

THE Roanoke Beacon

Washington County News

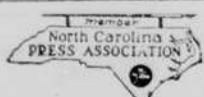
PUBLISHED EVERY THURSDAY in Plymouth, Washington County, North Carolina

The Roanoke Beacon is Washington County's only newspaper. It was established in 1889, consolidated with the Washington County News in 1929 and with The Sun in 1937.

Subscription Rates (Payable in Advance)
One year \$1.50
Six months .75

Advertising Rates Furnished Upon Request

Entered as second-class matter at the post office in Plymouth, N. C., under the act of Congress of March 3, 1879.



January 16, 1941

An Excellent Start

Action of the grand jury in requiring the county tax collector's office to check draft registration lists and poll books for names of persons who have been failing to list their personal property and poll taxes is an excellent thing. It is eminently fair in every respect, as those who have failed to list have been enjoying every advantage of government that those who have listed enjoy.

Absolute equality in taxation is possibly unattainable. Beyond question, there will always be some injustices; a few who pay too much and a great many who pay too little of their fair share of taxes. However, it is worth while to constantly strive to make the burdens of taxation fall on each alike, in proportion to ability to pay, of course.

One of the first steps in equalizing taxes is to be sure that the name of everyone supposed to pay taxes appears on the tax books. And by the method adopted here last week, several hundred names have been added to the list. True, most of them will have only their poll taxes to pay, but even that will add several thousand dollars in revenue for the operation of county and town affairs; and if it is fair to tax those with much property, it is just as fair to put some tax on those with little property.

An excellent start has been made, and our county tax authorities should use every available check to see that the tax rolls contained the names of all persons required by law to list. Further, every reasonable method to enforce the collection of taxes levied should be used. This is only fair to those hundreds of good citizens who list and pay their taxes as they come due.

Another Legislature

The 1941 session of the North Carolina General Assembly gets off to a little more promising start than many of its predecessors, due mainly to the

OUR DEMOCRACY by Mat

WHO OWNS AMERICAN WEALTH?

300 YEARS AGO—
A CLEARING OF LAND REPRESENTED A COLONIST'S WEALTH.

200 YEARS AGO—
HOMES, FARMS, SMALL MILLS AND SHOPS, OPERATED BY INDIVIDUALS REPRESENTED WEALTH.

100 YEARS AGO—
THE STEAM ENGINE EXPANDED PRODUCTION, INDIVIDUALS POOLED CAPITAL TO OPERATE THEM, INCREASE WEALTH.

TODAY MILLIONS OF INDIVIDUALS POOL THEIR WEALTH TO PROVIDE CAPITAL FOR VAST ENTERPRISES. THE NATION'S 64,000,000 LIFE INSURANCE POLICYHOLDERS HAVE A BIG STAKE IN U.S. INDUSTRY THROUGH THE INVESTMENT OF ASSETS WHICH ARE THE SECURITY BEHIND THEIR POLICIES.

fact that general business conditions are in much better shape than they were a few short years ago. Tax problems will continue to dominate the session, of course, but they are nowhere as serious as they were a few short years back, when the bottom had fallen out of everything and raising enough money to operate various state functions was almost impossible.

Those who look for elimination—or even drastic moderation—of the sales tax are doomed to disappointment. It has become a permanent feature of our tax structure, and we do not believe any of us now living will ever see its complete repeal, especially as long as the state continues to operate the public schools.

One of the leading controversial measures will doubtless be passage of a state wages and hours law molded to conform more or less with the similar federal statute. Opposed by most small business enterprises, this proposal nevertheless has merit, we think, since many small industrial plants are in direct competition with larger firms which are required to observe the standards laid down in the Federal act. Manifestly, it is unfair to force one concern to observe certain wage and hour schedules and to permit another concern making the same product to disregard them, simply because one of them does a strict-

ly local business while the other happens to sell some of its output across state lines.

The legislature began its session by passing a bill to raise the pay of constitutional officers by about 10 per cent. Without going into the unseemly haste by which this bill was passed, we hope teachers in the schools of the state will receive the same consideration when it is proposed to raise their meager salaries. North Carolina has treated its teachers shamefully in the matter of salary schedules, and certainly all possible should be done during the current session to remedy matters.

The first few days of the session was devoted to putting the legislative machinery in motion, but it is expected the assembly will get down to real business within another week. People of the state will watch closely its actions during the coming weeks.

Pork is cheap. Around here this holds true for the road hog variety, too.

Rambling About

By THE RAMBLER

In Raleigh—

When Representative W. M. Darden left last week for the legislature in Raleigh, I went along also. He went to attend the Democratic caucus that was held last Tuesday night and to take his seat in the House when the lower unit of the General Assembly opened on Wednesday morning. I went along as a candidate for reading clerk and I was eliminated on the first ballot.

Enroute on Monday morning, Washington County's lawmaker must have cut links and a black tie. He managed to purchase the cuff links which he was afraid he would lose. But that cravat. That's a story in itself. You see he must have had that black tie to use with the tuxedo that he was to wear on Thursday night to the Governor's Ball.

Maybe it shouldn't be told but the tuxedo was borrowed prior to his departure. And though he had attired himself in the tuxedo to determine which was the largest, him or the suit, he was still afraid that the cuff links would be lost, the tie become untied, the suspenders hold the trousers too far from his shoes, or something. If you haven't worn a dress suit to a Governor's Ball you don't know all about this formal dress business, according to the solon.

Arriving in Raleigh Tuesday afternoon, I turned to greeting the legislators in an effort to get some votes for my reading clerk job. Representative Darden began working behind the scenes. Of course, it turned out that whether the work was done in front or behind the scenes, 18 votes was the best we could muster.

One good soul informed me that he would "vote for me even if I couldn't do anything but mumble in the trial reading before the house." Another said that Mr. Darden had "told him how to vote in the last session and he expected to blindly follow him this session." But the other 110 made no pledges to me. So I wasn't misled.

Representative and Mrs. Cameron S. Weeks, of Tarboro. There is a couple for you. Her husband is blind. She conducted his successful campaign for the office and now attends him very devotedly as he represents his county in the House. He is a smiling, friendly, congenial man. Not what you might say in a political way, but in a happy way.

But then Representative Darden hasn't got that black tie yet. That cravat must be on hand in plenty of time. So he goes into a store and buys two. No telling, he explains, what might happen to one. And you know this tie is for the governor's ball. They only have a Governor's Inaugural Ball every four years. And not everybody goes.

Then I see in the hotel lobby Walter J. (Pete) Murphy who has been going to the legislature in this state so long that the mind of modern man hardly runneth to the contrary. Yes sir, there he was in the hotel lobby shaking hands with friends. Like the old time politician he is, he had on his spiked coat with unmatched trousers. He is a fixture in the House. Glancing around the hotel lobby, I saw a group of men in conversation

TOLL MUST BE REDUCED

By RONALD HOCUTT
North Carolina Highway Safety Division

"It's going to take a lot of intelligent planning and coordinated effort on the part of a lot of individuals and organizations to check the current upward trend in traffic accidents in North Carolina," Ronald Hocutt, director of the Highway Safety Division, declared this week.

Reporting that provisional figures indicate a toll of approximately 1,000 killed and 9,000 injured on North Carolina streets and highways during 1940, Hocutt pointed out that accidents in the state since last August have taken an upward trend which appears liable to continue into the New Year.

"This slaughter must be stopped, and I pledge a more vigorous effort on the part of the Highway Safety Division towards reducing traffic accidents during 1941," he said. "But we cannot do the job alone. The traffic problem is largely a local problem, and definite steps toward eliminating accidents must come, for the most part, from enforced officials, educational

leaders and interested organizations and individuals in each and every community in the state.

Hocutt said there was considerable safety activity on the part of many groups in the state last year, but that much of this activity was of the flash-in-the-pan variety.

"Safety activity, to be most effective, must be carefully planned, assiduously carried out and well coordinated," he stated.

"Another thousand North Carolinians who are now living will be dead and thousands whose bodies are now whole will be maimed and crippled by the end of this year unless every person in North Carolina resolves to do something and then actually does something to make our streets and highways safer during 1941."

The safety director said his services and those of his field workers are available in assisting any groups sincerely interested in helping to reduce this state's traffic toll.

I managed to edge into the crowd and they don't quit when I move close up as they know that I am a candidate and that I don't count any way so they keep right on talking over the big matters of state. I heard one say something about the dyes making an effort to have the State ABC law repealed and they engaged in very earnest conversation and after awhile I heard one say something about "retiring to his room where he can get some of the contents of this law in his constitution so that with the vigor that it produces he can argue from personal knowledge that these spirits of pleasure and gaiety should not be returned to the bootleggers for marketing as their sales force must of necessity be limited and the ingredients used in its manufacture may not be as wholesome, as the ingredients of that in the ABC stores."

I had never seen a lobbyist before. So there standing before my very eyes is Sam Blount, of Washington. Now this Sam Blount has been lobbying for some time. Seems as how he represents some beer manufacturers who want to keep their merchandise on the market even if the ABC stores go. He knows every lawmaker and they know him. He meets and greets them. They remember him when they go to vote. What legislator could with any degree of calmness displease this smiling, friendly lobbyist? So beer remains here.

And then back to the cravat again. Mrs. Darden who arrived to go to the ball had a hard time determining which would be the better tie for her husband to wear to the ball. He could choose either the factory-tied one or he could call in his friends to tie the other. Eventually, it was decided to adjust the strap on the ready-tied one and use that. This was done.

Meanwhile, I am advised that it might be a good idea for me to go up to the House chamber and get a range on the distance that my voice must carry so that I can read loud

enough to be sufficiently heard when the trial reading takes place Tuesday night. I pick up a young fellow who is standing by a post to listen for me. He and others said that my voice was okay. So I returned to meeting and greeting the legislators.

Representative Darden and I dropped into the rooms of O. M. Mull, of Cleveland, who like George R. Uzzell, was a candidate for speaker. Mr. Mull came from Shelby as did Governors Morrison, Gardner and Hoey. So he won the speakership. He is one of the most pleasant men you have ever met. So are all of the Shelby boys. They win, you know.

Bill Horner, of Sanford. Now that's the man for you to know. Ever pleasant and friendly he knows his way around Sanford and Raleigh. He put Ralph Monger over as reading clerk, and me and three others couldn't stop it. We ate lunch together but I failed to learn much of his political strategy. I did hear, however, that it was noised abroad that I didn't need the job as reading clerk as I had a job back home. And Bill and Ralph spent me back to it.

I think that if I had Representative W. I. Halstead, of Camden, to make a speech for me kind a like the one he made for Shearon Harris, of Albemarle, for chief clerk of the House I might have got that reading job I went after. He told of nominating Thad Eure for the place about 10 years ago. He said Bill Baker had a State job and Harris did not. This is something like the whispering campaign they had against me. And it is said that Eure ran for Representative after serving one term and was defeated and the next time he made a successful campaign for Secretary of State.

Besides lawmakers, I saw some newspaper men. For instance, there was Tom Bost, columnist for Greensboro Daily News; Charlie Parker, city editor for News & Observer; Tom Peel, Associated Press; and some others. Now these boys cover the capital "like the dew covers Dixie." And, of course, they have personalities too. Likeable, I should say. Not so much like the movie reporters but hard-working news gatherers.

Oh, yes, about that black tie that had caused so much trouble. It did perfectly.

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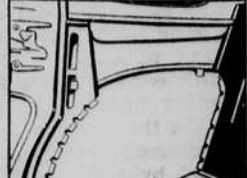
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