

CAPITAL GOSSIP

BY A. RAMBLER

The taxable property of Lexington County is \$7,848,822 for 1919, as compared with \$7,360,218 for the preceding year, according to figures by Rut L. Osborne, comptroller general. This is an increase of \$488,604 over the previous year. By far the greater part of this increase came as a result of the efforts of the tax commission to get stocks of merchandise assessed upon the same basis as banks and other corporations—that is at 42 per cent. of actual value. For the State as a whole the increase for 1919 was \$26,681,448, of which practically \$20,000,000 was added by increased assessments of merchants. It was by reason of this increased assessment that the comptroller general was enabled to reduce the levy for State purposes from 9 1-2 mills, as fixed by the legislature, to 9 mills.

In connection with the matter of assessments it is interesting to speculate whether the annual fight to abolish the tax commission will be made in the general assembly this year. "It is worth noting," said a person well informed recently, "to recall that when the fight to abolish the tax commission had been lost in the senate, it was a strong opponent of the commission who proposed to give that body \$25,000 with which to go out and get the invisible property on the tax books. To Senator Banks of Calhoun belongs the credit for this move, which resulted in the higher assessments for the current year. As a matter of fact while the \$25,000 appropriation passed the senate it was scaled in the committee of free conference to \$15,000, and it is understood that not nearly all of this was used."

According to figures furnished by the State treasurer's office Lexington county stands well up toward the list in the amount of back taxes owed to the State government. There remains on the books an unsettled balance for 1917 taxes of \$100.67, while for 1918 the amount is only \$638.28, which will doubtless be further reduced when the settlement is made with the sheriff for executions in his hands. There are only two counties in the State which have made full and complete settlement for all taxes due. Lancaster and Pickens hold this distinction. Comparisons are sometimes odious, but in order to realize how well Lexington has done in this respect it may be of interest to note that Richland county is due to the State for 1917 taxes \$8,879.63 and for 1918 \$9,884.56. The total due the State for 1918 by Richland was \$195,853.43 while that for Lexington was \$60,721.80. In other words Lexington is still due on 1918 taxes only a little over 1 per cent. of the total, while Richland is due slightly in excess of 5 per cent.

Among the industrial concerns chartered by the Secretary of State Saturday was the Swansea Gas and Oil Company, with a capital of \$15,000. B. E. Craft and T. O. Setzler are petitioners.

Lexington farmers who daily come to Columbia to sell produce will be interested to know that efforts are still being made by the city authorities of Columbia to dispose of the present city hall property and erect a modern market on Assembly street equipped with every convenience for both buyer and seller. Mayor Blalock is authority for the statement that a large syndicate is now dickering with council for the purchase of the city hall with good prospects of council being able to receive a sum which would warrant the sale. Mr. Blalock would not say who the parties were, but it is surmised that it is the company which has in contemplation the erection of a twenty-story hotel building. This would certainly be an ideal site for a good hotel, of which Columbia is badly in need. An article published in The Record lately says that plans have already been drawn for such a building.

An interesting discussion has been going on lately between the Columbia city board of health and a local creamery concern, which of course is of little more than local interest except that it draws attention to the fact that Columbia is only partly supplied with fresh milk, and this train of thought leads up to something that The Dispatch-News has already pointed out before that as a side issue on Lexington farms and as a weapon to fight the boll weevil an increase in the supply of milk could be made valuable. But in order to make this profitable there must be community cooperation. A gentleman recently returned from Maryland tells of a friend in that State who receives a

very tidy income from several cows and a good number of chickens. It is not necessary for him to take the produce to town, but each morning he places his milk cans and egg crates on the side of the road, from whence they are picked up by a community truck and carried to the city of Washington. And the beauty about an income from this source is that it is constant, being received weekly or monthly, as arrangements for marketing have provided. The opportunity for establishing a profitable industry lies at the door of Lexington county.

According to J. K. Bree'in, State chairman of the Anti-Saloon league it will probably take a court decision to clarify the situation with regard to the regulations for obtaining liquor after the federal amendment goes into effect January 16. The federal law provides that a pint every ten days may be purchased from drug stores for medicinal purposes. Mr. Bree'in believes that the State law allowing not more than a quart a month will take precedence over the federal law. He also thinks that so many restrictions will be thrown

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around the federal law that the sales will be almost nil. For instance only physicians licensed to do so may issue prescriptions for whiskey, and then only after close physical examination of the patient. No prescription can be refilled, but each purchase will require a new prescription. In other words the federal law will place whiskey in about the same position as narcotics are now under the Harrison law.

Mrs. M. A. Derrick of Chapin has been appointed matron at the Lutheran seminary, near Columbia and has assumed her new duties.

What the South Carolina legislature is going to do about the ratification of the woman's suffrage amendment to the federal constitution at the coming session is not known, and so few members have expressed themselves that a good guess is hard to make. If any considerable number of South Carolina women are urging the adoption of the amendment by the legislature it is not known. It may be that they are purposely keeping

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quiet until the meeting of the legislature, but not at all likely. It seems to be more generally accepted that by far the greater majority of the women of South Carolina are entirely apathetic as regards the right to vote.

Senator Dial the other day called attention to the fact that Republicans in congress have again introduced a bill reducing Southern representation in congress to a basis in agreement with the vote in the general election. Our people ought to take a larger interest and vote more generally in general elections, but it will take a good scare to make them do so.

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