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(AN EDITORIAL)

CROSS - EXAMINATION

Q. What's your name?

A. Doctor McDonald.

Q. Where do you live?

A. In Winston-Salem.

Q. How old are you?

A. Thirty-two.

Q. What is your business?

A. I have no business. I am a professor.

Q. Professor of what?

A. My specialty is civil government.

Q. Have you always lived in Winston-Salem, doctor?

A. Oh, no. I am a native of Illinois.

Q. When you left Illinois, where did you go?

A. To Arkansas.

Q. And where did you go from there?

A. To North Carolina.

Q. And so you want to be Governor of North Carolina. You appear to be rather young and inexperienced for such a big job as governing North Carolina. What put this notion in your head?

A. I can discern the need of a governor who is able to see the corruption and graft and incompetence which permeate your State government, and who has the courage and ability to eradicate it.

Q. So you hope to ride into office by an appeal to ignorance and prejudice, making our people believe their government is rotten and that our State officials are too corrupt and incompetent to manage it, and that you are the Moses who has come to lead them out of this wilderness of mismanagement, of dishonesty and inefficiency, and graft.

A. I am able to carry out my programs, and I expect to empty the swivel chairs at Raleigh when I come in.

Q. Well, doctor, when you turn out all the rascals at Raleigh and empty the swivel chairs, do you propose to refill the swivel chairs with cheaper men who are your own henchmen?

A. There are too many high-salaried men and women who are eating off the tax-payers.

Q. Will you kindly name a few high-salaried men and women whose places you would fill, and give us an idea of the prices you would pay?

A. Oh, I cannot go into those complications here. But the first thing I will do when elected will be to eliminate the sales tax, which is the most abominable curse ever devised by the devilish ingenuity of an office-holding oligarchy.

Q. Well, supposing you were able to eliminate the sales tax by your complete domination and mastery of the legislature, this would mean lopping off about 10 million dollars of the State's present revenue, would it not?

A. You are correct.

Q. Then, according to your program, I notice you propose to largely increase the salaries of the school teachers, to lengthen the schools to nine months, to lower the price of automobile tags to \$5, to pay old age pensions, and do other great and noble things, which will cost at least 10 million dollars more. So that with your negative program of cutting off the sales tax and your positive program of giving the people their new blessings, the State would be confronted with a \$20,000,000 hole in the necessary revenues. Will you please tell the people how you propose to fill up this hole?

A. You evidently did not hear me in my Winston-Salem address in which I explained clearly that there is a vast invisible bulk of untaxed wealth in the State, and this I propose to tax. For instance, I will have the State constitution repealed so that we can tax incomes as high as 10 per cent. in the upper brackets; I will tax the dividends of the corporations, and I will increase the franchise tax on the corporations, I will put a tax on merchants and a heavy tax on chain filling stations, etc.

Q. Well, doctor, I have noticed that the bulk of your supporters appear to be merchants whom you have led to believe the sales tax (which they of course pass on to the consumer) is a great evil, and they therefore have an obsession that you are some kind of a savior come to rescue them. How are you going to justify your savior-qualities further to these merchants when they begin to feel the pinch of your proposed privilege tax?

A. Oh, this merchant's tax will only be a moderate one, and this they will be glad to pay as a relief from the diabolical sales tax.

Q. Now, doctor, let us agree for the sake of argument that the industries of the State, already taxed to constitutional limits on their incomes, would receive your higher embargoes complacently; that the dividends of corporations, firms and individuals, which are already taxed, could take on your additional load of double taxation, and that all the other sources of the bulk of invisible untaxed wealth which you have enumerated in your program could be tapped according to your specifications, how much revenue would you raise thereby toward filling the 20-million dollar hole you had created?

A. It is all a matter of calculation and figures. I reach my conclusions by infallible methods.

Q. Have you noticed that State tax commissioner A. J. Maxwell has analyzed your program and makes public the statement that if you could reach every source of untaxed wealth as outlined in your program, that you could only produce 3 million dollars of taxes. Maxwell is long experienced in the intricacies of taxation and is considered one of the ablest authorities on fiscal matters in the United States.

A. Maxwell knows very little about taxation. He is ignorant of modern principles as taught in my philosophy. Besides, Maxwell is biased, being an occupier of a swivel chair at Raleigh. He knows if I get in, I will oust him from his berth.

Q. But, doctor, I see that this important question has been referred to a disinterested party in the person of Dr. Heer of the State University, that Heer checked Maxwell's figures and reported them substantially correct.

A. I stand by my calculations, and I guarantee my deductions to be accurate.

Q. Well, doctor, let me ask you to answer this question which is very vital to the tax-payers and citizens of the great State which you are trying to obtain control of: Suppose that you should be elected and that you were able to repeal the sales tax and to carry out your program of reaching the great sources of untaxed wealth outlined in your program. Suppose after you had bled these sources, that the State would then find itself confronted with the tragic situation of a 17-million dollar deficit in its revenues. What would be your recourse then but to fall back with heavy ad valorem taxation on land and real estate to save the State from bankruptcy. Would not your impractical theories then be charged with the destruction of the farmers whom you are trying to induce to place you in the State's highest and most important position?

A. Oh, my calculations cannot fail. Maxwell and Heer have erred in their figures through ignorance and bias toward me.

Q. But, doctor, even if these two eminent tax authorities should be ten million dollars out of line, you would still have a shortage of more than 7 million dollars facing your administration. Now answer, frankly, if land would not be your only salvation, but the farmer's destruction? Answer yes or no.

A. I am opposed to taxation of land. I would not submit to it.

Q. Now, doctor, I believe you were a member of the late North Carolina legislature that passed the sales tax.

A. I was and fought the sales tax bitterly while in Raleigh.

Q. Did you not, when the legislature finally saw that it was a choice between the sales tax and putting the tax back on land, if the schools were to run on and the State's honor and credit saved—did you not withdraw nearly all the wild theories you are now offering which you were offering then in the legislature? And did your plan not finally fizzle down to about a million dollars of revenue?

A. You are quoting the Greensboro News, and I deny it.

Q. You abandoned your Utopia in the legislature, why not abandon it now as a wild tissue of impossible theories which would be sure to get the State into serious trouble?

A. The people will back me in my program and I will beat the other candidates who are in favor of the sales tax.

Q. But, you know, doctor that the other candidates—all three of them—are opposed to the sales tax and have repeatedly said so, but realize that it can only be eliminated gradually unless we go back to heavy taxation on the farmer's land and on the real estate.

A. I have told you I am opposed to land taxation.

Q. Doctor, are you a reader of the Union Republican?

A. Oh, yes, and most other State papers.

Q. Is that where you get your information that the Democratic party of North Carolina is so rotten, and incompetent and crooked?

A. I have not said that the machine is crooked.

Q. What is the Democratic machine?

A. It is the gang of office holders at Raleigh.

Q. How is it you are so anxious to become a member of that gang of crooks, indeed its chief?

A. There will be a new set if I am elected.

Q. Of crooks?

A. I did not say so. My subordinates will be honest men and capable.

Q. You are very careful in your statements to the people in the course of your campaign, are you not?

A. Certainly.

Q. Then why did you so grossly misrepresent the dead Bowman Grey in your Winston-Salem speech, in insinuating that his property was evading taxation?

A. I said that his name did not appear on the tax lists, and it does not. I was right.

Q. But when it was proved that his estate did appear, and was shown to be paying its just share of taxes to Forsyth county and the State of North Carolina, why did you not acknowledge to the people that by inuendo you were trying to create a false impression in the minds of the people and to prejudice them against respectable and honored citizens, in furtherance of your methods to obtain an office?

A. The tax records are there for the people to see for themselves. I have no apology to make.

Q. And in posing as Sir Galahad, or the man without sin, you are willing for others to be condemned—Am I right?

A. I think you are stretching it.

Q. You are basing your campaign on the discredit and the dishonor of the party you want to put you in, why do you and Tammen and Coughlan and Townsend and other radicals not start a new party which would conform to your impractical and impossible theories?

A. I am not a radical. I am a great friend and supporter of President Roosevelt and the New Deal.

Q. Do you feel like you deserve any credit for that?