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MARCH 31, 1955

The School Board

In any discussion of Rep. G. L. Houk's bill appointing a school board for Macon County, it should be said at the outset that Mr. Houk is operating under a system that is crazy.

For why nominate school board members in the primary if the Legislature must appoint them? And why legislative appointment if nomination in the primary is to mean anything? And why nomination in a primary only, thus disfranchising Republican voters?

The system is wrong. It needs changing. But until it is changed, it is the system set up by state law.

Some rather searching questions, therefore, are raised by Mr. Houk's bill appointing men not nominated in the primary.

Those questions have nothing to do with the Macon representative's motives or with the character or qualifications of the appointees.

They relate solely to method. This newspaper has the same conviction now it has consistently voiced over a period of eight or nine years: So long as we nominate school board members in an election, then those nominated should be appointed by the Legislature. State law, in fact, says they shall be appointed.

The method of nominating one group and then appointing another, it seems to us, is wrong, both in principle and in practice.

It is wrong in principle for any one man (whoever he may be), or any one group of men, to overrule the expressed wishes of the voters. For if any one man, or any one group of men, knows better what is good for the people than the people themselves, then we'd better ditch democracy.

And it is wrong in practice. Because how are we going to get good men to run for the school board, if they have no assurance they will be appointed after they are nominated?

Those questions seem pertinent, under the present system.

Meanwhile, the system needs changing. What is needed is a law permitting all the people of the county to elect their school board, without legislative interference. That is the only system that is just. It is the only system that makes sense.

Bouquet

That was a fine annual meeting of the Franklin Chamber of Commerce Friday night — one of the best, many say.

The attendance was large and representative of the community, the program was excellent, and the audience was both attentive and responsive. Due recognition was given to what has been accomplished, and the spirit forecast even greater accomplishments during the coming year. Furthermore, everything moved smoothly.

And that, of course, didn't just happen. Somebody behind the scenes had carefully planned—had worked out not only the broad outlines for the occasion, but apparently had thought of every problem of detail before the problem arose, and was on hand to handle it when it did arise.

That somebody was three somebodies — the three members of the arrangements committee for the annual banquet. Those three — Erwin Patton, chairman, Norman Blaine, and Victor H. Perry — were not at the head table to receive applause; they were too busy elsewhere.

Here's a hand for them now.

A daily newspaper the other day announced it has collected all its comics on "two facing pages", and boasted that the arrangement will "save reading time". Who interested in saving time spends it in reading comics? More to the point, who wants

Who's Going To Pay?

How should the state raise the some 18 million dollars a year additional revenue it needs? Should we tax a couple of luxuries or a lot of needs?

Governor Hodges and the Advisory Budget Commission proposed a plan, the heart of which was a tax on manufactured tobacco, including 2 cents per pack on cigarettes, and a levy of 3/4 of a cent a bottle on soft drinks.

That program has three obvious advantages. First, it would raise the needed revenue by taxing luxuries. Second, it could and almost certainly would be passed on to the consumer of the luxury, rather than having to be borne by the industries affected. And third, it is a simple program; and since it taxes only two items, it would be relatively easy and inexpensive to collect.

The General Assembly's finance committee, under pressure from the powerful tobacco and bottlers' lobbies, has come up with an entirely different program. Instead of taxing the two luxury items of tobacco and soft drinks, it would levy some ten other taxes.

This complicated program has the obvious disadvantage of being harder and more expensive to collect since—the money would come from ten different sources, presumably it would be five times as difficult and as expensive to collect.

And what about the intelligence and fairness of the committee's alternate proposal? The answer lies in an analysis of where the money would come from.

Under the committee's plan, approximately one-fourth of the total amount would come from taxes on property. One of the ten proposed levies is a tax on building materials — surely a tax on progress; while another would tax real estate transfers. In both instances, the man hardest hit would be the builder or buyer of a home.

Approximately one-sixth would come from taxes on automobiles. Automobiles have ceased to be a luxury and have become a necessity, and the automobile already is the most heavily taxed item the average man must buy.

And approximately one-ninth would come from the farmer, in taxes on seeds, feeds, fertilizers, and insecticides.

Well over half, therefore, of the total would come from three groups of citizens — property owners (chiefly home-owners), automobile owners, and farmers.

And this program would tax not luxuries, but needs.

If the people of North Carolina are wise, they will insist that the legislators stay in Raleigh until they can come up with a more intelligent and a fairer tax program than this one. But the people will get it only by demanding it. Because the legislators already are growing anxious to get home, and that desire undoubtedly is being used as a lever to try to force this program through in a hurry.

Speaking Of Disloyalty . . .

American servicemen who were held prisoners of war continue to be tried and convicted for disloyalty.

Perhaps they are guilty. Maybe they should be punished.

But it is passing strange for this government, under present circumstances, to charge anybody with disloyalty: For isn't loyalty a two-way proposition? and is this government as loyal to its servicemen as it demands they be to it?

How about those U. S. airmen, still held in Chinese prison camps, apparently abandoned by their government? How loyal do you suppose they and their families feel the government is to them?

There are said to be some very effective lobbies in Raleigh. But none of them, apparently, can touch the theatres' lobby. Because in all the talk about new taxes, nobody, so far as we can recall, has so much as mentioned a tax on theatre admissions.

Letters

KEEP MACON DRY

Editor, The Press:

Let us, as Christians, keep Macon dry. God would not be pleased with a liquor store.

The roads around the beautiful little town of Highlands are

Rail oddities

THE FAMOUS GOLDEN SPIRE DRIVEN TO MARK COMPLETION OF THE FIRST TRANSCONTINENTAL RAIL ROUTE IN THE U.S.A. (MAY 1, 1869), HERETOFORE IN CUSTODY OF THE WELLS FARGO BANK OF SAN FRANCISCO, HAS BEEN SENT TO STANFORD UNIVERSITY IN PALO ALTO, CALIF. THE SPIRE CONTAINS ARMY 8550 NORTH OF OAKS.

FOR THE PAST 22 YEARS, SPECIAL AGENTS OF THE GREAT RAILROADS SERVING COUNCIL BLIFFS, IOWA, HAVE TAKEN OVER THE CITY'S POLICE DUTIES FOR ONE NIGHT SO THAT MEMBERS OF THE REGULAR FORCE COULD ATTEND THE ANNUAL POLICEMEN'S BALL.

EVERY YEAR PASSENGERS HAVE OVER FIVE THOUSAND TONS OF GOODS USED IN HOUSES, OFFICES, BARS, STORES, RESTAURANTS AND MANY OTHER PURPOSES. THE VALUABLE CARGOES TRAVEL IN WELDED TANK CARS OF MANY SPECIAL DESIGNS AND ARE SUBJECT TO SPECIAL ORDERS FOR LOADING, UNLOADING AND UNWELDING.

too crooked for it to have a liquor store. Keep Macon dry, and save a life.

Instead of using a store for liquor, why not use it for prayer meeting?

MRS. LEXIE SANDERS.

Franklin, Route 2.

EIGHTH GRADE ON WHISKEY

Editor, The Press:

We, the 8th grade of Highlands School, feel that a whiskey store here would be harmful to the youth of our town and our community. We hope that our feelings about this influence you in not voting for liquor in Highlands. We feel that Highlands and the people in it are the most wonderful people in the world. And we hope you will do nothing to change our feelings about it.

It is known by everyone in and around Highlands that illegal whiskey is plentiful to anyone in many different places. Again we feel that if the voters are really interested in Highlands and, more important, your youth of Highlands, then see that this traffic of abundant illegal whiskey, which is 100 times worse than legal whiskey, be cleaned out.

The 8th grade has seriously thought the questions of whiskey through. The room as a whole has discussed the question from both angles. A page from each student was read in the class and many good angles were brought out. A vote was taken after the class heard the papers on whiskey. There was a unanimous vote against the whiskey store in Highlands.

The problem of whiskey is a large one. It is up to the people to do what they think.

Whiskey does no one any good all the way around. Taxes may help but they may be obtained other ways, because a life is more precious than all the whiskey anywhere. Whiskey drinkers are a nuisance to the public and carry a great deal of trouble for the drinkers.

Highlands should not have a whiskey store because it will cause more heart aches, sadness, more accidents and deaths. A whiskey store will endanger the health of our people. We, the people of Highlands, want a clean town. We want to keep a clean street and a clean body of people.

If all the people would band together and vote against the A. B. C. store and get law officers to get out illegal whiskey, Highlands would be a nicer place than it has been.

It has been apparent for a long time that Highlands needs some kind of factory. Why can we not get one?

Sincerely,

MICHAEL BATT,
8th Grade Secretary,
Highlands School.

Others' Opinions

PRISONER OF WAR TRIALS

(Stanly News and Press)

Many citizens of this nation have been greatly disturbed by the treatment of some of the returned prisoners by the Army courts, and in recent weeks, the question mark has been put on the element of justice in these courts.

Men who were held by the Chinese for several years and subjected to what is known as "brain-washing" have been brought to trial on what amounts to charges of treason. Because some of the men were able to stand up under this "treatment" by the Chinese Reds, it is assumed that all men should have been able to avoid doing anything that would have helped the enemy. We think that attitude on the part of the Army and our civilian courts is wrong. Those who pass judgment cannot know the circumstances under which these acts of collaboration were carried on.

We have nothing but the deepest sympathy for those who were not able to withstand the pressure, and we believe it only fair to have waited until time had allowed some of the "mental wounds" of both the accuser and the accused to have healed before taking them into court.

And another thing that is rankling the American people is the fact that these courts seem to have one system of justice for officers who weakened under enemy pressure and another for privates and non-commissioned officers.

News Making As It Looks To A Maconite

By BOB SLOAN

The legislature of North Carolina does not seem to be much closer to solving the most serious problem it faces — that is where to find some thirty-four million dollars of revenue more than the current tax program will bring in.

I, for one, favored attempting to do this by raising certain of the so called luxury taxes. Included in this class would be taxes on such items as cigarettes and all other forms of tobacco after it had been processed so that it may be used by the consumer, a tax on soft drinks, increase in the liquor tax, etc. The only trouble is that after you have increased all of these all that they will stand you still won't have the needed extra revenue. Unfortunately, too, we are speaking only of the amount needed to continue public services at their present level; yet there are fields where North Carolina needs to expand the service rendered its people.



Sloan

Perhaps the best way to obtain the needed revenue would be to increase the state income tax. This tax structure has not been changed in over twenty years. People obtain more services from the state than they did twenty years ago (and clamor for even more), and certainly no sensible person would deny that you have to pay more in most any field than you did twenty years ago. However, I believe that if the state income tax structure were increased the exemption allowed per person should be increased also. This then in effect would increase the percentage of tax on the higher brackets of income more than on the average person. I have always believed that it was fair and made sense to tax where the money is.

Truly this session of the General Assembly is faced with a difficult problem since the war years surplus has just now been spent. But sooner or later, I am willing to wager, the state

—Continued on Last Page

Do You Remember?

(Looking backward through the files of The Press)

50 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Mrs. Minnie Gray Weaver, of Asheville, has been visiting relatives in this county for a fortnight past.

Rev. and Mrs. J. A. Deal and daughter, Miss Anna, were expected home yesterday evening from spending the winter in Florida.

Mrs. George A. Jones and Mrs. Lee Crawford left last Wednesday for a two-weeks' visit to their sister, Mrs. E. R. Kinnebrew, of Athens, Ga. Mrs. J. S. Sloan went from Walhalla, S. C., last week to meet them in Athens.

25 YEARS AGO

Miss Rachel Davis, of the Franklin school faculty, spent the week-end with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. W. S. Davis.—Highlands item.

The young high school set enjoyed two delightful dances last week: one Wednesday night at Trimont Inn, and one Friday night at the Scott Griffin Hotel.

Mr. and Mrs. J. Harry Thompson, of Bluefield, W. Va., are visiting Mrs. Thompson's parents, Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Evans, of Cullasaja. They will be in Macon for ten days.

10 YEARS AGO

Pfc. and Mrs. Weaver Hurst left Friday for Miami, Fla., where they will spend two weeks before Pfc. Hurst will be re-assigned to further army duties. He recently returned from Honolulu, where he spent 43 months.

The Misses Jessie and Nancy Potts, of Highlands, are listed among the 45 students at Western Carolina Teachers College, Cullowhee, who have won the distinction of being named on the Alpha Honor Roll.—Highlands item.

Miss Pauline Wild spent the past week-end in Monticello, Ga., with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Wild.