's Voice* is to be commended upon the stand taken and so ably defended. More power to ye, as the Irish say.

"Sincerely, James F. Gallagher."