

THE STATE'S VOICE

O. J. PETERSON, Editor and Publisher

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Beating On Beasley

I had already clipped the Hampton article from *Beasley's Weekly* of an earlier date when the issue of that paper came carrying an article complementary, if not too complimentary, to my leading article of July 15. Having been fighting angina pectoris for ten days and willing to avoid all the work I could, it was easy to persuade myself to reprint the Beasley article complementary to mine. Thus a goodly part of our space is filled with Beasley matter.

But there is no other writer in the state whose productions I can better afford thus to monopolize. His is the only reply to, or comment upon, the article to which the attention of all readers was called for comment pro or con. And he is one of possibly a half-dozen men in the state who has enough interest in fundamentals to give the article of July 15 the requisite attention. The average leader has lacked many fathoms of diving to the bottom of the economic waters where lie the mudsills of what of economic practices we have, and where should lie the mudsills for a safe and sane economic system.

This is rather uncomplimentary to many self-assumed Solons, but few of them will see it. Therefore I am pretty safe from their wrath. The average statesman never sees more than the limbs of the noxious plant of which I wrote in the July 15 number, and possibly spends his whole political career contemplating just one branch.

Until that New York writer Eichel, some weeks ago, reprinted some paragraphs from a volume of Henry George's which I had never read, I had never seen in print, except of my own, a recognition of the dire consequences of credit issues exceeding the value of the wealth existing during any reproductive period. I had decided that Mr. George's single tax solution of economic ills came too late to be successfully applied. But his clear-cut exposition of the principle that I have so long been harping on gives me a deeper appreciation of Henry George's analysis of the age-long economic problem, the unsolving of which is, I believe, responsible for not merely one breakdown in the economic sphere, but of all which have occurred since the world, or this country alone, reached the stage of plenty from that of poverty.

I know that emphatic declarations of economic principles unrecognized by professional economists subject me to the ridicule which I could less forcefully, because of my humble station, turn upon them; yet, as Mr. Beasley says, a man has a satisfaction in knowing that he has been digging among the foundations, or where they should be, rather than merely kicking about the surface stones. Yet there is a choice of structures built upon even false foundations. But it is a sad situation to see a whole world running from one side to the other of the economic structure thus built to prop here or there to prevent a tumble-down or to try to lift tumble-downs again into place, when the structure can never be safe, sound, and solid till rebuilt upon the bed rock of economic truth.

Mr. Beasley assigns two reasons for the failure of such an article as that of July 15 to serve any real purpose: inability to understand on the part of 99 out of a hundred, and the indifference of the hundredth which prevents his studying it. But much of that indifference of the hundredth man is due to a feeling that *nothing good can come from Nazareth*. Beasley and I are only little newspaper men living in North Carolina villages, without the prestige of either a Ph.D. degree or a million dollars which we have amassed by the very practices which the Nazarenes condemn as false as hell. But wouldn't it be fine if one could leave even a hundred bright young North Carolinians converts to the vital truth?

Here as I close this article I should tell our readers that the economist whom Mr. Beasley so highly commends is the same Henry George to whom I have referred.

Well, if all the big salary folk in the WPA spend their money promptly it should have somewhat the imagined effect of the Townsend pensions.

How To Get Evidence

There is no question that it is difficult to recognize comparative strangers in a stirring group, particularly where they are not expected. In a lynching mob, too, one does not find the persons one usually deems the people of a community. But officers should busy themselves on occasions like that in Franklin county writing down automobile numbers, if they haven't the backbone to be busy plugging holes into anybody trying to take prisoners from them. Either mark the lynchers with pistol balls or mark down their car numbers. Either proceeding will soon end the lynching menace.

State Convention of American Legion

The editor regrets that he will not be able to run down to Fayetteville and meet his friends among the soldier boys gathered there for their annual convention, and to meet others of the loyal fellows. Those men, even the younger of them, are now in the prime of life and are fast becoming the guiding group in the State's affairs. For the next 10 or 15 years, they, knowing the folly as well as terror of war, should have no difficulty keeping this nation out of war. The annual convention period is August 4-6.

Smaller Incomes Must Be Sliced

The tax-the-rich scheme is to produce only \$20,000,000. To make the tax effective as either a revenue measure or a "distribute-the-wealth" instrumentality incomes much under \$50,000 will have to be sliced deeply. A thousand \$25,000 incomes hurt just as badly as one \$25,000,000 income. But even \$20,000,000 a year restored to the people is no small item and will prove to have a helpful effect. Yet the chief harm is done in first getting those millions from those who should promptly spend them for the necessities of life. Prevention is better than restoration.

Thanks, Editor Manning, But—

From the *Williamston Enterprise*, which carries one of the most sprightly editorial pages in the state, we clip a paragraph which we appreciate very much but which makes us wonder why "Old Man," though a score of angina pectoris attacks since the last issue of the *Voice* has made us feel rather decrepit for two weeks. But I shall be able to see whether the dad of the works over at the *Enterprise* office has been writing those sprightly editorials or one of the younger Mannings, for "Old Man" W. C. has voyaged to England to an international meeting of his church, the Christian (Campbellite), and thence will journey on to France, Italy, and the Holy Land.—That is some trip for a country editor in his old age! But here is what somebody in the *Enterprise* office wrote:

"Excelled by Few

"It may not be noted for its glowing headlines nor its red letters, but for logic, truth and philosophy, few papers in the State excel Old Man Peterson's "State's Voice," published at Dunn, N. C.

We need more men like O. J. Peterson to run papers in this country, men who, from long experience have learned the things most valuable and then are frank enough to say what they are."

There Is Room For Four More

Already Harnett county citizens are harassed with the unpleasant task of choosing one out of three near neighbors and friends to vote for for Lieutenant-Governor. Harnett is surrounded by seven counties; only three of them have as yet furnished a candidate for lieutenant-governor. Chatham has its Horton; Johnston its Paul Grady; Cumberland its George McNeill. Wake, Lee, Moore and Sampson have not yet offered Harnett a candidate. If we all vote for the nearest one of the three, George McNeill would get Dunn's vote. If Paul Grady lived at Smithfield, he would be on a par with George. But Paul lives at Kenly.

But let none of the three imagine that his name is a household word in Harnett. Nine out of ten men and women in North Carolina, and I am almost willing to make it Harnett county, wouldn't recognize their names if formal introductions were made. I made a test with the first dozen men I met after starting to make the test in Pittsboro during the Fountain, Burgwyn, Langston campaign. Eleven didn't recognize either name and the twelfth recognized only that of Langston, who had taught in his community when he was a young man. There are plenty of

people in Harnett county, and in Sampson too, who seem never to have heard of me, though I have been running newspapers in this section for nearly twenty years and certainly have had a good deal of publicity one way or another throughout the territory.

All any one of the three has to do to be elected is to get acquainted with everybody, or even to make everybody aware of his existence. But half of the folk will have to be told who is who on the day of election, and the fellow that has the most tellers at the precincts that day will be the winner. Merit or achievements have no more to do with the result than—well, I can think of no adequate comparison!

An Idea of the Tenant Problem

One may get an idea of the size of the farm tenant problem in North Carolina from a few authoritative figures. In Cleveland county 66.2 percent of the 5,181 farms are operated by tenants. In Cleveland there are nearly twice as many white tenants as colored. In Edgecombe county, 84.2 percent of its 4,000 farms are operated by tenants, of whom nearly two-thirds are colored. In Anson county 2,100 farms are operated by tenants, of whom about two-thirds are colored; 1,072 farms are operated by owners. Seventy percent of the farms in Northampton are operated by tenants, of whom about three-fourths are negroes. Of the 7,666 farms in Robeson county about 70 percent are operated by tenants, white, black, and Indian. Just about half of Rutherford county farms are operated by tenants, of whom only 16 percent are negroes.

Now, it would be informing to know just how so much of the lands of these counties got into the hands of people who are not farming them. However, it is not presumable that the owners of the tenant lands all live off the farms. Men who operate part of their lands themselves may have a dozen tenants. Yet hundreds of men who have never farmed themselves have by some means possessed themselves of many acres of arable land.

In hard years the owners have little joy in their possessions. Yet it is the attempt of such owners to make an income from their lands that overflows the channels of trade and breaks down the prices. If the three-fourth of the farmers who have to surrender about half of what they make to their land lords, alone had to live from those farms, it is evident that so much would not have to be grown. The tenant system causes at least half as much again as would otherwise be grown to be produced; yet the land owners for that very reason find it hard to make a decent income, taking the years as they come and go, from their holdings. Thus they are doing themselves very little good and ruining the chance of the small farmers who own their lands to make a decent income.

The problem is already a very difficult one. But suppose a cotton picker proves a success and makes it possible for the owners to operate their farms with fewer tenants or none at all? And suppose that the giant tobacco reported to be growing in one of the eastern counties—a tobacco that will make 2,500 pounds to the acre—becomes generally grown by land owners in the tobacco belt? What in such event will happen to the tenant farmers?

Yet I have all the while contended that the fewer who can make enough for all the better it should be, provided we have sense enough to divide it up and put those who are not needed in production in any line at work for the common good.

But the trouble under the tenant system is that a great group is undertaking to make extra money from their farm lands, but succeed chiefly in making so much produce that the prices destroy their chance to make a profit and ruin the chances of the small farm owners and the tenants who should be owners of small farms.

Necrological

Death has cut quite a swath among the prominent men of North Carolina since the July 15th issue of this paper. Men have fallen whose like will not appear again. Among the narrow column articles appear comments upon Henry Page and Jas. H. Pou. Mr. Pou's fame is largely that of a trial lawyer, especially in criminal cases. Unfortunately the only case we ever heard him try was his Waterloo—that of Lawrence in Chatham county. In fact, to my conception, the defense never played up at all the two chief points in its favor.

I served as county food administrator under Mr. Page during the war period and know his

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