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H. M'GEE ON COUNTY FINANCES

Delighted To See Increasing Interest Shown By Citizens In Public Affairs—Compares Stokes With Forsyth.

Germanton, Aug. 11. Editor Reporter:

I observe that the citizens and tax payers of Stokes county held a mass meeting in the court house at Danbury on the first Monday in July, which was full to overflow of both interest and business. Chief among other things done by this meeting was the appointment of a vigilance committee, composed of two citizens from each township in the county, whose duty it shall be to ascertain the rights, at law, of the citizens and tax-payers, employ counsel if necessary, and see that each of the county boards and county officials function strictly within their rights and duties made and prescribed by law.

Following this meeting the Reporter carried an interesting article purporting to be signed by W. W. Sanderford, from some point in Ga., and he wrote, of course, as if he were on the grounds, and discussed at considerable length the citizens' meeting, the county commissioners, and between the lines wrapped certain individuals, and in fact it appeared to be a well prepared burlesque on the whole situation.

After reading Mr. Sanderford's article, Mr. Williamson, chairman of the board of county commissioners, comes to the bar, accepts the challenge handed the board of commissioners, discusses the financial condition of the county, declares the tax payers cannot stand any increase in taxes, and opposes any additional indebtedness of any kind for the county at present, and very plainly marks out his future course as chairman of the board and indicates he will pursue no other.

The board of county commissioners, the board of education and the highway board are each composed of Democratic majorities, hence we see this is a Democratic parade, interesting to review, but maybe far-reaching in its effect. Personally I have no inclination to become associated with the affair in any way, yet I am very much interested in the welfare of my county, hence I am submitting a few thoughts on the county's financial condition, and other kindred matters.

The division seems to be over the county's high tax rate, and the request of the board of education, in the annual school budget, for around \$100,000.00 with which to put on a school building program in the county. It leaked out that the board of county commissioners had approved the school budget and the folks at home began to kick like bay steers and were almost up in arms, hence the citizens and tax-payers meeting in the court house, the appointment of the vigilance committee, and the county commissioners revivifying that part of the school budget of about \$100,000.00, which constituted the school building program.

The present financial condition of the county demands our best thought and judgment. But few people, if any in the county, know our financial condition. I understand that our total indebtedness is about one million dollars. Some claim more and some less. I doubt whether any one can get in fifty thousand dollars of the exact amount. I am sure the amount we owe is alarming. Think of a million dollars, and this drawing sixty-thousand dollars interest annually, and both the principal and interest to be dug out of the ground. Our 1924 county tax rate was \$1.67 on the \$100 and many sections of the county have a special tax of some kind. I do not know at this time whether the 1925 tax rate will be higher than the 1924 or not, but will venture this assertion: It will be higher or money will be borrowed to meet the deficiency caused by reason of insufficient taxes. Our interest must be paid annually, our schools must be maintained six months in the year, our road program must be financed, our bridges kept in repair, our county home financed and many other items must be looked after not mentioned herein. For several years we have been

REVIVALS IN STOKES CHURCHES

Thirty Or More Additions To Church As Result Of Meetings Held By Pastor A. J. Bowling, Of Danbury.

Pastor A. J. Bowling, of the M. E. church here, has been conducting a number of religious revivals at several churches of the county this summer and has been very successful in all of them. In the meetings he has held, with no assistance from other ministers, there were more than forty professions and thirty or more additions to the church.

A meeting was closed at Bethesda church last Sunday night. There were seven professions and the attendance was large, at many services the church being unable to accommodate the congregation.

At Pine Hall a meeting was closed on the second Sunday of this month. Here there were 18 professions, and large attendance.

At Davis Chapel a meeting held last month resulted in 15 professions and intense interest was shown.

Sometime next month Mr. Bowling will begin a meeting at Forest Chapel, between Walnut Cove and Pine Hall, and he hopes to have a large attendance.

Tobacco Warehouses To Open October 1

Announcement is made that the tobacco warehouses in Winston-Salem will open for the sale of tobacco this season on the first day of October.

Increasing our taxes, both in valuation of property and tax rate. Our land valuations have been increased 4 to 6 times since re-valuation and tax rate almost multiplied by three.

William Josiah Bailey, in his campaign for the Democratic nomination for Governor, said the land taxes in the State had been raised 4 to 6 times. I am informed that the Atlantic & Yadkin railroad through Stokes county has been reduced in valuation for taxation from \$25,000 to \$12,500 per mile. If corporate valuations are reduced and farm lands increased as above shown, this suggests that the burdens of taxation are being transferred from the rich individuals and strong corporations to the farm lands and the poor laborers.

In the expenditure of money for roads, schools, bridges and all other internal improvements, due consideration should be given to a fair and equitable distribution of the same. All sections of Stokes county should have a square deal. Favoritism should not be known. We are all fond of good roads, good schools, good homes, good farms, and in fact the best of everything, but we are not all agreed as to where the dividing line comes. Personal circumstances many times require that we take such homes, farms, etc., as our financial surroundings will justify, and the same rule will apply to the county.

We have one school of thought which claims to be progressive, and never find a suitable time to quit providing and spending public money, and we have another school of thought which claims to be careful and conservative in obtaining and spending public moneys, and expect our public servants to exercise the same judgment and caution in the county's management they would in their own personal business. The individual's ability to do is based on his resources and so is a county. Individuals are not uniform in resources, neither are counties.

Stokes county has a property valuation of less than \$12,000,000 and her adjoining county of Forsyth has a property valuation of \$175,000,000. It is not necessary to say Forsyth county can finance propositions that Stokes county cannot entertain. In all matters of public indebtedness, and taxation the rights of the folks should be properly safeguarded.

It is fitting to illustrate an inequality that so forcibly exists in maintaining the public schools, and at the same time see with what force the strong counties impose upon the weak. The constitution of the State provides for a 6 months public free school and compulsory at-

LEAF PLANTS ARE ENLARGING

Imperial Tobacco Co. At Winston-Salem Adds 500 Employees—Other Leaf Houses Getting Ready For Fall.

Winston-Salem, Aug. 17.—Purchases made by representatives of Winston-Salem firms on the Georgia market are being shipped here now, and to care for these shipments forces will be increased, and general activity started.

Approximately 500 employees will be added to the forces of the Imperial Tobacco Company here the first of the coming week, for operating the stemming and drying plant of the company.

Large purchases have been made on the Georgia market by the Imperial Company and this tobacco will soon be arriving in large quantities. The plant has not been in operation for the past few months, since the close of the markets, and the re-opening at this time is to prepare tobacco for shipment to the factories of the company in England. None of the weed handled by the Imperial Co. here is for domestic use.

The Export Co. here state that they are not making any purchases of Georgia tobacco and their plant here will not begin operation until the local warehouses open in the fall for the sale of leaf.

With the opening of the Winston-Salem tobacco market on the first day of October, all the redrying plants will open up in full blast.

Attendance of all school children between the ages of 8 and 14 years, and there is no other reasonable conclusion than the cost would be the same in every county in North Carolina. However, we doubt seriously whether any two counties in the State have the same rate of taxes to maintain the schools. Forsyth, one of the stronger counties, pays 27c. on the \$100 to maintain her schools and Stokes pays 81c. on the \$100 to maintain hers. Just three times as much as Forsyth. Who makes and provides this condition? The Legislature of North Carolina. Why not have a straight flat State rate to maintain the schools and thereby promote right and justice?

Without any calculation, I assume that a straight State rate of 35 to 40c. on the \$100 would maintain the schools of the State and thereby reduce the school tax of the weak counties by half. The weak counties of the State are in majority and why not correct this matter when the Legislature convenes?

It would be difficult to find one who would take the position that such discrimination was just and fair, yet it is the policy of the centralized powers that be, and not the majority.

It is a right the public has to point out discriminations and inequalities, to the end that they may be corrected. All public indebtedness of every kind should be published, so that the tax payers might know the financial standing of the county.

Personally, I am fond of good schools, good roads, and all kinds of necessary internal improvements. However, I am mindful of the fact that our property valuation in the county is not large enough to maintain the school system and the road system we may desire without making our tax rate burdensome. We should consider these matters from a broad standpoint. We desire advancement as we are prospered. We should build school houses and roads as our financial condition will justify, but be careful not to bite off more than we can chew. All debts contracted will have to be paid. Our population is not increasing. Our financial growth is mainly inflation. We have but little except the farm from which to obtain taxes. I am delighted to see the general interest in the county's financial condition increasing. When the people rule, the country is safe.

I hope to see the general public's interest increase in the public's affairs, and let us remember "the price of liberty is eternal vigilance."

H. M'GEE.

ANOTHER HOTEL FOR WALNUT COVE

W. H. Sanders Will Create Summer Resort At Mineral Spring Near Town—Height Of Dam To Be Raised.

Walnut Cove, Aug. 18.—W. H. Sanders, who recently removed back here from Asheville, will construct a nice hotel and swimming pool and dance hall. According to the plans that have been drawn the pool will be 50 feet wide by 100 feet long and will have a concrete base. The hotel will be located at the artesian well, which is located about one-quarter of a mile from the Southern depot, along the national highway. The well furnishes some of the finest sulphur water in the State. It comes from a depth of about 700 feet under the ground. The well was drilled some years ago by the State in search for oil. Several wells similar to this one are located close by. It is understood that Mr. Sanders will build a modern structure. This will be the third summer resort located in the mountains of Stokes county.

The contract was started Monday to place four feet addition to the dam at the Walnut Cove hydro-electric plant. The plant has been in operation only a few months and the demand for the power has increased so that it was necessary to add an addition to the dam. This will also be a great aid in droughts, like the one which occurred this summer and caused several days loss.

The contract was let Monday to the Martin Construction Company of Salisbury, to complete the streets in town. This work will be started at once and is supposed to be completed in the next 30 working days. This will make Walnut Cove's main street about 48 feet wide.

The Martin Construction Co. have crossed the bridge here and have only about 700 feet more concrete to pour before completing the State highway.

A new jail is being built here. It will be used only as a sub-station from which prisoners will be transferred to the county jail at Danbury. The building is being constructed of sheet iron and will undoubtedly be a warm place during the summer months. It has only one window and this faces the cemetery.

C. W. Crutchfield, who has been in the ice cream business here for the past two years, is making plans to open a similar business in Kernersville.

A large number of the people of this community attended the dance at Moore's Springs Saturday night. Among the number were: Mr. and Mrs. Paul Davis, Dan Heath, J. W. Bowles, Ed Ray and Dr. H. E. Blackburn.

Several heavy rains have recently visited this section. The one Friday evening apparently covered almost the entire county. Tobacco crops shows wonderful improvement. A good number of farmers in this section have made cures and report the result very satisfactory.

WHEAT DROPS IN PRICE

Government Report Shows Production Much Larger Than Had Been Forecasted—Corn Prices Unchanged.

Chicago, Aug. 15.—Rough tumbling down of wheat prices this week has come about largely through simultaneous government crop reports in Canada and the United States. Each of the two reports took the wheat trade by surprise and both indicated that unofficial estimates of 1925 production had been millions of bushels below the probable harvest yield.

Compared with a week ago, wheat this morning was 5-14 to 5-3-4 cts. a bushel lower; corn was unchanged to half a cent off; oats 1-7-8 down; and provisions varying from 50 cts. decline to 25 cents advance.

G. W. Smith, who was here from the King section today, stated that farmers would produce two-thirds of a crop of tobacco in his section. The quality will be only fair taken as a whole. The corn crop will be cut short half, he said.

NO INCREASE IN STOKES TAX RATE

Tax For Interest On Road and Bridge Bonds Slightly Increased and Tax For Road Maintenance Lowered.

At the last meeting of the Board of County Commissioners the tax rate in Stokes for the coming year was fixed, and is now the same as last year, namely, \$1.67 on the hundred dollars valuation of property. Owing to additional road bonds having been issued since last year, it was necessary to increase slightly the levy to take care of this, however, the board took enough from the levy for maintenance to balance the two, so that the rate for all county taxes as a whole remains the same as last year.

The levy for each of the different purposes was as follows:

Maintenance of schools, 51 cents on the \$100 valuation of property.
School building fund, 23 cents.
School bonds, 7 cents.
General county tax, 15 cents.
Road and bridge bonds, 38 cents.
Road maintenance, 33 cents.

This levy does not include special taxes levied in certain special school districts of the county.

The board of commissioners have given considerable time and thought to the fixing of the tax rate and have done well to hold the rate down to last year's figures in spite of ever-increasing expenses. The affairs of the county will be conducted the coming year along the most economical lines possible in order to stay within the limits fixed. An increase in the tax rate this year had been generally predicted.

CROPS ARE GOOD SAYS MR. PRICE

Head of Jefferson Standard Insurance Company Has Returned From A Long Trip Through Western States.

Greensboro, Aug. 15.—Julian Price, president of the Jefferson Standard Life Insurance Company, who has just returned from a trip which took him to every office of his company west of the Mississippi river, reports that taken as a whole the crops in the southern states indicate a period of great prosperity for this fall.

Mr. Price covered approximately seven thousand miles on this trip and had an exceptional opportunity to get first hand information on the general conditions throughout the South and West, his trip carrying him as far in the latter direction as Denver, Colorado.

"There is an optimistic spirit everywhere," Mr. Price said, "even in regions where the crops had been damaged somewhat by dry weather. Texas will produce about 70 per cent of a normal crop this year and conditions in the panhandle and entire country are good."

"Arkansas and Missouri people told me that they had the best crops in the history of those states. Oklahoma has suffered some from dry weather in isolated communities but on the whole the state is in good shape."

"In southern Georgia the crops are good but the central and northern parts appear to be having trouble. Crops in Eastern South Carolina are good as they are in North Carolina."

"As I said even in the places where they have been having dry weather the people are not depressed. Around San Antonio, which is having more trouble than any other section of Texas, I found that they have thousands of German farmers who are methodical, conservative and careful and will have a fair crop in spite of the dry weather and being very thrifty people will manage to keep a little money in the bank."

"Taking into consideration the crops of Eastern Carolina I would say that the south is put in good shape and the indications are that we will have very prosperous times this fall."

John T. Scopes says the Tennessee evolution row all started in a drug-store discussion. Surely not without a prescription!—New York Herald Tribune.

ROY WILLARD IN TROUBLE

Lodged In Stokes Jail This Week On Charge Of Bigamy—Has One Wife In Stokes and Another In Richmond.

Roy Willard, a native Surry county man, charged with bigamy, was placed in the county jail here yesterday. Sheriff J. Frank Dunlap went to Richmond, Va., after Willard early this week.

The following account of Willard and his troubles was sent out from Richmond to the papers:

Richmond, Va., Aug. 18.—Sheriff Frank Dunlap, of Stokes county, N. C., struck a snag here today when he arrived to get Roy Willard, a young man originally from Surry county, wanted for bigamy in Stokes county. He had been advised that Willard was in the city jail waiting to be turned over to him. Upon his arrival, he learned that there was a charge against Willard in Juvenile and Domestic Relations court proffered by wife number one and that the Rev. J. J. Scherer, Lutheran preacher, who is assistant judge of this court, was unwilling to turn the prisoner over to him, in the absence of Judge Hoke Ricks, who was out of town, and was not expected back until tomorrow. Sheriff Dunlap had decided to wait over here until tomorrow when Judge Ricks was reached over the phone at Charlottesville and agreed to the release of Willard. As a consequence, the sheriff was enabled to leave early tonight on his return trip with the prisoner.

Willard was charged in the court here with deserting and failing to support wife number one, a former Powhatan county girl, whom he is alleged to have married several years ago. He was ordered to pay support money to her. When he failed to do so he was committed to jail. That happened a month or so ago. And he has since been languishing in jail.

Willard's wife number two was formerly Miss Trudie Alpha Sisk, a Stokes county girl, daughter of J. M. Sisk, well known farmer of that county. Willard is alleged to have married her about a year ago, after deserting the first wife here. Wife number two, who is now with her parents in Stokes county, first learned that he had another wife, according to Sheriff Dunlap, when he disappeared from that county and was arrested on the non-support and desertion charge.

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Stokes Schools Open Sept. 14 and Oct. 5

The high schools of Stokes will open Sept. 14th and the short term schools Oct. 5th, according to announcement recently made by the county board of education.

The board of education anticipates the best year in the history of the schools, as improvements are constantly being made and attendance is growing every year. The school at Danbury is added to the list of districts having new buildings and the attendance at this school will increase largely.

Maps Of Stokes Have Arrived

The maps of Stokes county, prepared by the county and State jointly, have arrived and may be had at the Register of Deeds office at the court house at \$1.00 per copy. These maps are well gotten up and furnish considerable information about the county.

Gasoline Dealers May Get Lower Prices

Raleigh, Aug. 19.—Dealers of bulk gasoline in North Carolina me here yesterday in joint session with representatives of several large refining companies to discuss freight rates on gasoline. The dealers voted to join hands with the refiners in waging a fight for more equitable rates on gasoline from the mid-continent oil fields to the southeastern states and the raising of a fund of \$15,000 for carrying the fight before the Interstate Commerce Commission was suggested.