

'Just remember...rebuild for the future!'



EDITORIALS

Never Forget That These Editorials Are The Opinion Of One Man
— And He May Be Wrong

More for Schools?

The Lenoir County School System which is already far and away the most expensive school system in this general area wants a king-sized boost in its budget for the coming school year insofar as county funds are concerned.

This year from county funds the system is spending \$798,677.45. For the coming school year it is asking \$1,213,263.05. An increase of \$425,585.60 which comes out at something like a 53 per cent increase.

This is one budgetary request that should have the very closest study by the board of county commissioners.

Last year the Lenoir County School System spent \$488.46 per pupil, compared to \$452.76 in the Kinston School System, \$449.11 in the Jones County System, \$452.76 in the Craven County System, \$423.72 in the Pitt County System, \$452.74 in the Greene County System and \$433.07 in the Wayne County System.

This also does not take into consideration that the \$449.11 spent in the Kinston system included the special 21-cent school tax levied against all real and personal property in the Kinston Graded School District.

The proliferation of all school systems is a financial scandal that the public has next to no understanding of and the extravagant expansion of the Lenoir County system is one of the very worst examples of this fiscal lunacy.

When such a subject is brought up at the local level the stock answer is and has been that the extravagant difference between the expenditures for the Lenoir County schools and the Kinston schools is transportation for pupils.

But this excuse doesn't wash since the Craven, Greene, Pitt and Wayne

county systems also haul their pupils to and from school and they make out with far less money than the Lenoir County system.

It is considered sacrilegious in many circles to question any expenditure for education at any level but it is long past the time when the taxpayers and most especially those who allocate the taxpayers' money began understanding that quantity education has nothing in common with quality education.

School officials who are concerned with academic affairs as well as fiscal affairs might also benefit from a brief contemplation of this truism.

Tobacco

Gotterdammerung

There must be furious lightning and terrifying thunder in that corner of Valhalla where the Tobacco Kings wait out eternity: R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company is dropping tobacco from its name. In an unprecedented act of total cowardice, when the tobacco empire is under its worst attack in this era the world's biggest maker of cigarettes has chickened out, and with chicken chow mein among other things. It attempts feebly to explain its abject cowardice in full page ads which whine away that 14 per cent of the gross business of that billion-dollar giant is now in "non-tobacco" products. Old Man Dick Reynolds must be sputtering and spitting tobacco juice all over God's half acre.

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JACK RIDER, PUBLISHER

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Silent Blessings

Among the expenses born by the taxpayers, either through the direct medium of taxation or the indirect costs of donations to medical establishments is an assortment of silent blessings that most of us are not aware of and none of us fully appreciate.

In the 20-year period from 1949 through 1968 consider some of the dramatic victories in the battle against disease as reported for North Carolina by the state board of health:

Diphtheria cases fell from 550 to none. Measles dropped from 17,330 to 324 cases. Polio dropped from 229 cases to one, and in that 20-year period a peak for polio was hit in 1950 when 756 cases were reported.

Another child-killer, streptococcal pharyngitis which includes scarlet fever fell from 1,838 cases to 772 with the peak being reached in 1954 with 2,687 cases.

Whooping cough which killed a lot of small children and frightened many more young parents into early graves fell from 1,398 cases in '49 to 53 cases last year and reached its peak with 3,352 cases in '50.

Tuberculosis, the terrible white plague at the turn of the century, fell in North Carolina from 3,402 cases in '49 to 1,247 cases last year.

These are only a few of the areas in which communicable diseases have been brought more nearly under control, and is so short a period. Equally dramatic changes in the area of all of medicine have been experienced in this brief pair of decades.

Another 20 years will quite likely see other terrors of the medical world brought under control.

Of course, there is as yet nothing on the medical horizon that tends to offer eternal life to anyone. Not even heart transplants when they have been proven more successful can accomplish that. Putting new motors on an old chassis works for a period but after a while that old body is just completely worn out and time inevitably will take its toll.

But the child killers and the terrible communicable diseases are now under a measure of control no one dared dream possible a generation ago.

No Comment Needed

The figures speak for themselves and editorial comment is meaningless, so we tender that Gonorrhea case reports fell from 16,173 in North Carolina in 1949 to just 8,583 in 1962, but since that year reported gonorrhea cases have risen to 15,026 in Not-So-Fair Tar Heelia.

On People Counting

Some interesting guess-work is being done even before the 1970 census is tabulated. Interesting bits of this speculation include: Grade school enrollment is dropping and will continue to drop. People talking about building a lot of elegant new grade school buildings might take passing note of this and spend more time improving the teaching being done rather than exerting most of their effort into the expensive art of edifice erecting.

On Political Legs

After a casual glance at the legs of Mrs. Edward Kennedy we are inclined to feel that bell-bottomed trousers would do much more for her than mini-skirts. Her legs look like two bed slats stuck in a watermelon, since in addition to having unsightly legs she also has king-sized, or is it queen-sized, feet?

PERSONAL PARAGRAPHS

BY JACK RIDER

I'm quite sure I join every other American in great pride over the almost unbelievable efforts that have been made so far in the exploration of space and in the most recent trip of three brave, resourceful Americans to the moon. But I'm also very sure that I join a great many Americans in wondering whether a disproportionate amount of money is not now being spent in this effort.

I suspect that there were many subjects of Ferdinand and Isabella in 15th century Spain who would have questioned their wisdom in sponsoring the exploration of what was then outer space by an Italian sailor named Christopher Columbus.

History now confirms that the tiny investment Spain made in those courageous voyages of Columbus paid the Spanish Empire the biggest dividend of any of any investment Spain ever made and elevated Spain to the highest rank among world powers.

But that was almost 500 years ago and most of us can see little comparison between the voyages of Columbus and the voyages of our 20th century astronauts. But there are many.

Now to a majority of us there appears to be very little to be gained from putting a man, or a thousand men, on the moon. But whether the moon is made of gold, green cheese or cheap rock there is one tremendous dividend we Americans have already unconsciously been receiving from this effort: That dividend is technological. Miniaturization has opened new doors for nearly every field of engineering that touches our daily lives. Making smaller and more powerful and more dependable things that we use everyday in business and in our homes.

But the biggest dividend is a combination of the philosophical and technological. . . and it should offer us the greatest consolation for both the immediate and distant future of our nation, and the world. And that is the certain knowledge we have as a result of the fantastic success of this space exploration that nearly every problem of mankind — except the basic moral problems — can be solved when the weight of brains and resources are devoted to such problems.

We hear a great deal about water and air pollution, and they are major problems, but the amount of money and manpower and brain power that have been devoted to these basic problems is a trifle. . . and I feel sure that amazing strides will be made in this area in the immediate future and much of this comes as a direct spin off of the research that has been done in the space program.

Housing is another problem in all the world. . . but new materials, new methods and new viewpoints born in the space program are very likely to bring about a real revolution in the entire building industry, and this is also an expectation that lies very near to hand.

Even such mundane things as garbage disposal which may seem remote, indeed, from space exploration, may be given a big helping hand from some of the research already completed for the space program.

In fact there is hardly a facet of our everyday life that has not, or will not, be ultimately touched by some spinoff from this space program.