

THE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION—TAXATION

Experts to Assess Difficult Properties—The Standard of Value is to be 100 Per Cent of Conservative Judgment—Revaluation is for Benefit of Local Governments—A Square Deal for Cities and Towns.

(By A. J. Maxwell)

The last article covered the organization for the revaluation of real estate under the new act, except special examiners. The act authorized the Tax Commission to employ for the State special examiners to assist in appraisal of properties the value of which is difficult to ascertain. This provision anticipates that in so far as it may be found practical experts in appraisal of particular classes of property will be employed with the view that all property of each of such classes will be accurately and equally appraised in all parts of the State.

The Standard of Value

The standard of value is 100 per cent, or as expressed in the act, what the property would sell for at ordinary sale for cash. Forced sales, auction sales, and sales on "the extortion plan," or the allurements of time prices are to be eliminated as a matter of course. The act does not anticipate that unnaturally inflated values shall be used, even when supported by some conditions of sale. The rule is plain enough; the difficulty is in the application. That element of value is in every case a matter of sound judgment and discretion, based upon accurate knowledge of the property. A very small percentage of property has actually changed hands by recent sale, and even as to this small percentage there is in every case room for investigation of the character and conditions of the sale to ascertain if the price represents

actual fair value. The judgment of well-informed men will in almost every case differ. The one thing that will be insisted upon is that the assessing officer in every case, as to each piece of property, large or small, get all the available facts—not take for granted, but take the trouble to investigate—and after acquiring all the knowledge that can reasonably be gained in a proper way, exercise an intelligent, conservative judgment as to actual, stable value, and then apply 100 percent of that judgment as the basis of value. To use any other basis—95 or 99 per cent—would be like knocking a chock from behind the wheel of a car standing on a steep incline—it would settle right back to the old levels, with a different rule applying in each county, and with inequality the general rule.

Revaluation For Benefit of Counties and Cities

The State tax rate has been reduced this year to 11 2-3 cents. The average tax rate in the counties, including special taxes for various local purposes, was 1.08 per cent in 1918. In most of the larger cities of the State the total rate is around 3 per cent. So that about 10 per cent of the taxes collected in the counties from property will be for the use of the State, and less than 5 per cent of total taxes collected from property in the cities is for the use of the State. The State is pursuing a policy of receding from the property tax, and looks now definitely to a complete abandonment of the property tax for its revenue, except for the public school tax, which will be distributed back to the counties. So that the chief purpose of the revaluation act is to furnish a more accurate, efficient and equitable means of revenue to meet the local needs of the counties and cities of the State. They will be the chief beneficiaries of its success.

A Square Deal for the Cities

The tax burden bears especially heavy in municipalities where so many modern improvements have been provided at public expense. If it is in the cities especially that we hear the complaint that high tax rates are confiscating income from property, and a very great reduction in city tax rates is essential to the successful administration of the full value property tax system. The revaluation should leave the total combined tax rate in the highest taxed city in the State right close around one per cent.

There are three provisions that will become effective under the revaluation that will be interesting particularly to the municipalities, and that will tend to lower the rates.

Shares of stock in their banks have heretofore been distributed to the residence of the shareholder, wherever he lived. Now all the shares of stock in every bank will be taxed where the bank is located, against the bank, and therefore all the stock will be liable for municipal tax, and in the municipality where the bank is located.

Real estate and fixtures of telephone companies have been distributed on wire mileage. All such property now located within a municipality will be subject to the municipal tax.

Railroad depots, yards and terminal facilities have heretofore been assessed as a part of the total property distributed on main line track mileage, so that with a few slight exceptions they have paid town and city taxes only upon basis of the length of main line mileage within the corporate limits. Under the revaluation next year the value of all railroad properties within the corporate limits of city or town will be subject to municipal taxes.

MR. FLEMING TO LEAVE

Will Depart When Work Started Last Year Is Completed.

Editor French Broad Hustler:—

Although the County Commissioners of Henderson County have withdrawn their support from the Agricultural Extension Work, the authorities of the State and Nation have decided to retain the services of Mr. Fleming as County Agent for the present. This action is taken because of work that has started last year due to war conditions which still needs supervision. Just as soon as it is practical Mr. Fleming will be transferred to other work and the Agricultural Extension Service will comply with the wishes of the people, as expressed by their Board of County Commissioners, to sever all connection with the State and Federal Governments in the work of Agricultural development.

Yours very truly, JAMES M. GRAY, District Agent

Asheville, April 10, 1919.

Purify your blood and throw off all disease, Garren's Tonic will do it. II.

(Continued from Page Six)

ing the rich surface soil, by terracing their lands or other conservation methods they would both benefit themselves and the bottom lands along the streams. (Terracing should begin at the top of the hill, not at the bottom, or the terrace banks will be broken frequently.)

With whatever improvements are undertaken, it is urgently recommended that the numerous tributaries that bring down silt and sand be given proper attention by the local landowners or the district. It is highly desirable that this material held in suspension by these swift flowing streams be deposited before it reaches the main channel. This may be done by constructing one or more low dams across the branch stream just above its mouth, to check the velocity of water so that the suspended material will be deposited and so that erosion in the channel itself will be prevented. In its simplest terms the system consists in making the bottom of the branch stream nearly level between check dams, each of which "stops up" about 3 feet. They may be built in a very economical manner by the use of wood posts and hog wire. Such dams have been used with success in California and ought to be of value in drainage districts in this State. If the reaches above these dams finally become filled with sand, it may be advantageous to build more of these checks, but experience in the Piedmont section, to which this district is comparable, does not indicate that much work of this kind will be necessary.

District Organization In 1915 a drainage district for the improvement of Mud Creek and its tributaries was organized, a survey made, and a final report of the board of viewers filed with the Clerk of the Superior Court of Henderson County on March 20, 1916. Mr. C. W. Justice, Hendersonville, N. C., was the engineer. The district comprised all the streams discussed in this report, but the improvement of Mud Creek was to stop at Johnson's Bridge just below the junction of Mill Creek and about 2 miles below Clear Creek. In all, 12 1-2 miles of creeks were to be improved and the area to be benefited was found to be about 1,500 acres. Petition was signed by 39 landowners for the improvement, while only 4 opposed it, but legal difficulties brought up by the opposition after the final report was filed caused the project to be dropped for the time being. The organization even went so far as to elect a board of drainage commissioners consisting of W. C. Jordan, chairman; Joseph Newman, secretary, and R. K. Stepp, a superintendent of construction was elected on May 20, 1916.

The proposed improvements were to be done by the Hendersonville township and Henderson county dredge, which was at that time stationed in Mud Creek above the Edneyville road for the purpose of obtaining sand. The work was to have consisted in simply widening and deepening the present water courses to a depth of from 3 to 4 feet below their existing levels. The estimate called for the excavation of some 597,700 cubic yards of material, which at 4 cents per cubic yard, together with the cost of clearing, engineering and legal expenses and some maintenance work amounted to about \$12,000.

Further Survey A meander of the portions of Mud Creek and its tributaries, which are to be included in the proposed district, should be made and levels taken throughout. Except at the lower end, if this is to be taken into the new district, there will be no necessity of measuring the edges of the bottom land to determine the area, since this has been already done.

After the route of the ditch has been decided upon, it should be located on the ground. Along the located line stakes should be set at 100-foot intervals and levels should be taken at each station to enable a profile to be made and the amount of excavation to be determined. Soundings should be taken about every 500 feet along the line to determine the location of rock, so that changes may be made in the located line to avoid it as much as possible.

A survey would require about one month time for a party consisting of the engineer in charge, one levelman, one rodman, and two axemen. Much of the country is open and not much cutting will be required. Board can be obtained at Hendersonville or along the creek, the party driving to and from the work.

Based on pre-war construction prices the cost of improving Mud Creek and its tributaries would be very little, if any, higher than other similar districts which have been constructed in the Piedmont section of North Carolina. While the fall is less than the average, thus requiring larger ditches, the amount of bottom land per mile along Mud Creek is larger than the average on most Piedmont streams, and reduces the cost per acre.

Since the project is practical, the question arises as to whether it would be better to wait for a few years until construction prices became lower, or to undertake the work at once. Experience after all great previous wars seems to indicate that prices are very slow in declining and authorities seem generally agreed that "It is doubtful if reduction will occur within the near future to any marked degree, unless factors other than the economic conditions now prevailing come into play." Materials are high, labor is high and likely to continue so, but land and farm products are also high, and it may be advisable to start the project at once to reap the benefits of the present high prices.

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Hags, rags, Amalibler, Velvets, Wool fibers, Crex, large and small, at low prices. Chas. Rozelle, 11-21-c.

MEETING OF WOMNAAN'S CLUB

By-Laws Adopted After Interesting Discussion.

The Women's Club held their meeting in the school auditorium on Wednesday afternoon, April 9, at 3:30 o'clock with Mrs. L. M. Colt in the chair. Mrs. R. T. Wheelright, Sec. pro tem, called the roll and the majority of the 17 who answered, responded to their name with a current event. The minutes were read and approved. The new constitution and by-laws that were drafted by Mrs. Wheelright who was chairman of the committee, were read by her. The reading of each article in both was followed by comments and discussions before they were adopted. A rising vote of thanks was given Mrs. Wheelright for her untiring efforts in preparing this work. There will be an election of officers at the next meeting and every member is urged to attend.

Under new business, the president presented a copy of "Everywoman's Magazine," and told of its contents. The finance committee will have this in charge. The hour for meeting will be at 4 o'clock hereafter. The committees were not ready for reports so action was deferred until the next meeting. Miss Carson stated that \$40.00 was realized from the rummage sale on April 5, and asked for a contribution for the sale last Saturday. Mesdames George H. Valentine, Charles Gray, George Wright and Miss Wright were unanimously received as members.

This program followed which showed research and was appreciated by all. Mrs. A. H. Marey's paper, "The Monroe Doctrine and its Effects on American History," and "Freedom of the Seas and Arbitration," by Mrs. L. R. Barnwell, were both well read. The meeting adjourned.

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WANTED TO HIRE a married man, fifty dollars per month, house rent and garden, if you want a place, come to see me don't miss R. J. Woolley, on Crab Creek Road, 11-31-p.

We have few Portorico Sweet Potatoes to seed at \$2.00 per bushel, at the F. S. Royster Storage Warehouse—the big rock building by the East Hendersonville Baptist Church. Govan Hyder, 11-11-p.

Restless nights will turn to restful nights, ask those who have taken Garren's Tonic. II.

We need one hundred customers this week. First come, best bargains. Chas. Rozelle, 11-21-c.

FOR SALE—Five sows—will farrow in May. J. C. Wooten, Kentucky Horse, 11-21-c.

FOR SALE or Exchange—12 acres close in at a bargain, P. O. Box 554, Hendersonville, N. C.

FOR SALE—Baby chicks, with mothers. Phone 9822, 11-10-11.

FORD TOURING CAR For Sale—First class condition, Phone 190, 10-31-c.

FOR SALE—Full stock Barred Rock eggs \$1.00 for 15. Mrs. F. C. Whitaker, Hendersonville, N. C., Route 2, 9-31-p.

FOR SALE—One bay saddle horse. Gentle. Can be seen at Orr's Stable J. C. Wooten.

FOR SALE—Silver lace Wyandotte chicks. Day old. 15 cents. Mrs. E. L. Sinclair, Fletcher, N. C. 11-31-pd.

TAXES!

At the last minute the County Commissioners were induced to extend the time of advertising property for taxes

Until May 1st

In order to give all unpaid taxpayers one more chance to settle without cost. Please remember the date as no more

time can be given under any circumstances

Respectfully,

A. E. HUDGINS

Tax Collector and Treasurer

Are you doing your DUTY to your FAMILY? If not, begin now to put money in OUR BANK for their protection. The Salt of the Earth is the man who brings a family into this world and takes care of them, he does his duty. How about you? Are you putting your spare money in our bank so that should sickness or adversity overtake you, your family will not suffer. Think it over. Then come in and open an account in our bank. You will receive 4 per cent interest.

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