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Major Heath Says Results Show Removal of Top Soil Helps Land

Mr. Isom Plyler, and Others, Whose Fields Were First Scraped, Admit Productiveness of Land Has Been Increased—"Nagging Critics" Scored.

By W. C. HEATH
Due to the recent agitation concerning the taking of top-soil for the construction of roads, a matter which I thought had long since been settled by practical experience and analysis, I feel impelled to reply to certain allegations made both in print and conversation.

When the road work began in May, 1919, and when I, along with several other unfortunate ones, had been named and delegated a member of the road commission and electorate by an act of the legislature, I naturally, although having had some experience in engineering, began making investigations in other counties of the state so as to determine the proper course to pursue, and to ascertain what effect would be had in the removal of top-soil for road building purposes from open fields. To my surprise, I was told that there was no resultant damage to the productiveness of the land by removal of top-soil, and this fact I ascertained to be true by a personal visit to several counties that had begun road operations several years prior to the authorization of our work, and by correspondence with road officials in other states. This view was also subscribed to by the state and federal road authorities, and so thoroughly convinced am I in this matter that the county, through its road commission, will enter into a contract with parties from whom top-soil has been taken, to pay damages even at the end of two years if it can be shown that the land from which the soil has been obtained does not show a productiveness equal to, or in excess of, adjoining fields which have not been touched by the road scrape.

Cites Instances of Improvement.

It has been demonstrated by roads already constructed in this county that the above referred to contentions are absolutely correct, as evidenced by the experiences of the land-owners adjoining the 100 or more miles of permanent highways built by your road commission; and it might not be amiss, in this connection, to make personal citations, and I respectfully refer you to those whose lands were "robbed" of their top-soil prior to the planting of their crops in the spring of 1920, which would be the only ocular evidence that could be offered at this time.

The first field from which top-soil was taken for road purposes was on the Morgan Mill road, and belonged to Mr. Isom F. Plyler. He seriously objected to the removal of his top-soil, but now admits that no damage whatever has occurred after the growing of a crop, and the same applies to Fowler & Lee, who also own property on the same road. And while I dislike to refer to my own experience, will say that two acres of my land on an 8-acre field on the Jackson highway were scraped for top-soil, and that after the same

amount of fertilizer had been applied, row for row, throughout the length of the field, the cotton yield from these two acres was better than the balance of the field. This can be vouched for by my good friend, Sheriff John Griffith.

Removing Top-Soil Allows Plants to Strike Humus.

On another acre of my land, from which the top soil had been removed, and which I regarded as a "brax-patch," I planted same one-half in sorghum and one-half in peas and cane for forage, and I have never seen a finer production.

While I cannot, in the myriad of facts with which I have had to contend, recall the names of all parties whose lands have been benefited by the removal of top-soil. I am confident that most of the farmers living along the Pageland road can testify to results similar to those secured on the lands of Mr. Isom Plyler, Fowler & Lee and mine.

After all has been said and done, no real farmer can deny this fact: As advocated by all agricultural papers, deep plowing and sub-soiling is productive of good; and when, for instance, 4, 5 or 6 inches of top-soiling have been removed, and the land is then plowed as deeply as it originally was, it is naturally plowed just so many inches relatively deeper than ever before. When this is done, there is reached rich plant food, stored there by nature through the leaching of the soil, thus obtaining there the potash which is so valuable and so costly when purchased commercially.

Deplores Criticism.

Why is it that a terrace through a field is more productive than the balance of the field? The answer: By the fact of plowing, and by throwing up the terrace, the stored plant food and potash is brought into activity with the best of results.

Top-soil required for roads does not mean a soil with a super-abundance of humus unless accompanied by an unusual quantity of gravel. In fact, a proper top soil for road purposes is that which has been worn out by the leaching process of continuous cultivation; which oftentimes, results in the abandonment of fields and the opening up of others with the attributes of virgin soil.

I have always felt a great interest in Union county, the place of my nativity, and am willing to make sacrifices in its behalf, but it is exceedingly discouraging to find that in the great undertaking of progressive road-building we are confronted with nagging opposition, which is, to say the least, inexplicable. Instead of throwing impediment in the way, now is the time to give your road commission in the completion of that project which will place our county on a comparative basis with neighboring counties in progressive road building.

"NOVUS HOMO" SUBMITS A FEW QUESTIONS TO PRICE

He Also Advocates the Construction of Roads by Direct Taxation Instead of By Bonds.

SAYS IT IS FOLLY TO ISSUE THEM

By NOVUS HOMO.

We were of the opinion that Hon. James N. Price was partly responsible for the much maligned revaluation act, and also for the Union county road law, with its bond issuing provision. If he is, then why is he so up in arms against his own work as a law maker, and if he is not, then what was he doing down at Raleigh when these unlovely, unjust and absolutely ridiculous measures were being framed and put over on the people who had sent him down there to guard their interests?

It seems that Mr. Price did not get aroused about the matter until he went to pay his tax, and found that five bales of cotton were required to meet his part of the running expenses of the State and county government. He does not tell us how much property he owns, and since the same rate of tax applies to him that applies to other people in the State, we are inclined to believe that the ex-senator has just five times as much property as the man who paid his tax with one bale of cotton, or ten times as much as the man who paid his with half a bale.

Shouldn't Object to Bearing His Part of Taxes.

When the tax rate is 50 cents on the one hundred dollars worth of property, the man worth one hundred above the exemption pays 50 cents, and the man worth ten thousand pays one hundred times as much. According to this comparison Mr. Price seems to be a very wealthy citizen, and we do not think he should object to bearing his part of the expenses of running his government. Maybe the State is collecting and wasting the people's tax money. If it is, then the proper thing is to advocate curtailment of expenditures, and the best time in the world to do that is while the legislature is in session, and not when we go to pay our taxes.

Taxes in Europe.

There is one thing we need to learn in this country, namely: That land-ownership carries responsibilities as well as advantages. The more advantages vouchsafed to a citizen, the greater the responsibility until a comparatively short time ago. The owners of the lands in all European countries were required to support the crown, and to pay into a fund a sum sufficient to maintain the necessary army forces to defend their possessions. This was deemed proper because the securities guaranteed by government were of sufficient importance to amply repay the cost of maintenance of both the executive of the various branches of government, and also the military forces. The poorer classes who had no possessions, and who, consequently, enjoyed none of such government securities were deemed not liable for the expenses incurred in maintaining the machinery. Modern financiers and grafters have invented a new arrangement of taxation which has shifted the burden of taxation from land to labor. Thus securing to themselves all the benefits of ownership of natural provision and paying only such a sum therefore as others who have none of these things pay on the possessions brought them by the application of their labor.

Should Tax Land, Not Labor.

This method of taxation and monopolization of natural resources, placing all the burden of monstrous taxes on the class that is already down on its knees, and with all this in full view we are planning and scheming all the time to place a greater burden on the class already crushed, and less on the class who are receiving all, or nearly all, the benefits of civilized (?) government.

As an illustration, when we decide to build roads, instead of levying taxes to pay for the work of building the roads, we issue bonds and sell them to the wealthy class of our citizens who enjoy the benefits of the better roads, while at the same time they not only do not help build 'em, but charge us a sum for the use of the money, equal to the cost of the roads every twenty years. Therefore labor builds the roads, pays the interest on the bonds, and if the bonds are ever paid, labor does that too.

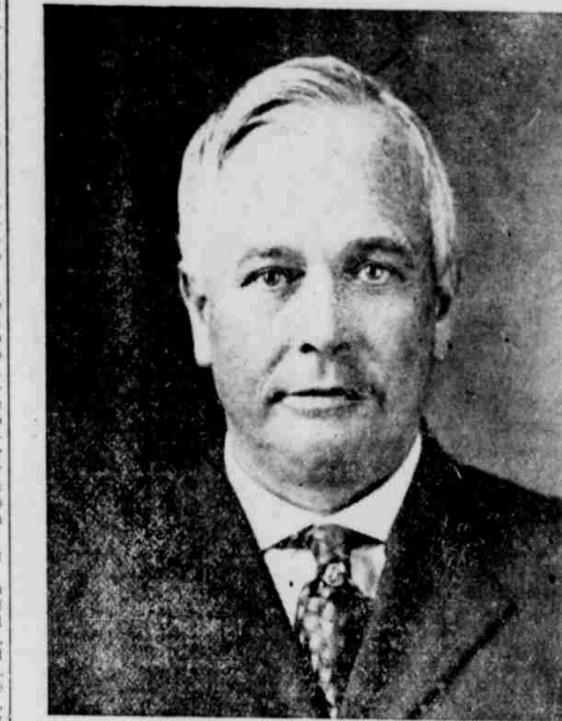
If a proposition to retire one hundred families in the county on a one-thousand dollar pension to each family each year was submitted to a popular vote of the people, we would denounce the man, or men, who submitted it as a monstrous set of fools, and would vote it down before breakfast. Yet this is exactly what we will do if we vote \$2,000,000 worth of bonds on the county to build roads, instead of levying a tax for the purpose.

The interest on the bonds will amount to \$100,000 at five per cent, and would keep the one hundred families in perpetual idleness with a pension of \$1,000 each. Isn't it folly?

He who ploughs straight does much; he who thinks straight does more.

A writer of note has stated that the state of Texas, under intensive cultivation, could produce enough foodstuffs to feed the world. Good as far as it goes. But how about the drinks?

Bickett's Career Should Be A Pride To Every Citizen And An Inspiration To Every Youth, Says Roland Beasley



GOVERNOR THOMAS WALTER BICKETT.

UNION COUNTY MAN HAS MADE GREAT EXECUTIVE

Old College-Mate Pays Great Tribute to One of North Carolina's Most Progressive Governors.

HAS HAD INTERESTING CAREER

By R. F. BEASEY.
Raleigh, Jan. 10.—At noon Wednesday Governor Bickett winds up fourteen years of public official service to the people of North Carolina. His career should be a pride to every citizen and an inspiration to every youth. We are in the habit of looking back to our great men of the past to find examples of great devotion and great service, and are too prone to overlook such examples within our own time. I unhesitatingly say that the career of this fine son of great old Union county affords as grand an example of unselfish devotion to humanity as is to be found in the long years of our past history.

Opening his last address to the general assembly last Thursday, Governor Bickett said:
"The sole claim that I make for myself and for the woman who worked and walked by my side is that in peace and in war we have diligently endeavored to use our position as a lever to lift the state to higher levels and as a light to lead the people into more excellent ways."

And this principle has guided him not only as governor but all through his career. Knowing him from boyhood as I have I was impatient for future, I felt that at last he had em- barked upon a career which I felt confident would not stop until the people had called him to their highest service. And when he made the speech at Charlotte that caused him to be nominated attorney general and showed the state that a new and wonderful force had arisen among us, I was not a whit surprised. I knew perfectly well what that rowdy and eager crowd would do if they could be made to hear only his first few paragraphs.

He had come to the legislature with one and only one bill in his pocket. That was a bill to provide more adequate treatment for the insane people of the state. Looking over the record since that first service in the legislature with the bill for the insane, through eight years as attorney general and four as governor, I know that it was no boast when he used the words quoted above as to the principle which has guided his official life. He has sought "to lead the people in more excellent ways."

Above I said that Mr. Bickett's career ought to be a pride to every citizen and an inspiration to youth. Why? Not alone because he has made good, but because he has made good on the simple and simple platform of "trying to lead the people into more excellent ways." He has won without stooping to anything. Not in all his career has he deemed it necessary to be aligned with any faction or any interest, or to serve any thing or any purpose other than this high ideal. We are prone to say and to think that politics are bad and politicians selfish. But here is the finest success based upon ability coupled with ideas of service. Not is not the significant thing that a man can be found who is willing to serve, but that the people themselves will stand by a man who does serve. If he has the ability and the devotion necessary to challenge their support. Neither patriots nor patriottism is dead.

Mr. Bickett has a great passion and a great art. His passion is for finding the right and the just way and his art is in making that way appear good to other people. He recognizes as no other public man I know does, the fact that fundamental righteousness in all human relationships is the most absorbing question that confronts modern society, and through all his official life this has been his quest. It has been his motif. "In all thy getting, get wisdom." This wisdom is the primary thing needed in our democracy today.

Of the many big things of this administration, I cannot now speak. I am speaking of "motives." In the midst of the serious things of peace and war, Governor Bickett's personality has been a bright and lasting sparkle. I cannot count the times that I have heard him speak, nor the great speeches he has made. But I have never heard him make a dull or flabby one anywhere at any time nor of any length. His enthusiasm, his brightness and his novelty are as great today as they were ten years ago. He has not gone stale. And he goes out of office as fresh and powerful as he came in. No governor of my time has had any more influence with the legislature and yet he has made no enemies, threatened no one nor offered any reward other than the pleasure which comes from walking in "the more excellent way."

Put off unimportant things until tomorrow and then forget to do them.

SAYS HE WOULDN'T HAVE DONE IT FOR THE WORLD

Ransom Baucum Expresses Regret Over the Killing of His Brother, Charles Baucum.

WILD SCENE AT BAUCUM'S HOME

"I wouldn't have done it for the world," said Ransom Baucum, slayer of his own brother, as he met the officers who had come to take him in custody. Tears streamed down his cheeks as he shook hands with Sheriff Fowler. Close by, near the road, lay the body of his dead brother, with a hole about the size of a saucer in his left breast, just over the heart. Death had been instantaneous.

The killing occurred late Saturday afternoon at the home of Ransom Baucum, in New Salem township.

While the officers were bringing their prisoner to Monroe, another brother, Caston Baucum, was at Unionville have wounds, which he received from a blow by a gun that was used in the killing, dressed.

The story of the killing was related to the officers by Ransom Baucum. His two brothers, Charles and Caston Baucum, he said, came to his store about 6 o'clock Saturday afternoon to buy some gasoline. He refused to sell them any, and they rode away, firing a pistol into the air as they receded in the distance. Some of these shots, the prisoner said, struck his house. About thirty minutes later they returned. He met them in his front yard, and an exchange of words ensued, the argument finally terminating in a strenuous tussle. It was said, with Ransom on the ground, and one of the brothers on top of him. Getting up finally, he claims to have secured his shot gun, and with a renewal of the fight, he struck Caston Baucum with the gun, and then fired it at his other brother, Charles Baucum, the load of shot taking effect in his breast.

In giving his version of the shooting, Ransom talked incoherently, and when the officers questioned him as to how he secured the gun he admitted that he was so frightened that he was unable to remember.

It was a wild, desolate scene at the house that greeted the eyes of the officers. W. H. Baucum, father of the boys, was on his knees in prayer, and the air was rent with the screams and cries of the women of the family. Ransom, himself, prayed at intervals, and he was a disheveled, agitated man when he reached Monroe.

The gun that was used in the killing is said to be the same one that had severely kicked a young son of Ransom Baucum several weeks ago, resulting in his death.

Charles Baucum, the man who was killed, is about thirty-three years of age, while Ransom Baucum is about thirty-five years of age. Both men have several children.

This is the second murder of its kind to have been committed in this county within the past year, a South Carolinian having killed his brother near Mineral Springs as the result of an argument as to whether they should continue in their car on to Monroe or return home.

When doctors disagree they look wise, quote a lot of Latin, and charge it up to the patient.

We editors are at heart a truthful bunch of fellows. And yet when duty overrides conscience we have to pay glowing tributes to his virtues when we know darned well he is shaking hands with the devil.

PEA-SUPERSTITION NEW ONE TO LUTHER HUGGINS

Marshville Man Says He Never Heard of It Until It Was Mentioned by Wilmington Friend.

NO LONGER BACK-WOOD SECTION

To the Editor of The Journal:—It appears that you have started something by your statement in a recent issue of your paper that few families in Union county were without peas for dinner New Year's day. You doubtless intended no reflection upon your native county by said statement, but I believe your conception of the superstition of Union county people is rather exaggerated. It is a fact that Union was once looked upon as a poor, back-woods section, having been formed from the gullies of Anson and the persimmon orchards of Mecklenburg, but that day has passed.

Union county now bears the distinction of having more rural home-owners and more rural telephones than any county in the State. The writer was reared in south Marshville and north Lanes Creek townships and had never heard of the superstition of eating peas on New Year's day until Christmas week of 1920 when a former resident of Wilmington brought the subject into conversation.

Your reminiscences and interviews on other superstitious ideas, however, affords an opportunity for me to furnish some first-hand information, especially in regard to small "possums" climbing large trees while large ones content themselves with a perch on bushes or other small growth. Having been reared on a farm and therefore having experienced all the thrilling adventures the country boy is heir to, "possum-hunting" became second nature to me years ago. Hence it has been my observation that the small "possum" does invariably hunt the tall timbers when the "hoop daws" gets in behind him, this because of the fact that he is "skereed" almost to death, while the large one shows his contempt for the "crazy cur" by climbing just high enough to get out of reach of his pursuer. Just at this point "possum" intelligence comes to an end and he never for a moment stops to reflect that the dog is backed up in his murderous design by a human being who is intelligent enough to use unsuspected methods in securing his prey.

L. E. HUGGINS,
Marshville, N. C., Jan. 10, 1921.

But They Probably Were Not Linn.

It was the governess's birthday, and the little girl had carefully saved fifty cents of her own money to buy a gift. Gayly she went shopping all alone, says the Springfield Union, and came home bearing a package very triumphantly.

"What did you get, dear?" asked mother, who had refrained from even suggesting a gift, believing that thus the child's initiative and individuality would be developed.

"Handkerchiefs," came the happy reply.

"Handkerchiefs! But you couldn't get many for fifty cents, could you?" "Oh, yes, mother, I found a nice place where I could get ten for fifty cents, and of course I bought 'em."

OFFICERS FIND MUCH BEER ON FARM OF SILAS O. MULLIS

New Salem Man Drew Shot Gun on Sheriff Fowler and Officers Griffith and Dry.

Silas O. Mullis of New Salem township, staged a little gun exhibition for the benefit of Sheriff Crawford Fowler, Deputy Sheriff Paul Griffith and Revenue Officer S. P. Dry last Friday afternoon when he found them searching his farm for a still. He encountered them in a deep stretch of woods, and with a drawn shot gun demanded to know "what business they had on his place." The Sheriff walked towards Mullis, with the drawn gun pointed in his face, and calmly proceeded to extract the dangerous weapon from his hands. They placed him under arrest. Before leaving for Monroe, Mullis became unruly, and the officers say they were forced to use their fists to subdue him. When he presented himself before United States Commissioner Flow for trial there were several bruises on his face. Three still sights, it was testified by the officers, and three barrels of beer were found on Mullis' farm. He was bound over to the Federal court under a \$500 bond.

It Did Not Help Auntie's Nerves.

(From the Youth's Companion.)

Punch reports a conversation between a harassed-looking woman in the side car of a motorcycle and a cheerful youth on the saddle of the same vehicle, which is moving at a scandalously rapid pace over the road.

"Auntie," says the boy, after the fourth or fifth hairbreadth escape from destruction, "you're not feeling nervous, are you?"

"I am, rather," says auntie. "This is only my third experience in a motorcycle."

"Well, you've beaten me," says the boy, with a happy grin. "It's only my first."

If you will pretend to be cheerful, you will be astonished to find how quickly pretense becomes reality.

What has become of the old-fashioned...

"Idols of Clay" New Fitzmaurice Play.

The dangerous South Sea Islands mingled with London's Limehouse slums in George Fitzmaurice's latest production, "Idols of Clay," which will have its first local showing at the Strand Theatre Wednesday and Thursday. Mae Murray and David Powell are the featured players. The story was written by Ouidi Bergere.

The central characters are Faith Merrill, a pretty, innocent creature living with her father, Jim Merrill, a dorelet, and his dissolute partner, Blinky, on an obscure South Sea Island. Merrill and Blinky sell illicit rum to the natives in return for smuggled pearls. To the island comes Dion Holme, a young sculptor, who is drifting around the world in the effort to forget an unfortunate affair with a Lady Cray, in London. Faith picks him up half-conscious on the beach, and under her care not only his health, but his considerable talent for working in clay returns. Later, Jim Merrill is killed in a drunken brawl and Dion, completely restored, returns to London to take up his career again.

The exciting adventures that befall Faith when she attempts to follow him form the remainder of the action.

Dodging the Issue.

Little Margaret was dressed and told not to get herself dirty before dinner. Later she was discovered sliding down a bank. Her mother told her to come into the house and, as soon as dinner was over, she would have to be punished.

When dinner was announced Margaret did not come to the table. A search revealed her upstairs, playing with her dolls.

Asked why she did not come to dinner, she said: "Mother said she would whip me as soon as dinner was over, so I am not going to eat any dinner."

Consular reports tell us that cheap American talcum powders are competing quite successfully with the Japanese article in the Dutch East Indies. That, however, does not prevent its being cheap at twice the price in the U. S. A.

Yes; the sun has spots, but don't think of the spots; think of the light.