

Tax Commission Asked Not Increase Land Assessment

The people of Bamberg county are perfectly willing to carry their just portion of the tax burden of South Carolina; they strenuously object to carrying more than their portion of the load, however. Bamberg county is not crying out for charity at the hands of the state tax commission, but it is protesting against assessing the lands of Bamberg county more than the lands of neighboring and adjoining counties, which, with a few exceptions, are equally as able to pay their taxes as Bamberg. The county is asking only for fair treatment at the hands of the state tax commission.

All of these facts, and a great many more, came out at the meeting of citizens held at the court house Friday morning, when two members of the state tax commission, J. P. Derham and J. Frasier Lyon, met with the people and discussed the increase of land assessments in this county an average of 36% over the assessment of previous recent years.

J. F. Carter was made chairman of the meeting and W. D. Rowell and R. M. Hitt were requested to act as secretaries. Representative J. Carl Kearsse, who called the meeting, stated in a brief talk the purposes for which the meeting had been asked, and invited those present to state to the tax commissioners their various complaints.

The chairman first asked the commissioners present to state the facts regarding the increase of land assessments in this county right at a time when the county is practically bankrupt from the ravages of the boll weevil.

Mr. Lyon, speaking first, said that the commission was in sympathy with the farmer, and he realized that the people had taxes to pay that some of them cannot pay. The state puts a first mortgage on your property, he said. The legislature determines how much money to spend. It is the business of the commission to endeavor to collect this money in as equitable manner as possible. He and Mr. Derham came to Bamberg, he said, with open minds. "If you will point out a wrong, we are here to right it," he said. "We all feel bad about the situation; you cannot feel it any more than we do. We want facts and figures, so that not only may we be convinced there has been an error made, but that we may be able to show other counties why an exception should be made of Bamberg. Four years ago the tax commission went to work to iron out the assessment of lands, and a difficult task it has been."

Showing the relative increase of land assessments in various sections of the state, Mr. Lyon said that in Marlboro land had been increased from \$5 to \$15; Darlington \$6 to \$10; Anderson \$6 to \$12, etc. Notwithstanding these increases, many counties have continued to pay on smaller assessments than before. If the commission erred in regard to Bamberg four years ago, it is willing to review the entire matter with a view to adjusting it. The land assessments in South Carolina, he said, are lower than an average in the United States.

Mr. Derham said that while the people of this section are feeling the effects of the boll weevil acutely, the entire state, with the exception of a small area, is feeling the same. In his own county, Horry, the weevils had taken a toll of two-thirds of the cotton crop. In other counties where the devastation has not been as great, he said, the distress seems to be about as acute as in Bamberg. Giving the figures in regard to the assessment system, he said that the commission had valued the land here at an average of \$15.15 per acre, and had taken 42% of that amount in reaching the assessable value. The land values had been adjusted as best they could, using all available information to arrive at them. This valuation had been arrived at in 1918. No attempt had been made to fix values on the inflated prices of later years. The land sales of this county had been inspected for the years 1913-14-15. U. S. census figures for 1910 had also been employed.

Replying to a question, Mr. Derham said that the land assessment in Barnwell county is \$4.70 per acre; Allendale, \$4.15; Hampton, \$3.60; Colleton, \$2.90; Aiken, \$4.35; Orangeburg, \$7.45. Mr. Kearsse interrupted to say that by paying the old assessment Bamberg would be

about on a parity with the counties surrounding Bamberg, excepting Orangeburg. It was brought out that there had not been an increase of assessments this year in any of the surrounding counties.

The land valuations, arrived at by an average of land sales, are as follows: Bamberg \$26.57; Barnwell, \$25.43; Allendale, \$25.16; Colleton, \$12.63; Hampton, \$21.39, while the values in two upper Carolina counties are: York, \$30.85; assessment, \$7.95, and Anderson \$67.37 with an assessment of \$12.75.

B. W. Miley interposed with the suggestion that the lands, for the greater part, of Bamberg and Barnwell were the same in value.

Mr. Lyon quoted many figures to show that the commission cannot assess in one county the same as the adjoining county, as this would extend all over the state, and thus get nowhere. It was stated at this point that the commission had ordered the land assessments increased in this county in 1918, but that for some reason not stated in the meeting the order had never been made effective, for which, Mr. Lyon said, the commission was not responsible. The present order of the commission simply restores the assessment to the figure it should have been.

S. G. Mayfield stated in a clear and convincing manner the actual situation that confronts Bamberg county. Years ago it was the system of Barnwell county, before Bamberg was cut off, to group its townships for assessing the lands. It was realized that some of the townships were possessed of land far more valuable than others. A considerable area of the county is in low lands that are frequently inundated and therefore of less value, although during good years producing fine crops. Taken as a whole he is of the opinion that the lands of Barnwell are more productive than those of Bamberg.

The state became drunk with prosperity, said Mr. Mayfield, during the war period, and we are now paying the price, and for this condition he does not hold the commission responsible; on the other hand he sympathizes with the commission in its work in carrying out the law.

Everything was getting along fine here until an uninvited visitor came, the boll weevil. Instead of producing a normal crop of 28,000 to 34,000 bales of cotton, last year the production dropped to a little more than 4,000 bales. "We had one bale in eight left to us," he said. "Our farmers have not forgotten how to raise cotton; they work just as hard as ever. Less than one bale to the plow was made on the Mayfield farms last year. I would like to ask how many farmers have made a single clear dollar in two years. We have tried truck, with very little success. We are simply wiped out of existence. The Ehrhardt and Olar districts made nothing from excessive rains, and if it is possible you can subtract the weevil damage from nothing. The 1922 crop promises a repetition of last year unless we have a dry July. Our taxes should not be increased."

Mr. Mayfield said that many of our best farmers are unable to pay the 1921 taxes. The weevils had eaten up the crop in spite of government expert advice. Several specific instances of the fearful ravages of the weevil were related, in one instance a farmer producing 56 bales of cotton to 105 plows. Years ago the Piedmont had petitioned the legislature for relief because of the drought; the appeal was heard. "We are a hard working people. Suppose cotton goes up; it takes everything to pay expenses, and there is nothing left to live on. Our people have done their level best; we cannot be kept down, but I beg that the commission will not add to our awful burden by further increasing our taxes."

Representative J. Carl Kearsse made the following motion, briefly stated: That this body go on record as being in favor of allowing the assessment of land to remain the same as in recent years. The motion was duly seconded, and after further discussion was unanimously adopted by a rising vote.

Mr. Kearsse offered the following reasons for this motion: 1. The boll weevils and other conditions over which we have no control have devastated the farms; 2. Other counties adjoining Bamberg show valuations lower on an average than this county; 3. Sale prices of lands during the

Candidate Crop Is Above Par

Columbia, June 19.—A bumper crop of candidates for state offices makes a rich harvest this year for the treasury of the state Democratic Executive committee. As one hat after another was flung into the ring, and these fell thick and fast up to 12 o'clock today, accompanying the somberos of male candidates and the millinery of women candidates were checks of \$100 and \$200 denominations.

"A pretty good day's business," remarked Edgar A. Brown, the state chairman who, hailing from Barnwell, where he is a candidate for the legislature, is incidentally boss of the works.

Complaint was heard not very many days ago that this year there appeared to be little interest in state politics outside of the gubernatorial race, but the last day's gleanings, and it was only half a day at that, that brought the biennial crop of candidates up to something a little more par. Pledges were filed thick and fast this morning, so thick and so fast that the entire landscape was completely changed. Those political wiseacres who have heretofore predicated their prognostications upon the line-up as previously existing now

past few years have materially decreased and are now on a parity with other counties adjacent to Bamberg; 4. A vast amount of timber has been cut and moved leaving these previously valuable timber lands now practically worthless; 5. A great portion of the county is composed of swamps, bogs and low lands that are practically worthless; 6. Because Bamberg has recently annexed a considerable area of Colleton county, whose lands are admittedly less valuable than those of Bamberg.

Mr. Miley called attention to the fact that census figures are not to be accepted as accurate. Sales figures are a good index and Bamberg and Barnwell counties show little difference in sales prices. The commission may have made an honest mistake in fixing the assessment in 1918.

Capt. J. B. Guess had sympathy with the commission, but said that this is no time to raise taxes, especially in a county where farmers cannot pay expenses. Bamberg lands are not worth more than a third the value of four years ago. We are not in position to bear any more burden, he said, and he added that he felt sure there would be no increase.

J. Wesley Crum, Jr., said that a correct census now would show a less land valuation than 1910. By taking an average of the assessments of surrounding counties, we would have an assessment for Bamberg of about \$4.50 per acre, and by taking an average of land sale prices of these counties, Bamberg would show up with an assessment of about the same as has been enforced heretofore.

There are parts of the county, said Mr. Crum, that cannot secure a land loan except from the farm loan board on account of being classed as coastal low land. We have already had greater damage from the boll weevil than upper counties will ever have, for statistics show the further south one travels the greater infestation he will find. Another reason our lands should be low assessed is because we have had two years more of infestation than the upper counties, and, therefore, they should be in better condition, whether they are not. The people here made about enough cotton last year to pay their taxes.

G. W. Goolsby caused a laugh by saying that there had been enough oratory at the meeting to take off all the taxes, and that too much territory had been taken in. What we are interested in is Bamberg county. The main point of complaint is, he said, we simply have not the cash to pay more taxes.

W. D. Bennett was the last speaker, and after discussing the question a few minutes, gave a striking example of the deflation of land values; 400 acres of as good land as there is anywhere hereabouts had sold for \$3,500 cash. "We can't meet our present taxes; we haven't the cash. Now is not a time to raise taxes."

Mr. Carter thanked the commissioners for their consideration in coming to Bamberg to ascertain the situation here.

It is presumed the commission will take the matter under advisement and announce its decision in regard to rescinding the order increasing the assessment from \$4.69 to \$6.40 per acre in the near future.

Not to Die Says Edmund Bigham

Edmund D. Bigham, under death sentence for the murder of his brother, L. Smiley Bigham, does not expect to die in the electric chair and still believes he will be freed, he told the prison officials. "I never expect to go to the chair," Bigham declared.

The condemned man lost much of his spirit when he was denied a new trial at Florence last week. He left the penitentiary to make the trip confident that he will be given another trial, telling penitentiary officials that he was "certain to get another chance."

Judge Shipp refused Bigham a new trial, however, and his attorneys are appealing to the supreme court from the ruling of the circuit judge.

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face the necessity of revising the same because of new entries.

Eleventh-Hour Candidates.

Eleventh-hour candidates have rather complicated the situation for those who, until this morning, had no opposition. Political aspirants came today from various parts of the state. One shudders to think what might have happened to the aspirations and ambitions of some of these had their trains been late, or had they suffered more than one or two blowouts on the way. In point of fact, Sam T. Carter, state treasurer, is the one state officer who did not draw an opponent, a worthy tribute to a faithful and worthy official of the state government.

There was also one withdrawal: Paul Moore, of Columbia, quit the race for state superintendent of education. In this race, however, are left six candidates, including two women, the first of the feminine sex to offer for state offices, Mrs. Bessie Rogers Drake, of Marlboro, and Mrs. Martha Wallace, of Columbia.

For lieutenant governor two new candidates entered the political arena, E. S. Jackson, of Wagener, and Dr. E. C. L. Adams, of Columbia.

Two candidates for attorney general also announced, Harold Eubanks and D. M. Winters, both of Columbia. For comptroller general, T. Hagood Gooding, of Hampton, announced and two new candidates for governor filed pledges, J. J. Cantey, of Summerton, and William Coleman, of Union.

I. S. Hutto, of Dorchester, J. J. McMahon, of Columbia, and W. F. Stevenson, of Cheraw, filed their pledges.

The complete list of candidates as compiled after the clock struck the noon hour today, is as follows:

For Governor.

Cole L. Blease, J. J. Cantey, Wm. Coleman, John T. Duncan, Geo. K. Laney, Thomas G. McLeod.

For Lieutenant Governor.

E. C. L. Adams, E. M. Jackson, James K. Owens.

For Congress.

First district—W. Turner Logan, I. S. Hutto and J. D. Morrison.

Second district—James F. Byrnes.

Third district—S. H. Sheppard, Fred H. Dominick and E. F. McCravy.

Fourth district—J. J. McSwain.

Fifth district—W. F. Stevenson.

Sixth district—W. R. Barringer, A. H. Gasque, Jerome T. Pate and P. H. Stoll.

Seventh district—A. J. Bethea, H. P. Fulmer, and J. J. McMahon.

For Superintendent Education.

Mrs. Bessie Rogers Drake, J. H. Hope, O. D. Seay, C. H. Seigler, J. E. Swearingen, Mrs. Martha Wallace.

For Adjutant General.

Thos. B. Marshall and R. E. Craig.

For State Treasurer.

S. T. Carter.

For Attorney General.

Harold Eubanks, D. H. Winter, and S. M. Wolfe.

For Commissioner of Agriculture, Commerce and Industries.

B. Harris and George W. Wightman.

For Secretary of State.

W. Banks Dove and Jas. C. Dozier.

For Comptroller General.

Walter E. Duncan and T. Hagood Gooding.

For Solicitor.

Third circuit—Frank A. McLeod, and Jno. G. Dinkins.

Fifth circuit—A. F. Spigner.

Twelfth circuit—C. W. Muldrow and L. M. Gasque.

The big gun of the campaign will be fired tomorrow morning at 10 o'clock at Columbia.

Letter Explains Situation Regarding Cucumber Prices

W. A. Klauber, president of the Bamberg County Truck Growers association has received a letter from Smith & Holden, commission merchants of New York, relative to the situation that has prevailed in regard to the cucumber crop in Bamberg, explaining the reason for the market going to pieces. Inasmuch as many farmers hereabouts are interested in this subject, The Herald prints below this letter, excluding some personal matters, for the information of cucumber growers and all others interested in this matter; the letter being signed by P. Willis Holden, member of the firm above referred to:

On June 3rd I sent you a long day letter, in reference to the cucumber situation here, and advised you that it was about the worst that I have ever seen.

I want to confirm this by saying that I have been handling cucumbers here from the south on a consignment basis, for approximately twenty-five years, and I do not think that I have ever been placed in as undesirable position as I was last week, and the early part of this week, when we had to refuse approximately 5 car loads of cucumbers from your association.

I want to go further and say that the refusing of these cucumbers was in no way caused by poor quality, grading or packing of the commodity, but rather I want to congratulate you, for the efficient manner in which these cucumbers have been graded and packed, and to say that in all my experience, I do not think I have ever come across a similar condition, where a station like Bamberg, practically unknown in the cucumber growing industry to any extent, has the first year, with any quantity shipments come to the front and made such a strong showing in the way of grading and packing.

Furthermore, the general reputation for cucumbers originating at or very close to Blackville, has been anything but good. I would hardly dare to repeat the remarks that I have heard in the past ten years, relative to the "raw" methods pursued by many or most of the cucumber growers or shippers at Blackville, and to meet up with Bamberg this year, practically new in the cucumber game, and have grading and packing up to the standard that your association has done, is very unusual.

I am going to give the credit for this situation, to you, because I believe that it was your good business methods that brought it about.

I have had to refuse many shipments of cucumbers in the past years, about which I did not feel any unusual regret, because of the way that the goods had been graded and packed, but it did hurt me very much, to have to refuse the cars that you entrusted to us.

I want to explain to you a condition that we are up against when glutted periods are on here, in this way: If there are 50 carloads of cucumbers arrive, of which 10, 15 or 20 are in bad condition or of such poor quality or grading that they will not bring freight charges, they are refused to the transportation company, to avoid paying transportation charges. As soon as these cucumbers are refused, a sale is effected if possible by the selling agent of the railroad company, and cucumbers that might under normal conditions bring 40 or 50 cents per basket, will be sold at 15 or 20 cents, or possibly 25 cents per basket.

A receiver here has three hours, from the opening of the market, or at the present time, until 8 a. m. to file refusals with the transportation company.

It is always our policy to wait until almost the last moment before offering refusals, so as to keep these goods off of the market as long as possible, but the point that I want to make is, that as soon as the railroad selling agent begins to offer 15c, 20c or 25c cucumbers, the outcome is that receivers with better cucumbers, that might have been sold for at least freight charges, possibly from 10c to 25c more, are forced at the last moment to refuse their arrivals to the transportation company.

The large buyers of cucumbers, under such conditions, know how the thing works out, and simply refuse to buy cucumbers at 65c or 75c which would show the transportation charges, and we will say the cost of the package, and wait until the refusals are in, and buy the same cucumbers, for half or less than half of the price that they could have been bought for earlier.

I have not overlooked the fact that you have secured graders and packers from Florida for these cucumbers, and naturally at considerable expense. I appreciate that you undoubtedly have a very big interest in the success of truck growing at Bamberg, and I have never seen work along that line done better than you have done, and I am sure it is no fault of yours, that the results will be so unsatisfactory.

In closing, I must comment to this extent, that the acreage in your state was undoubtedly over-done. There were two unfortunate conditions, one is that whereas the normal acreage of cucumbers in the Blackville district ranges from 800 to 1,000 acres the acreage in the middle South Carolina district, say from Bamberg west, and from the Southern railway north and south for perhaps 25 or 30 miles in each direction, is reported to have been nearly 3,000 acres.

The acreage in the Meggetts or Charleston, S. C., district was ap-

parently normal, and unfortunately was about a week later than usual, making the shipments from the two districts begin and end practically at the same time.

I am frank to say that the cucumber proposition in middle South Carolina is not a good one for an increased acreage over normal.

The same conditions were prevalent in Florida on cukes, watermelons, tomatoes and potatoes, and in South Carolina on potatoes, but the weather conditions interfered so that the actual volume shipped was hardly more than normal, and in some cases not even normal, and what I had expected was likely to occur long before your shipping season, did not happen, and really your district is the only section that has received the brunt of the effect of over-production.

Florida is getting the same dose now on watermelons, but I hope that the watermelon crop in your section will pull out.

The crop of Florida cantaloupes has been unusually large this year, and much to our surprise, we have had some 8 or 10 carloads which we have sold at quite satisfactory prices, but I cannot predict anything very bright for cantaloupes from your district, for I fear that they are going to be here with the big rush from California, and at present, I am afraid even California is going to make a bad showing with her cantaloupe crop this year.

Better Times are Ahead For Tobacco Growers

More than 50 warehousemen and field workers of the Tobacco Growers' Cooperative association from 38 marketing points of the association in the South Carolina belt met Tuesday in Florence, where T. C. Watkins, director of warehouses, said, "Those towns which support this movement of South Carolina tobacco farmers will reap a rich reward and those merchants and bankers who have helped to win new members throughout South Carolina will bring, with the tobacco and the growers which come to their towns, a new prosperity."

Dr. J. Y. Joyner, vice president of the association; A. T. Breedlove, and C. B. Cheatham, of the leaf department, assured the field workers and warehousemen at Tuesday's meeting that the campaign for cooperative tobacco markets has been a phenomenal success to date.

Telling how 75 per cent. of growers in the old belt of Virginia and North Carolina were lined up with the cooperative movement and that the entrance of 3,000 tobacco farmers from eastern North Carolina into the marketing association during the past three weeks had developed into a landslide for the association to push their present majority sign-up in South Carolina to 75 per cent.

Letters will reach 6,200 members of the Tobacco Growers' Cooperative association in this state during the present week announcing that the member growers may take their choice of markets, among which are the following points: Andrews, Aynor, Bamberg, Conway, Darlington, Dillon, Georgetown, Hartsville, Hemmingway, Johnsonville, Kingstree, Lake City, Lake View, Lamar, Latta, Loris, Lynchburg, Manning, Marion, Mullins, Nichols, Olanta, Pamplico, Sumter, Summerville, Timmonsville, Bladenboro, Cerro Gordo, Fair Bluff, Fairmont, Lumberton, Proctorville, Rowland, St. Pauls, Tabor, and Whiteville.

Geo. J. Holliday, of Aynor, Horry county, was present at Tuesday's meeting and signed up his crop of 55 acres with the organized tobacco growers, also renting his warehouse to the association. Mr. Holliday is well known as a successful merchant and large farmer in Horry county.

Citizens of Florence have given land for the erection of a cooperative tobacco warehouse during the coming season. The contract for the sale of this property to the marketing association was signed Tuesday and will make of Florence a marketing center convenient to most of the 1,200 signers of Florence county.

Quite True, Stubbins.

The English tourist approached Farmer Stubbins.

"How charming are those surroundings, sir," she began smilingly.

"They be, madam," replied the farmer.

"And how sweet the song of the thrush," she continued.

"Aye, madam," returned the son of the soil; "but the song of the thrush is nought compared with the lay of th' 'en."