The Curbstone Diplomat

BY

WILLIAM S. COLLINS

After being at the tax-payers meeting last Saturday and after haering people tell about the meeting, I must say that getting it second hand is far more interesting. Like everything else, in going from person to person, it has become exaggerated. At least two or three people stood up and talked without getting hit on the chin.

Nothing but sympathy can be expressed for the chairman. He had some job on his hands to handle the meeting according to parlimentary procedure. Discussions were plentiful, but motions were few.

Right off the bat there was a wrangle about school teachers salaries. This caused trouble. Suggestions were made to do away with some of the jobs but no motions were made to that effect.

One man, who seemed very interested in the meeting and probably has the welfare of the County at heart, asked why school expenses had been increased and in what way had the standards been raised. He never received an answer. So therefore we have obtained the information for him. Still, however, we do not intend to tell him that he does not know what he is talking about.

Here are the standards of 1914 compared with 1932.

In 1914 an elementary teacher's certificate required completion of the eighth grade in the elementary school, which was the same as the present seventh grade, and passing an examination made out and administered by the county superintendent of schools.

In 1914 a High School Teacher's Certificate called for completion of two years of Normal School or College training, and passing an examination in the subjects to be taught, made out by the County Superintendent of Schools.

In 1932 we find the following requirements. Teachers must attend Summer School every three or four years.

Elementary teachers must be graduates of a four year high school and successful completion of a three year course in a standard normal school. An elementay principal must have, in addition to the above, a full half year's work at a recognized college or university in elementary school methods, supervision and administration and must also have three years of teaching experience in the elementary schools. They must also be able to pass a thorough physical examination.

High School Teachers Certificates require the following at the present time. Graduation from a standard college or university, or equivalent scholastic training; provided that during the college course at least two high school branches were continuously pursued for two years and that not less than two hundred recitation hours of instruction in education, including aims of seconday education, methods, observation and practice teaching of high school subjects. These must be included in the four years training. Advance work at graduate school is required for a principal's cetificate.

In 1914, 2,243 were enrolled in the schools of Kent County, but the average attendance was only 1,636. This incuded both High School and elementary.

There was no colored High School and in the colored elementary schools 1,462 were enrolled and average attendance was 786.

In 1920, 203 were enrolled in the White High Schools and the average attendance 169. There was no colored High School.

In 1925, a Colored High School was started with 37 enrolled and average attendance was 33. White High Schools had 304 enrolled and an average attenance of 277.

Today 518 are enrolled in the White High Schools and the average attendance is 485. The colored High School now has 104 enrolled and average attendance is 98.

There is a big increase in the numbumber of students attending High Schools in the County today compared with 1914. The elementary enrollment however has fallen off.

Why people were opposed to shifting the taxes from property is hard to understand. Some shifts could be made and at the same time it is possible to have them reduced. The State is filled with tax dodgers. Most of the large corporations hire a tax expert to dodge taxes for them. Why us little fellows should put up with this and object to having some of the tax burden shifted is hard to understand.

It's a wonder that somebody did not jump up and ask for a revenue collector for Kent County to collect from the bootleggers. You pay a tax on your cigarettes, moving pictures, basket ball games, soft drinks, etc., and yet you get your liquor tax free. "Oh boy! isn't it wonderful."

There is no need to get too excited about this next tax-meeting. The whole thing is merely a recommendation to the legislators and the other counties have nearly the same program, so Kent's meeting will not be a very serious matter.

This Week's Cartoon



Odd - But True





FURROWS



BY JOSIAH ALLEN WEATHERBY

It might be a good thing if the tax payers of the county would meet every Saturday to discuss tax matters. A lot could be learned about our County Government. A lot more could be learned about some of the people that has been livin at the tax payers' expense fer a good many years. When a meetin of citizens, which wuz called to study a bad situation, degenerates into a name-callin contest, and is used mainly as an opportunity for one group to make uncomplimentary remarks about another group, it looks to me like there ought to be another meetin or two held to let these fellers show all of their colors.

Some of the remarks made at the meetin last Saturday wuz entirely uncalled fer and out of place. The farmers of this county ain't such a bad lot of people after all. They has been furnishin a good part of the taxes to provide a livin fer a certain set of office holders fer a right long spell and it ain't very nice to git up in meetin and call farmers names and make remarks about 'em that reflects on their integrity. Some of the people that does most of the talkin about the faults of farmers ought to git their feet out of the public feed trough fer awhile and try makin a livin on a farm and show the farmers how it can be done so easy. A lot of folks that criticises farmers could learn something by tryin to farm fer a livin.

The main problem of this here tax business ain't been touched yet. There ain't goin to be no satisfaction about the whole affair till we git at the root of the matter. Farm property in general is assessed too high. There ain't many farmers in Kent County that could git the assessed value fer their farms right now. Then why should people have to pay taxes on a valuation that they ain't got? It can't be justified on the basis of income from the farms fer in most cases that don't exist. Then why don't the county officials lower the valuations on farms to somewhere in the range of market valuations?

Well, says one, these is unusual times, and market values is off a lot. Yes, and so is prices fer farm products off a lot. Who can raise turkeys at thirteen cents a pound and pay taxes on a valuation thirty to fifty per cent above what the farm would bring on the market? And how about the price of wheat, corn, tomatoes, and asparagus? When these here valuations on farms in Kent County wuz put there by the last assessment wheat wuz bringin over a dollar a bushel, and it cost a farmer less than three hundred bushels of wheat to pay three hundred dollars in taxes. Now it costs him from eight to nine hundred bushels of wheat to pay his taxes on the same assessed valuation. And that ain't all. The people that draws regular salaries from the county and from other sources can buy almost three times as much farm produce fer a dollar as they could when these here valuations wuz put on the farms in this county.

It looks like we need a new deal in our County and State Government as well as in the National affairs. But if the farmers git anything like a new deal or even a square deal in this county, they'll have to do more than talk. They'll have to vote.

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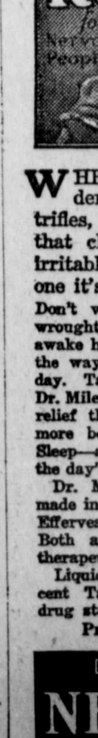
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