

Jones Journal

"A BETTER COUNTY THROUGH IMPROVED FARM PRACTICES"

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Our Tax Article Irks Taxpayers Who Irk Tax Collector Who Irks Editor As Board Chuckles At All

A pint-sized tempest ruffled the otherwise quite air of the January meeting of the Lenoir County Board of Commissioners when Tax Collector and Supervisor Milton Williams complained vehemently and lengthy over a December 25th article in this paper on taxation in the county.

Williams pointed out that the article was the lowest blow he has suffered in 17 years in the department and that it has made his job infinitely more difficult than it might have been without the article.

The referred to article mentioned that Williams, last spring, had told the commissioners that his department was now going to give particular attention to personal property and inventory listings since the real estate and fixed equipment listings had been carefully and scientifically brought into line by the Cole-Layer-Trumble Company.

The article took various types of stores in Kinston and listed the 1953 tax inventory figures for each store in each group. From William's rather heated exposition on the "freedom of the press" it was apparent that the figure causing the biggest embarrassment to him was that which listed the inventory of Harvey's department store at \$35,565. The department store inventories listed include: Sear's \$18,500, Bird's \$16,000, Panny's \$13,340, A. J. Sutton's \$14,700, Harry Pearson's \$13,975, Nachamson's \$20,185, Brody's \$32,650, Belk Tyler's \$36,000, Montgomery Ward \$35,415 and Sear's \$64,580.

Since this was a grouping of department stores the Harvey

inventory listing only included the Harvey department store section and did not include the entire Harvey tax listing. This paper felt that it would not be fair, and still feels that way, to include the entire Harvey listing and set it beside the listings of Belk, Brody's and the other stores.

Williams never did say but he inferred strongly that this Harvey listing had caused others to squawk that they had been listing their inventories too high. This \$35,565 inventory listing for Harvey's only include the men and women ready-to-wear and the other soft goods.

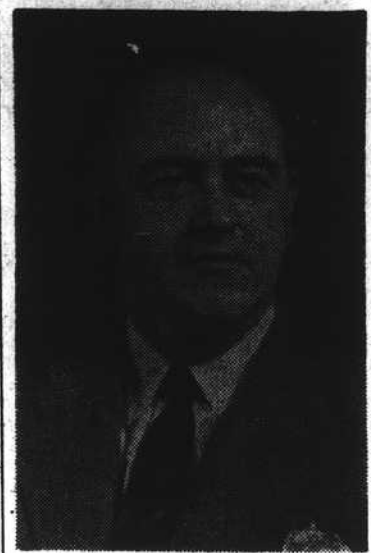
After Williams had finished his dissertation on the unfairness of newspapermen in general and Jack Rider in particular, Rider then rose to have a few words to say on the subject and said in effect:

"I wrote this article in the best possible faith and with only the most helpful motive in mind. Over the five and a half years period that this paper has been published I have tried on every occasion to help the tax collector and his department. If I have made a mistake in this particular article that has embarrassed the tax collector and made the work of his department more difficult, I am sorry I repeat here what

that I would print a clarifying article, that I would write personal letters to each of those persons who has bothered Williams, or I would visit each of them personally and explain that Williams knew nothing of this article and had nothing to do

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New Commissioner



John Lucas, manufacturing superintendent of the Du Pont Company, was named a member of the City Recreation Commission Monday night for a five-year period. Lucas' appointment fills out the nine-man commission which has been one member short since Member Jack Rider, who had been the Welfare Board representative on the commission, was named to fill out the unexpired portion of J. C. Kennedy's term following Kennedy's resignation.

Routine Session By Jones Board Monday

The initial 1954 meeting of the Jones County Board of Commissioners was relatively quiet and perhaps the most expensive proposition before the board was tabled for further study: That was the question of repairs to the court house floors, many of which are in bad condition and getting worse—particularly in the first floor.

Other matters acted upon included giving Welfare Superintendent Mrs. Zeta Burt permission to sell two sewing machines that represent holdovers from early "New Deal" days when a sewing room was set up in the county.

Sheriff Jeter Taylor and Deputy Brown Yates had their allocation for telephone rentals in their homes increased from \$5 to \$7.50 per month.

The lowering of the acreage of the A. H. Hagan farm in White Oak Township from 211 to 250 acres was authorized to be made on the tax books and a road petition, asking improvement of the "Blonie Brown" road in Beaver Creek Township, was approved.

Holidays approved for 1954 included July Fourth, Labor Day, Armistice Day, November 25, 26, 27 and 28 at Thanksgiving and the same one week scheduled Christmas vacation. All county employees were also authorized a one-week vacation with pay to be taken at their discretion.

North Carolina tobacco farmers produced 83 per cent more leaf per acre in 1952 than in 1942.

Speed Killed 10 in 1953 On Jones County Roads

The year just ended was by far the worst ever on the highways of Jones County. Ten persons were killed, thus breaking a five year chain in which the annual toll on Jones highways and byways had been two per year.

Jones County escaped contributing to this grisly statistical parade until 2 a. m. on Monday, March 9, when Theodore Roosevelt Browning, a 22-year-old Camp Lejeune Marine came to his death five miles west of Comort when he came off a side road onto NC 41 and rammed his car into an embankment. Speeding and drunkenness were blamed by investigating officers for this first death of the year on Jones County highways.

The next day, Tuesday, March 10, at 11 a. m. Jim Rob Jones, a 37-year-old farmer of Beulaville Route one was instantly killed when his car hit a wooden bridge three miles north of Potters' Hill and he was impaled by a piece of the timber in the bridge. Speeding and drunken driving were the combination blamed for Jones' death.

Then a three month holiday for highway death in Jones County was observed—until 10 p. m. Friday, June 5th when 20-year-old Marine Virgil Jesse Bitney, going at an apparently terrific rate of speed rammed into the rear of a truckload of people and was himself killed instantly by decapitation. Speed

was the demon that "done him in."

On July Fourth John James Darden of Lincoln, Delaware, speeding and under the "influence" rammed into a tree inside the town limits of Maysville and became No. 4 in the Jones death parade.

The next day Navy Veteran Ira Eugene Monette, a native of Pollockville hit "Little Hell" bridge on NC 12 and died instantly. Speeding and "driving under the influence" were again the culprits.

Then the most awful tragedy of the year in Jones County came at 7:45 p. m. on Sunday, August 22nd, when a drunk, speeding, young marine rammed headlong into the car of Michael Pellitani of Irvington, N. J., at a point 2.3 miles north of Maysville on US 17. Pellitani, his three-year-old son Francis, and his mother-in-law Mrs. Emma Piacenti, all were instantly killed or died shortly afterwards from this wreck.

The marine was indicted for manslaughter and drunken driving. Tried last month he was given a probationary sentence in the Jones County Superior Court and had to pay fines and court costs totalling \$55.

This was the only death from collision other than that in which Bitney died after ramming the rear of a truck and was the only highway death of 1953 in Jones County that resulted in an indictment.

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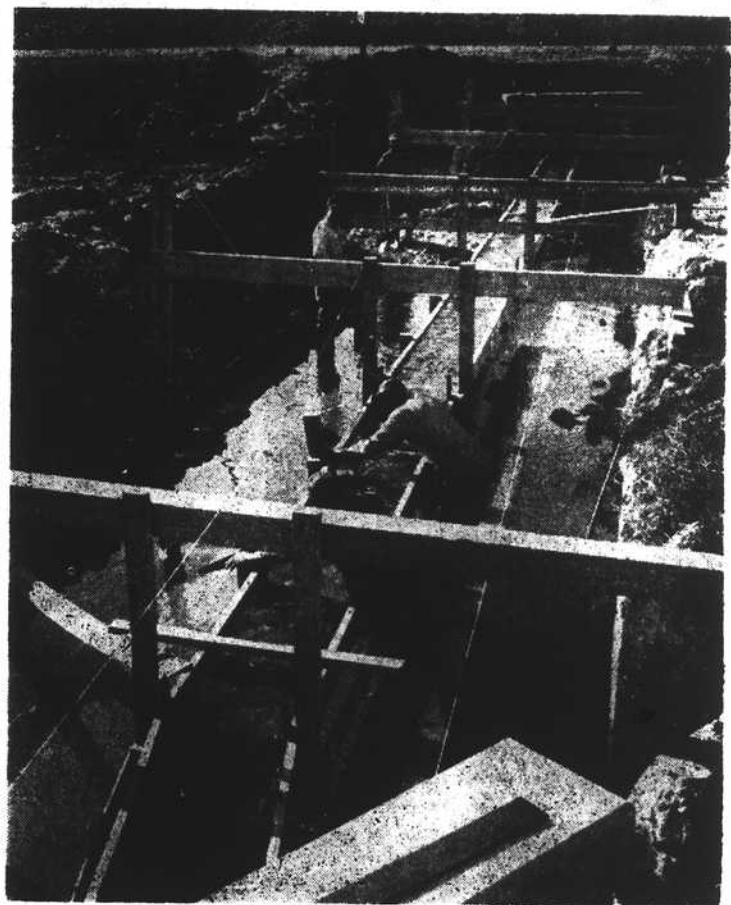
Teen-Ager Had Quite An Arsenal



Pictured here is the arsenal found on or about the belongings of 17-year-old Victor "Jack" Debnam who is awaiting trial in Lenoir County on three charges of breaking and entering and larceny. Debnam, a former inmate of the East Carolina Training School at Rocky Mount, was caught red-handed Wednesday night while he was leisurely pilfering the Thrifty Food Store on the 200 block of East Caswell Street. Officers Durwood Smith, Leslie Moore and Jim Griffin caught the young man. He was wearing the nickel-plated .32 caliber automatic pistol in the lower left corner in a shoulder holster beneath his shirt at the time he was apprehended. Later in the apartment of his mother at 26 C Simon Bright Homes in Debnam's

handbag the other four guns were found. Debnam admits having broken into Parrish's super market at the corner of McDaniel and Bright streets, where he got \$3 and the pistol he was wearing when arrested. Also admits sawing the door off a safe at Jaybird Sparrow's market at the corner of Adkin and King streets and taking some \$40. He also admitted to Detective Wheeler Kennedy that he had broken in one place at Port Arthur, Texas, and two other places in Alabama. Other loot also in the heavily armed handbag included a number of men and women watches and some sets that had been knocked out of rings. Debnam drew two years on the roads in Recorder's Court Monday. (Polaroid photo-in-a-minute by Jack Rider.)

Unique Construction Project Underway



There have been far larger projects of this nature pictured here but not locally, or so most who observe it believe. Part of the widening program for US 70 highway south of Kinston calls for installation of a wide culvert at the intersection of the New Bern and Trenton roads. But water has to keep running and in order to accommodate the water a man made ditch, about two feet above the ordinary bot-

tom of the ditch was built and through it something like a 1,000 gallons of water per minute are flowing while workers of the Barrus Construction Company prepare to build a bridge, not over but around said stream. Workers in this picture are seen making preparations for the bottom of the culvert while the water flows between them. (Polaroid photo-in-a-minute by Jack Rider.)