

**Humpty Dumpty**



# EDITORIALS

*Never Forget That These Editorials Are The Opinions Of One Man, And He May Be Wrong.*

## State Withholding Tax Too? Hell No!

About all it would appear that this small voice can do on the overall subject is holler, and that's just exactly what we're doing now: Hollering to the top of our voice HELL NO to any state withholding tax.

This page, last week, this week and perhaps several weeks to come will no doubt be overburdened with opinions and facts about the tax situation in North Carolina; so if you don't like to read of tax matters or if you don't care how deeply the tax man sticks his sticky little paw into your pocket just skip this page until the General Assembly has gotten through assembling.

Last week and again this week we have tried, and we hoped with some success, to point to the gross and criminal contempt in which the present simple North Carolina income tax laws are held by the biggest single segment of the state's potential taxpayers: The farmers.

As much as we are appalled at the magnificent disregard of the farmer for his fair share of the income tax burden we cannot stand it beside the obvious, continuing malfeasance on the part of the North Carolina Department of Revenue that has failed and continues to fail to make ANY slight effort to correct this wrong which it is naive enough to report for all the world to see in its "Biennial Report of the Department of Tax Research and the State Board of

Assessment". Said report was most recently transmitted to Governor Luther Hodges on December 31, 1952, but apparently Cousin Luther ain't had time to look at it.

If the Department of Revenue, the Governor of North Carolina, the Gentlemen of the General Assembly and other assorted and important groups of officials feel that 8,190 income tax returns from the more than 288,000 North Carolina individually operated farms is fair, legal and in order then Dix Hill is unnecessarily detaining a lot of folks with far keener reasoning capacity.

This paper knows, as any reasonably intelligent person with the ability to understand simple arithmetic must also know when he is confronted by the facts, that there is no legality, no morality and damned little taxpaying in this situation.

Now the collected brains around Capitol Hill in Raleigh suggest and almost without dissent that we heap more coals on the already scorched man on the payroll by subtracting another tax from his income before he sees it and permit this major part of the North Carolina to run foot loose and tax free through the hedgrows and bypaths of Fair Tar Heels, still untaxed, still ignored by the Revenue Department; then we repeat and will continue to repeat: HELL NO, a thousand times, HELL NO.

## The More We Look, The Worse It Gets

Last week in this space we had an editorial in which we used figures that indicated, at least to our satisfaction, that a vast majority of the farmers of Jones County were not complying with the law insofar as payment of income tax was concerned. We said then, that the situation was equally bad at the state level, and did not mean to infer that Jones County had any corner on that practice of falling and refusing to file properly and pay reasonable taxes to the state treasury.

To further substantiate that fact, and to further stress to the General Assembly that collection of present taxes would eliminate the need for new or increased taxes take a look at a few more facts and figures: In 1952 when the farm income of North Carolina was \$942,189,000 and when the number of people living

on farms was 1,317,288, in the entire State of North Carolina there were only 8,190 farmers who filed an income tax return, and they reported a taxable income of only \$23,313,061 and paid a total state income tax of just \$1,039,634.43.

These figures are too glaring and too criminally wrong to be longer tolerated. If the State of North Carolina, through its executive agencies and legislature condones such gross and continuing refusal on the part of the average farmer to pay his fair part of the income tax burden, then the law ought to be changed, giving legal exemption to all farmers, since that small percentage that now does pay tax is being penalized for its honesty.

The law at present says that every person who has a gross income of \$2,000 or more per year shall file a state in-

# Short Shorts..

We'd like to correct an impression that some may have gained from a paragraph in our "Personal Paragraphs" last week which said "What the change now proposes (penny pop tax) would do is penalize Harvey Hines Jr. for the profit his father made off of indecently paid and over-worked labor 20 years ago". This writer surely should have pointed out in that connection that the wage scale of that 20-year ago day, as paid by the Late Harvey Hines, was better by far than the average then paid in the Kinston vicinity. Our point which we failed to make clear enough was that the entire labor climate of that day was indecent. We did not mean to even casually infer that the Late Hines was a skinflint when much to the contrary he was more liberal than the average businessman in that almost-forgotten time of the breadlines and soup kitchens. And although we recognize that the correction seldom gets the currency of the original error we do trust that no one will continue to believe that we were seeking to slander a man for whom we held the very highest personal regard.

The heavy air of a perjury indictment filled the Recorder's Courtroom Monday as three Craven County women took the stand under oath and swore to what Judge Albert Cowper decided to be a lie. Conviction on a perjury indictment is difficult in most situations and perhaps impossible in that particular one of Monday afternoon, where three women were swearing against one man. But the tenor of the testimony, the background of those who were testifying and the supporting facts brought to bear in the case indicated to us very clearly that Judge Cowper chose correctly in selecting the tale he chose to believe. We feel, in that connection, that a few perjury indictments would have an overall wholesome effect on our courts, even if convictions were not obtained in every instance.

come tax return, to say that among the 288,508 farm operators of North Carolina in 1952 there were only 8,190 who had a gross income of that much is too wild a claim, too big a lie to offer even in the densest counsils.

This paper is NOT anti-farmer, but rather because we do believe and know that farming is the backbone of our fair state we seek to correct this gross inequity. The average farmer does not wish to regard himself as a sponge on his fellow citizens, but so long as the tax collection methods are so lax and poorly enforced the farmer is going to enjoy this doubtful honor.

If this situation is not corrected sooner than we may expect a great breach may develop between the urban and farm populations of the state, and no worse thing could happen to any area than to have such a division.

Speaking as a farm voice, from a predominantly agricultural area, this paper wants to repeat here with all the emphasis at its command that this matter should be careful and intelligent consideration by the General Assembly now in session, and by the executive departments whose dereliction has resulted in such an obviously wrong situation.

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JACK RIDER, Publisher

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## PERSONAL PARAGRAPHS BY JACK RIDER

People are funny animals. That's nothing new, but it will stand repeating once in a while. The thing that brought it to my mind, recently, was a cup of potlikker. Last week, on one of those raw, wet days the aroma of some collards and a ham hock caused me to open the pot and look in for a closer smell, a La Dagwood.

The potlikker looked so appetizing and smelled so good that I automatically reached for a cup and a hunk of cornbread. And that first cup tasted so good that I was soon back for another. And while my amazed daughter wondered what had gotten wrong with her Old Man, I began to make apologies for my crude eating habits.

And then, as a taste or smell will sometimes do, I was carried across that Atlantic and into a small spotlessly clean Belgium kitchen where that same taste was found in a bowl of soup. Then it dawned on me that, indeed, people were funny animals. Ride a boat, fly a plane across to La Belle France and in a quaint, little, expensive sidewalk cafe the average American tourist will spend his mortgage payments and wax poetic over the magnificent soup that begins his meal. All he's sipping is potlikker.

Bring that same Touring American back home and offer him a cup of potlikker and he's insulted. Of course, he might go to a French cafe in a large American city and eat potlikker disguised under some fancy French phrase but at home; Hell No! Potlikker is something that poor whites and ignorant Negroes eat.

But, by any name, I like potlikker. Now, of course, with potlikker, as with everyother delicacy, there is potlikker and Potlikker. Too much grease, too long boiling the vegetable, too little flavor of the meat; these are a few of the sins that may result in potlikker that the hounds won't lap. But when the vegetables are left in the likker just the right length of time, and the ham or bacon is smoked over real hickory coals and gives off just enough fat to put a few golden beads on the top and when the cornbread is nice and crumbly; then Brother, Potlikker will hold its head up in any culinary company.

There is some argument over which vegetable makes the best potlikker. There, one must choose his own. Some like the tangy flavor of turnip greens, some like the paler taste of cabbage, some prefer rutabaga to turnip. Me, I happen to be a collard man. Can't get away from my raising. If a person likes any particular vegetable, he'll love the potlikker from said vegetable if it is prepared right.

Most cooks make the mistake of worrying more about the vegetable than the potlikker. Paradoxically, the cook who watches, and sips the potlikker from time to time also turns out vegetables that are "just right". One might say, "When the potlikker is right, the vegetable is also at its peak for eating."

Perhaps, if we would quit calling potlikker by that hearty sounding name, and began calling it "Soup de Jour" or "Carolina Broth" or "Dixie Dew", or "Coastal Vegetable Chowder" or some equally fine-sounding name people would begin paying it the respect it's due.

But, then, I should care. I like potlikker by any name, and although I hope that is all I have in common with the late Huey Long, I also belong to that class of Southern Gentlemen which believes in crumbling corn bread n their potlikker.

But then a lot of folks, including my wife, don't agree with all of the peculiar tastes I have.