

Movement Grows For County Investigation

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itor-General's report, there were returned delinquent in Oakland County 143,000 lots and 108,000 acres of land, having an assessed valuation of more than \$102,000,000 with the amount of delinquent tax being \$6,531,000. This seems to be some sort of proof that real estate in Oakland County is being overtaxed by both county and state.

Enthusiasm In Spending
Now it is impossible to say that any one man or any one department or any certain group connected with the affairs of the county is to blame for such conditions. That is, one cannot say that any individual has deliberately gone about the business of mulcting the taxpayer of money. But it may be said that in some quarters there has been too much enthusiasm in spending the taxpayers' money and too little thought given to saving it.

Moreover there is no doubt that the system of government in Oakland County is in itself conducive to waste. All one has to do is to pay a visit to one of the Board of Supervisors' sessions. There we have 45 supervisors all apparently intent on doing their best to help conditions. And all about them are county office holders, department heads and subordinates and often some ex-officio holders hanging around to hear what might be said about them.

A matter of some importance is brought up in the discussion. The question immediately arises: Who has jurisdiction in the matter? Can the supervisors legally do this or that thing? Should the

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Continued next Thursday

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Board of Auditors have done this or have not done this according to law? Why did this thing occur? Why wasn't that thing done? Who's responsible and why? The things thus goes on and on, grows panicky in a way and reminds one of a ping-pong game with an official at either end of a green table battling the issue at the other fellow.

Meanwhile the movement for a thorough investigation of county affairs is spreading rapidly. From Royal Oak, Orion and Oxford, where the agitation had its inception, it is moving onward with every appearance of soon becoming general. During the past week activity in support of an investigation has been started in Pontiac, Farmington and Clarkston.

An ambitious campaign among taxpayers has been started by the Oakland County Association for the Reduction of Taxes, whose president is Karl Tibbitts, well-known farmer of Farmington Township. Steve Clinton of Clarkston, member of the family that has waged warfare against the notorious Southfield drain, is secretary of the organization.

With an original membership of 116 taxpayers this organization is taking new recruits to its banner daily. They have appointed a field committee whose duty it is to carry the fight for an investigation of affairs into every section of the county. "We are not going to let up until we get what we want," said Mr. Clinton, "and what we want now is an investigation, preferably by grand jury."

"The farmer is a docile, easy-going fellow as long as he is treated justly. He is not strong enough to stand his just share of improvements, even though he can't see any personal benefits coming from them to himself, either directly or indirectly." But the farmer won't be imposed upon! He's aroused now. And before he quiets down he is going to find out why certain things have happened and who is responsible for them.

While the main spring of the movement is the Oakland County farmer he is being given hearty support by property owners in villages, towns and cities of the County. Merchants and professional men are taking an active interest. Private investigations of certain construction projects have been launched by individuals.

Plans are now under way for the establishment of a campaign headquarters for the general movement.

The salary reduction matter for instance, it has been shunting back and forth between supervisors and auditors for a fortnight or more. Why the delay in reaching a definite basis of reduction? The answer is, simply no system, no co-ordination. It was apparent, however, that both supervisors and auditors would like to have disposed of the matter and forgotten it. Yet it was a bull whose horns nobody wanted to grab. There was no outstanding leadership on either side.

There is good reason for not only an investigation of the present system but a concerted movement toward establishment of a form of government and government system in keeping with the vastly changed county conditions. We cannot expect to operate efficiently and with justice a county of 204,000 people with a system that probably was good enough for a county of 50,000.

Letter Received
The Oakland County Association for the Reduction of Taxes, with headquarters at Farmington, Michigan, directed the following letter to this department:

"Dear Mr. Blunk:
"We have been taking a great deal of interest in your weekly letters and last week's report was a 'humdinger.'"

"Well there are many of us who fear that you may have overlooked a thing or two and we want you to answer a few questions in your next article. For instance: Was the County Dog Catcher's salary of \$3,000 and car allowance of \$600 actually cut or was it only recommended for a cut? We noted that it was to be \$1,000 and fifty cents for every dog licence. Now we are wondering if you couldn't pull a little 'nigger' out of that joker. We have a good-sized hunch that there are better than 15,000 dogs in Oakland County.
"Also what was the idea of all cuts coming into effect a year from now? Why not at once?"

"We would also like the name of the gentleman that challenged you to show a road that 'went nowhere and past nothing.' And we don't think that the road in Orion Township is the only one. How about the Northwest Highway? We are of the opinion that that challenger is one of the crowd that has been preaching the doctrine of every good road increasing valuations, until they have paperized every farmer who believed them. He is either a danged fool or a deliberate liar. Values are determined by earnings and if he can show us a 'single farm in Michigan that a good road helped raise more potatoes, corn, wheat, oats or anything per acre or increased the prices on these products in the open market then he is a dandy. And he will be the first one we ever met who even tried, but we want to get him to make that statement publicly so we can get at him."

"We want to tell the taxpayers what we know about certain roads, how they came to be, etc. And how syndicates speculated on the land along the rights of way of those roads; who were the stockholders in the syndicates? But most of all we want the taxpayers to know that these road commissions, drain commissions and other commissions have been spending monies like drunken sailors, without any regard as to where it was coming from until now. When the taxpayer's property is taxed beyond his ability to pay he isn't paying it simply because his property won't produce it. Now these wanton spenders have a job on their hands of proving up or shutting up the list of them not only shut up but RIN. "Hopin' to see some good hot stuff next week we wish you good luck."

The Board of Supervisors' Salary Committee made the recommendation for the cut in the dog chaser's pay to \$1,000 with the fifty cent fee and his 1931 budgeted salary will be something closely approximating that figure. And still he will make a nice salary. For there are quite a few "purps" in Oakland County and its quite certain that under the fee system they'll either be licensed or shuffled promptly out of this dog's life, for in addition to the fifty cents licensing fee the dog catcher is entitled, under the new recommendation to fifty cents for every "mutt" he puts under the ground. And the chances are, if conditions in Oakland County are not remedied that ere the leaves fall again many a faithful bow wow will lie beneath the sod.

The salary cuts recommended by the Supervisors, or the cuts recommended by the Board of Auditors are to take effect in the forthcoming county budget.

The man who flung the challenge about the road made his little conversation over the phone. We invited him to make a personal call but he refused, also refusing to give his name.

FARMINGTON BOY SCOUTS TO HAVE COURT OF HONOR

Willard Credit To Be Made Star Scout; Twelve To Receive Badges

The first Boy Scout Court of Honor to be held in Farmington since the reorganization of scout activities some time ago will take place next Wednesday evening, October 23, in the Farmington High School gymnasium.

Willard Credit, first Farmington Scout to achieve first-class ranking, will be made a Star Scout, having won five merit badges. Gwen Lancaster will be made a first-class Scout, five will receive their second-class badges, and six their tenderfoot badges. Scout Executive Herbert Watson of Pontiac is expected to make the presentations.

New Scoutmaster
Clarenceville Troop No. 44 has a new scoutmaster, John Wagner, recently elected to succeed Glenn C. Swanson, who has left for Jamestown, N. Y. Robert Jones has been elected chairman of the Scout committee to succeed Floyd Hallock, resigned.

The Farmington and Clarenceville troops, under direction of Erskine Evans and John Wagner, and Commissioner Hallock, took a hike to Dodge Park at Walled Lake Saturday afternoon. They built fires and cooked their supper.

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Officials Unite To Raise School Money

(continued from page one)
ment will be based on an appeal for payment of school taxes. Few people in the Township know, according to officials, that they may pay any part of their taxes and not the remainder. The plan discussed is for organization of a Township-wide campaign to appeal to all taxpayers who possibly can do so to pay their delinquent school taxes.

Large property-holders, whose taxes are not paid, will especially be appealed to, although they may not be residents of this community, on behalf of the schools. Would Save Expense
The officials believe that hundreds of taxpayers who cannot pay their entire taxes can and gladly would pay their school taxes to avoid a costly lawsuit and possible closing of some Township schools.

The gathering Tuesday evening at the Township Board meeting, brought together the Township Board, the Board of Education of Clarenceville School District, former Supervisors Isaac Bond and Harry N. McCracken and former treasurer Elmer Empson. Much of the impetus for organizing to keep the matter out of court came from Mr. Bushnell, the attorney, who pointed out that "if the School district sues the Township, the money for both sides comes out of the same pocket, the Township taxpayers." He declared that a suit on the treasurer's bond would not end until after a long, bitter fight, and that a plan to retire the debt in two or three years by strict economy and slightly increased tax would bring the money in quicker than a suit against the bonding company, even if, the suit was successful.

Mr. Bushnell suggested that aid be sought of the Municipal Research Bureau in Detroit, and offered to take the matter up with that organization. He was requested to do so.

The meeting was arranged by members of the Clarenceville School Board, who said that while

court action had seemed the only resort left to them, a number of people within their own district had expressed themselves as opposed to it. Clarenceville district is suffering most from lack of funds.

Ask Court To Stop Use Of Sewer By City

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contractors moved in their machinery and men and started excavation.

'Impair Public Health'
The bill declares that except for assurances from the City they have taken steps against the sewer earlier. Besides the damage of \$10,000 to their property, the plaintiffs declare, "the public health and general welfare of the community would be greatly impaired and endangered" if the Power Avenue unit is put into operation.

The complaint asserts that City officials described the present condition as "temporary," but that the permanency of construction indicates that this is improbable.

'State Deceived Also'
The complaint charges that the State representatives, the State Health Department and the Stream Control Commission have been misled by "deceptive methods" of City officials; that the State officials are "fully in accord" with the plaintiffs' purpose of preventing such contamination as would result, and will co-operate with the plaintiffs to prevent it.

The bill asks that the State authorities be required to answer the bill or join as complainants.

Quote Health Officer
The plaintiffs assert that Dr. James A. Miller, Farmington City Health Officer, "has shown great interest and opposition toward the proposed discharge and has communicated his objections to the City authorities and is entirely in accord with the plaintiffs."

"The bill concludes by stating that the plaintiffs desire the sewer for benefit of residents of Power Avenue, but also want provision made for disposal.
The hearing will be held in

MRS. BOND HEADS COUNTY EASTERN STAR GATHERING

Farmington Member Is Presented With Corsage At Banquet; Officers Installed
The Oakland County Association of the O. E. S. held a very successful meeting at Berkley on Thursday, October 16th.

Mrs. Ada Bond, president of the association presided at the morning session which was notable for its orderliness and efficiency.

After dinner the newly elected officers of the Association were installed, the new president being Mrs. Goldie Richardson of Commerce.

The Chapter was then opened by Berkley officers after which they vacated their stations for the officers selected to exemplify the initiatory work. Mrs. Nola Switzer was the selected officer from Farmington.

There were fifteen present from Farmington. Mrs. Bond was presented with a corsage at the meeting.

Judge Gillespie's court at Pontiac at the opening of court Monday morning. E. A. Fink and Lodge and Brown appear as attorneys for the plaintiffs, and Judge John J. Schulte will appear for the City.

Extend Power Sewer
Acting on a request of Charles H. Ely, the City Commission Monday night voted to extend the Power Avenue sewer west on Shawansee street to the corner of Our Lady of Sorrows Church property, to provide it with a sewer outlet. The extension is of 12-inch crock, the same as that on Power, and the cost will be between four and five hundred dollars.

City Clerk N. H. Power reported receiving another request for a complete map of the City's sewer system, which must be filed by January 1st with the State.

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