

THE PILOT

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ter.

A LOGICAL TAX SUGGESTION

From the grocers of Charlotte comes the most logical proposition regarding taxes that seems to have reached the surface in this blind-man's bluff that has been for some time in progress. The grocery men propose a flat tax of one-twentieth of one percent in sales at the point of wholesale distribution, with an increasing percentage as the volume of sales grows larger. That is the whole story. No assessments on anybody, no tax collections here and there in dribs and bucketfuls, no nonsense, no favoritism, just a percentage tax at the fountain head of distribution, and there the whole thing stops.

One-twentieth of one percent would gather in a whale of a lot of money on the sales in North Carolina, yet so triflingly small on any one thing that it would not annoy anybody. And it would permit and require every one of us alike to pay our honest proportion of the taxes required. If John Smith, the millionaire should buy a million dollars worth of stuff in the year he would pay his proportion of taxes on his purchases just as the man who buys a box of crackers and a can of sardines would pay his share. The tears shed over the poor man's percentage would be so few in number that his taxes on his purchases would not pay for the salt in his tears.

One of the troubles with a sales tax when one is mentioned is that too many people begin to figure a cent on each package of five-cent chewing gum, or each bottle of soda water, or on anything that can be suggested. But to tax a five-cent package so much as a cent is robbery. It should be taxed a fraction so small that it could hardly be computed. A cent on a dollar's worth of stuff bought would be much nearer right, and that would like as not afford more money than the state and the counties would ask for. The sales tax scares us because we have been figuring out how we could put it on a few selected victims, allowing all the others to escape, and that sort of a sales tax would be as iniquitous as the present favoritism in taxation where the levies are made against those who seem to be the easiest victims.

The Charlotte grocers who propose a flat and universal small percentage on everything sold have hit the idea and probably a lot of merchants would find that such a tax would relieve them of a lot of the special schemes now in vogue which skin them here and there promiscuously, but which under a general sales tax would be abolished. The only fair tax is one that falls alike on everybody in proportion to ability to pay, and nothing tells better the ability to pay than the ability to buy. The small buyer would be a small payer of tax. All the complicated schemes would end, and justice would come as near prevailing as it ever can in a motley organization like government.

STAND BY CHAIRMAN MULL

O. M. Mull, chairman of the Democratic executive committee of the state, and executive counsel to the governor, has declared emphatically in favor of re-districting the state. His stand is so logical that he deserves the emphatic backing of every citizen. Mr. Mull says there is no place for a Congressman-at-large, for he represents nothing, no district, no state, for the state has its two Senators and the several districts have their own individual representatives. So such a general Congressman is an abstract nonentity. But far

above that is the mandate to apportion the state into districts that each district may have the representation to which it is entitled in Congress, and that no district shall be so placed that it is unfairly represented as compared with any other district. Under the new census each 290,000 people of North Carolina are entitled to a Congressman. To continue the present districts, in some of which something like 400,000 people have one representative, while others of not much more than half that number have equal representation is an unfair deal.

It was unfortunate that one member of the legislature recorded himself as saying that he is for the best interests of the Democratic party in this affair. A member of the legislature as well as every citizen of the state owes as his first duty a consideration of the best interests of the state. If the Democratic party is not in line with the best interests of the state, then it is time for the party to get there. It is party cowardice that is not excusable to try to make any political capital whatsoever of this situation, for if the plain mandate of the law is to be evaded in the hope of political advantage the Democratic party must be on mighty thin ice. But that is not the case. A party that has all the eleven members in Congress has no excuse for shenanigan in the effort to hold the political power of the state. Mr. Mull takes the fair stand, and he is not the least afraid of the cars.

THE DOMINIE OF THE TRENCHER

"Be seated all, draw up and then Fall to, like valiant trenchermen."

Today, as of yesterday, and as will be tomorrow, "men are only boys grown tall; hearts don't change much after all." No hero of childhood ever clove to the cockles of youth more than that old Friar Tuck, who could make a venison pasty with any man, and say his orisons between times; and so good old Saint Andy Creamer spreads his tables and summons to a dinner the burghers and the layity and the priests, that as men garnish their spirits with bread and savory meats they may think of the duties they owe the church, the great mother of civilization, knowledge and progress.

It is of more than passing consequence when men go out of their way to espouse the cause of righteousness and to throw toward the pulpit the influence of their institutions and the example of their occupations and craft. Creamer, Joe Chapple's apostle of friendliness, a registrar of community appreciation of the cloth, of the banner that has led the hosts of men for near two thousand years in their climb toward a broader humanity, inviting the multitude about him to indicate the exalted station in which the church is held and to encourage it in its greatest of all tasks, the uplift of the race.

Andrew Creamer tells the community that we all owe to the great moral and religious leader a backing and support greater than we are giving it. On the results of the work of the church hangs the future of the race and the nation, and on the people, those out of the church as well as those in the church, turns the success of the work the church stands for and urges. It is of much importance that the business world in such emphatic manner impresses on the community the fact that the church aims and the church efforts must be sustained by all of us, for we are all the beneficiaries of all that is good no matter what the origin. Possibly Creamer, this domine of the table is functioning as successfully in lighting a lamp of righteousness as the man who in his pulpit is holding the front line of attack on evil. For Creamer is recruiting in a new field and bringing up the reserves. He is defending the flanks and he knows the character of the enemy he encounters there.

Aiding and abetting Friar Creamer was another missionary in this novel field of home work, Tom Kelley, the Chantey-man of the occasion, with choruses and canticles, a worker like Creamer, another unattached disciple, steeped in human kindness and riding herd on the mavericks and doing good on many occasions where other influences do not reach.

THE GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE

Governor Gardner's message to the legislature is about what thinking men expected from a practical executive and adviser. It is free from store-box oratory, and in no way a play to the grand stand, but on the contrary a dignified and studied statement of the conditions confronting North Carolina in the world wide transition from yesterday toward tomorrow. It is not merely that we have come through a war that presents us new problems. For years a steady trend toward new methods has prevailed, and, as the governor says, we are at the cross-roads today. We are expanding from a rural state organization in which neighbors and friends in a modest way carried on local and state government, the influences being of short range and the consequences not very grave. But today a state of over three million people with diversified motives highly industrialized, and tensely engaged in efforts of many kinds, look with more vital necessity on the administration of state government, which is after all no more or less than the relations between man and man.

Steadily we are heading toward state socialism, although we do not admit the name. Individual control and responsibility is giving way to state and federal domination into the remotest local affairs. It is a world-old fight and possibly is no nearer a solution today than in the days of the Pharaohs. Nevertheless with the magnitude of our operations and the clamor for money and help from the state and federal treasuries it is a feature of government that is growing more conspicuous. The governor takes cognizance of the situation, and offers his suggestions. What action will be taken depends on the attitude of the legislature, but undoubtedly something will be set in motion that will have its influences far into the future. The ultimate outcome must be a new state constitution, carefully written and on broad ground. That may be yet far in the future or close by, but it is the first decisive step, because it is basic. It will govern the others.

The governor recommends, and in the main it seems, wisely. The legislature and the voices from home will consider his recommendations. Out of all will come much intelligent consideration, and from that will come some action, some of it wise, some of the kind that will have to be revamped later on. The document is not one that can be dismissed with an off-hand opinion, for it is broader than that. It is a thought provoker, to be carefully and thoroughly weighed, for it is not a command. It is a suggestion, and as such

will be carefully discussed by the broader minds of the legislature as well as by those more flighty, and before it is dismissed with the close of the session it will have started many lines of thought that will be of use to the state. It deserves careful reading by every thoughtful citizen.

THE VIRTUE OF NECESSITY

The county commissioners have made some reductions in county expenditures. They have not yet attacked the big problem, for the items that have been pruned so far are the small ones, and the saving of a few hundred dollars a year will not make a mark on the outlay of the nearly half a million dollars that this county is called on annually to pay. An annual lopping off of \$4,000 would reduce the tax rate only about one per cent from what it is now, and much more cutting must come before that one per cent is reached.

The commissioners have shown that they are anxious to reduce taxation and they are probably digging much deeper into the problem. We might as well make up our minds to a few things. The big costs of this county are in the bonds and their interest, the roads and the schools. The bonds are not subject to paring down. That leaves the schools and the economies must be sought, if any are to be found, there. It is safe to assume that the extended plan of road construction is not to be extensively continued. It is doubtful if much new road building will be favored right away. Probably some disappointment is to face the county in the matter of road expansion. Possibly the commissioners may undertake a closer scrutiny of school expenditures. Not that The Pilot is proposing such steps, for the attitude of the people, and their willingness to pay, are yet to be made known. But if the insistence on tax reduction is carried much farther it is rather apparent that the two big items of cost will be the next attacked. The commissioners have no easy and no pleasant task ahead of them. What they do will be done through a sense of the necessity of the case, and in whatever they do should have the approbation of the people. You can't scatter big gifts from an empty pocket book. If as a county we want things we must pay and if we don't want to pay we must be content with what we can get in return for what we will pay. The commissioners are confronted with the job of determining what this shall be. Our job is to kick as little as possible and to make the fewest possible demands on them if we are not willing to pay.

GRAINS OF SAND

The Governor's message is constructive and pretty complete, BUT—
Where is our pet mania?

What good will the enactment of all of his recommendations into law do if none of us are here to enjoy the benefits? AND—

We aren't going to be here if Tom, Dick and Harry, Minnie, Mabel and Maude, without regard for competency, sobriety or sanity, are permitted to operate motor vehicles on the highways of North Carolina without a license.

The automobile death rate increases each year. Last year it broke all previous records.

But there isn't a word in the Governor's message advocating an operator's license law, or increase in the State Highway Patrol.

O tempora, O mores, Oh Governor Gardner! Are we to sit by and watch ruthless slaughter on the roads of your commonwealth for another year without lifting a finger?—

We have just learned of a smaller daily newspaper than our Sandhills Daily News. It is called the Torres Straits Daily Pilot, is published on Thursday Island in the south Pacific, where lives a population of 2,000 souls. The staff consists of one man, who is compositor, linotype operator, printer, reporter, editor and business manager. The paper is three columns in width, eleven inches long, costs 25 cents a week or twelve cents a copy.

You can almost set your watch by Tom Sparrow. Tom wanders into the Bryan Drug store each morning at the same hour, sits down at a table with a morning paper and proceeds to do the crossword puzzle.

All records in the history of organized protection were broken in North Carolina last year with a total of 3,278 forest fires reported from the 45 cooperating counties during the ten months ending October 31. The total burned area was 278,057 acres; estimated damages, \$514,741. The record drought of the year, which resulted in an average deficiency of 13 inches of rain in the state, was responsible.

Be careful of your cigarettes and matches when in the woods. Don't throw them carelessly from your automobile.

Radio sets in use in North Carolina July 1st, 1930 numbered approximately 92,000; in the country, about 13,478,600 sets.

Our next Congressman, J. Walter Lambeth, thinks President Hoover needs a vacation. He saw him in Washington and gained the impression that the President is breaking physically under the cares of office, "and that it would be best for him and for the country if he should take a thirty days vacation. The President is an overworked man and refuses to spare himself in the many burdens that fall upon the chief executive."

And Congress, particularly the Senate, isn't making life any easier for him as the days roll along.

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She was a widow. She made two mistakes. When she bought her lot and built her house she neglected to have her deed recorded. She kept her deed in her house. Both these mistakes were fatal. The house burned down. The man she bought the lot from died. The lesson from the pitiful tragedy is to record your deed the day you get it, and then as soon as it comes back from the recorder's office put it in a safe deposit box.

Safe boxes at small cost are available at the—

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Weymouth Heights

Southern Pines

More horses coming, more folks locating on Weymouth Ridge. More people looking out for rural holdings in the country adjacent to the expanding Weymouth community.

No more land being made but more folks wanting a slice of what is already provided.

You don't go through the filling station district to get to Weymouth Heights.

Out Massachusetts avenue, out Pennsylvania avenue, out Connecticut avenue through the best home section of Southern Pines and through Weymouth pine forests clear to Fort Bragg.

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