

\$41,000 Error in Township-City Road Tax Assessments Reported

Township Tax Rate Is Again Reduced

Continuing further the reduction of Farmington Township taxes which has been in progress during the past few years, the township is able this year to get along with out levying any tax for operation of the township government. In the roll for 1938, turned over yesterday morning by Supervisor Arthur P. Coe to the treasurer, there is no levy for local purposes. A year ago there was \$2.00 per thousand valuation levied for township operation.

The saving follows up a reduction made last year, when the rate was reduced \$3.50 per thousand as a result of elimination of the debt service item. Reductions totalling \$5.50 per thousand in two years, and the elimination of tax for operation of the local government, puts Farmington Township in a select class among local governing units.

Roll 8 Per Cent Less

The township roll this year is about eight per cent less than that of a year ago, totalling \$57,812.39 for 1938, as compared with \$62,716.00 raised for 1937.

An increase in the county rate prevented even a greater saving. The county rate this year is \$1.10 per thousand for general purposes, representing an increase of \$1.10. The county debt service is slightly less, being \$1.26 as compared with \$1.40 for 1937. The amount for welfare is the same, \$1.00 per thousand. The total tax rate for this year is \$6.36 as compared with \$7.40 a year ago. Thus the net decrease is \$1.04 per thousand, the county rate of \$1.10 serving to offset part of the township saving.

Activity in building in the township is reflected in increased property valuation. The assessments this year totalling \$4,923,715.20, as compared with \$4,217,200 a year ago.

Drain Tax Spread

Property-owners of one section of the township will be called upon to pay for sewer facilities, levies for which had been held in abeyance for some years by litigation. As a result of court decision, levies are made this year for the Hazel and Clarenceville drains, which had been involved in litigation. A mandamus this year ordered the special assessment spread, most of the property being in Grand River Crest Subdivision in the southeast corner of the township. The levy upon property-owners amounts to \$8,755.21, and the township-at-large has an assessment for this item amounting to \$165.36.

Included in the tax bills will be the levy for school purposes, totalling \$29,824.56, for the eleven school districts lying either wholly or partially within the township.

Township Tax Rate Again Is Lowered

Farmington Township's tax roll, representing again a substantial decrease from the previous year's levy, has just been completed by Supervisor Arthur P. Coe.

How Report Indicates City Overpaid \$41,523 in 6 Years

Below is a portion of the figures showing the apparent error by which Farmington City, from 1926 to 1931, paid over \$41,000 in Covert road taxes which should have been levied, according to the report, upon Farmington Township.

The roads for which the taxes were levied are Orchard Lake, Twelve Mile, Eight Mile, Ten Mile, Thirteen Mile, Northwestern Highway, and Nine Mile Road.

| Amount Spread Upon Farmington City | Correct Spread |
|---|----------------|
| 1926 \$ 6,092.56 | \$ 3,223.64 |
| 1927 5,701.92 | 3,068.45 |
| 1928 8,153.85 | 2,294.97 |
| 1929 10,132.71 | 1,526.35 |
| 1930 11,683.73 | 1,543.71 |
| 1931 11,660.39 | 244.97 |
| \$53,425.16 | \$11,902.09 |
| Excess \$41,523.07 | |
| Spread Upon City Instead of Township Thru Error | |

Butler Held by Kin's Testimony

As a result of testimony of a cousin of one of the suspects, together with other evidence presented by the police, three men are held in county jail at Pontiac on charges of a holdup on the highway last night. The men are held on charges of a holdup on the highway last night. The men are held on charges of a holdup on the highway last night.

Playing an important part in the holding of the men for Circuit Court trial was the testimony of John Butler, 17, of Novi, who testified against his cousin, Dale Butler, 24, of Nine Mile Road, Farmington, as well as against the other two suspects. The younger Butler was released after it was revealed that he had had no part in the theft, and his only connection with the episode was that he had gone with one of the others on a trip during which an effort was made to pawn some of the property.

He assisted the police case with evidence at the examination, and is regarded as one of the most important witnesses in case it is necessary to bring the other three to trial in Circuit Court. However, it is believed they may plead guilty when arraigned at Pontiac. Police said they confessed soon after arrest, but upon arraignment in justice court, they pleaded not guilty.

Bail is \$5,000.

The suspects, captured by Deputy DeVriendt in time to avert what might have developed into a serious gun battle, were bound over to the Circuit Court by Judge Schulte, who set the bonds at each at \$5,000, with two sureties required. The men are accused of having broken into the Nook hardware store at Walled Lake and stolen a large quantity of guns and ammunition.

Accused along with Dale Butler are Steve Sziber, 27 and Victor Cuny, 17, who had been living at Novi, but who gave no home address.

Assistant Prosecutor William Dohany presented the case for the people. None of the defendants had counsel.

FARMINGTON MEN AT WORK TO AID SCOUTS

Ed Alexander, Supt. Robert Burns, and Arthur Power are planning Farmington's participation in the drive to be held to raise funds for the Oakland area council of Boy Scouts soon after the first of the year.

The campaign, which already has the backing of the civic leaders throughout the country, will be carried on in every community.

School Bus Change Tuesday

Wisdom of Farmington school officials in making drastic changes in the school bus system effective next Tuesday, December 14, has been especially evident during the past week, when key roads have emphasized the difficulty and danger of the present system.

During mornings this week the single large bus, crowded on some runs with as many as 30 or more pupils, far above its normal capacity, has brought children to school on the last trip more than half an hour late in the morning. The same tardiness has characterized the afternoon trips in the afternoon, children on the last run arriving home not long before midnight.

Packing in of the children like the proverbial sardines has not lessened the burden upon the driver in negotiating the slippery roads with the large heavy bus that is difficult to manage around sharp corners on narrow streets, and on the steep hills.

Principals Board of Education thus far has heard some response from other districts concerning its requirement of pay for transportation, sufficient to indicate that some provision will have to be made. There is enough to make it likely that an additional small bus may be needed, or possibly a large, heavy sedan at least.

Farmington officials are hopeful that other district boards will make known their decisions immediately, rather than waiting until the last moment, in order that the transition may be made with a minimum of difficulty. It is hoped that the new system will be fully in effect by the middle of next week.

Stores Decorated For Christmas

Farmington stores are decorated in accordance with the spirit of the shopping season.

Especially striking window displays are that of Hixson's Farmington Hardware which is also extensively decorated inside. Fred L. Cook and Company and Dickerson Hardware. The windows disclose much ingenuity in presenting Christmas merchandise in an attractive setting.

PARTY IS PLANNED

The Brotherhood of Salem Evangelical Church will hold a Christmas party Monday evening, December 20, at Farmington Town Hall. The public is invited to attend and enjoy a pleasant evening.

Farmington Capture Ends Gang's Career

Not only has the alertness and quick action of Deputy Joseph DeVriendt of Farmington landed in jail perpetrators of a holdup in this territory, but a large number of robberies in various parts of the metropolitan area are said to have been solved, as a result of the capture of four men who "stuck up" the James Fanzini restaurant early Thursday morning of last week.

According to Detroit police, the capture puts an end to the wide-spread activities of a tough gang numbering six, who included in their depredations a recent daylight holdup of a lumber company office at Center Line. Six other holdups in Detroit and vicinity are said by Detroit police to have been admitted by the gang.

The remaining two members of the outfit have been picked up since the Detroit officers arrested four following a call from Deputy DeVriendt a few minutes after the Fanzini holdup.

Face Detroit charges The suspects have been arraigned in Detroit on charges of robbing a beer garden and gasoline station there. Inasmuch as the arrests took place in Detroit, the men will first face charges there. However, an Oakland County warrant has been issued for them, and if Detroit police fail to gain a conviction, the suspects will be brought to Oakland County to stand trial.

Deputy DeVriendt this week received commendations and congratulations from officers throughout Oakland County, and also from Detroit, upon the quick thinking and action which made possible the capture of the gang, and the termination of their preying upon places of business and the public.

Goodfellows Plan Annual Activity

The annual Goodfellows Fund work is to be undertaken soon in Farmington. Efforts along this line have been begun by the Exchange Club with Judge John J. Schulte heading the organization's committee. Floyd Nichols will serve as treasurer.

Others on the Exchange committee are Vic Blakeslee, Howard Otis, and Curtis Hall. Appointments were made by President Arthur Power.

MR. NIMROD

Having a birthday Wednesday, not enough of itself, perhaps, to combine with the fact that he is among Farmington hunters, brought back his buck this year for Deles Hamlin, a salaried member of the Exchange Club Wednesday. The salaried member of the Exchange Club Wednesday.

Farmington Meeting Best in 50-Year Career, Says Judge

Seventy-eight years old next Sunday, and with 50 years of public life as a background unequalled in Oakland County, Probate Judge James H. Lynch has handed Farmington "the palm" for providing him with the outstanding recollection of a half century of political and civic activity crowded with memorable episodes.

Speaking before Farmington Exchange Club Wednesday noon, the veteran lawyer and political warrior told to citizens of the community the story of an event which few, if any of them ever had heard-told it with the infectious humor and in the inimitable way that belongs only to "Jim" Lynch.

It was 25 years ago, Judge Lynch recalled, that he came over to Farmington from Pontiac to speak at a political rally, a Democratic rally of course, in view of who the speaker was. And in Farmington occurred something that has never repeated and enjoy a pleasant evening.

City Erroneously Paid 27% Of Township's Covert Levy, 1926 Through 1931, Report

Present Officials Defer Comment on Road Tax Discovery

Both Supervisor Coe of Farmington Township and Mayor Warner of Farmington City, neither of whom were in office when there occurred the apparent error in levying Covert Road tax assessments upon the City, indicated that they preferred to defer any extended comment on the situation for the present.

However, Supervisor Coe remarked: "I have not gone into the matter much, but I have looked up most of the assessment warrants issued to myself and predecessors, and I find there was spread on the Township rolls just what the warrant from the County Clerk ordered to be spread. A supervisor couldn't do otherwise and act legally. That would seem to cover the Township's responsibility in the matter."

SCOUTS WEARING AWARDS GIVEN AT HONOR COURT

Several Boy Scouts of Farmington Troop 45 are proud possessors of bright new badges, following presentation of the awards Monday evening at a court of honor in M. E. Community Hall.

Most important of the presentations was that of an Eagle Scout to Joseph (Bud) Norton, son of Dr. and Mrs. Joseph W. Norton. A first class badge and two merit badges were presented to Jack Samuelson. The merit badges are for music and for hiking.

John Winston Edgar and James Youngblood received tenderfoot pins.

"The Eagle badge was presented by Supt. R. C. Burns of Farmington School, who called upon the mother of the recipient to pin upon her son the coveted award. Bud, who is 16, joined Troop 45 July 6, 1933, became a second class scout on October 25 of that year, and was promoted to first class on April 5, 1935. On December 20, 1935 he attained the rank of star scout, and he won Life Scout ranking on August 1, 1936.

The Farmington Scouts are working for further advancements and badges. There will be two opportunities for review before the Big Court of Honor to be held at Pontiac during the Annual Round-up February 25, 1938. At that time an unusual program will be presented. Troop 45 participating.

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A huge governmental error repeated annually throughout six years, as a result of which Farmington City taxpayers may have paid as much as \$41,523.07 in Covert road taxes which should have been assessed against Farmington Township from 1926 through 1931, is apparently indicated by figures which have accidentally come under scrutiny recently. The matter is receiving attention of officials and is expected to come up at the City Commission meeting Monday evening.

In 1929, 1930 and 1931, several years after the township-city separation occurred, Farmington City still was paying more than \$10,000 a year in Covert Road taxes which should have been assessed against the Township, according to the report. In 1931, five years after the separation, Farmington City was levied upon for \$11,660.39 for such taxes, whereas the amount it should have paid, according to the statistics, was a small item of \$244.97 representing the balance remaining upon the Switzer Road, built in 1925, when the City had been a village, and as such, part of the Township for tax purposes.

Some of the roads for which Farmington City has been assessed as late as 1931, according to the report, are Northwestern Highway, Twelve Mile Road, Thirteen Mile Road, Ten Mile Road, and Nine Mile Road, most of these improvements being miles away from the city.

Back of the apparent error is evidently the agreement between the Township and former Village of Farmington, whereby when the latter became a city, the assets and obligations were divided 73 and 27 per cent, in accordance with the valuations.

In some manner not yet ascertained, in 1926 and for the five subsequent years, there continued the evident mistake by which each year, after the Township-at-large road tax was computed, 27 per cent of that amount was ordered spread against the City.

WOMAN'S CLUB TO HOLD ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY

Farmington Women's Club will meet at the home of Mrs. Fred L. Cook on Wilmuth Avenue Wednesday, December 15, for their annual Christmas party. This year the members are asked to bring useful gifts for children, rather than toys. These gifts will be distributed among children in the community. Any member who finds it impossible to attend, is asked to please send their gift. The program for the day is in charge of the Hospitality committee. Tea will be served following the program.

At the last meeting of the club, held at the home of Mrs. George Checketts, Grady McKay, teacher in the Farmington schools, and five of his pupils gave a discourse on "Peace."

Last Friday, members of the Farmington club, were guests of the Northville club. The speaker of the afternoon was Miss Grace Brown, an attorney from Detroit who is an authority on international law. Miss Brown gave an address on her trip around the world. Last year she toured the continent, and made almost a complete circuit of the globe, traveling all the way by aeroplane. A choir of 64 voices from the Northville school, sang several selections. Tea was served following the program. Other guests at this meeting included the clubs from Redford, Plymouth and Wayne.

ENGAGEMENT ANNOUNCED

Mrs. Mary Carey of North Farmington announces the engagement of her niece, Miss Jeanne Lamphere, to Louis Krimm, of Eight Mile road, Northville.

Though no definite date has been set for the wedding, it is planned for the middle of December.

(forms the background, just exactly how the error occurred and was repeated each year that the Covert road taxes were assessed, has not been ascertained. Covert road tax assessments were discontinued in 1931, being paid since that time from the County's share of the weight and gas tax.)

What remedy if any the tax payers of the City might have, and against whom is certain to be an involved, difficult question. Spread of the tax was ordered by the county, acting by what authority has not developed, but the city paid without questioning it for six years.

\$15.00 Per \$1,000

The Covert road at large tax which now appears to have been improperly paid by the City taxpayers, in 1929, 1930, and 1931 amounted to more than \$15.00 per thousand valuation. The six-year total is twice as much as the City now spreads each year to operate its government.

One of the strange circumstances surrounding the entire matter is that at the offices of the County Road Commission there is no copy of the Farmington Township-City separation agreement. There are on file copies of agreements made when other villages of the county have become cities.

Discovery of the situation was almost purely accidental. County road officials, recently became fearful that the weight and gas tax returns some time soon may prove insufficient to meet the Covert road bond. In that event first the County, and then the local units would be called on to make up the deficit. Heads of the various bodies have been called in from time to time, including Supervisor Coe of Farmington Township and Mayor Warner of the City, to consult on what the tax situation might be if it was necessary to levy again.

(Continued on Page 4)



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Probate Judge JAMES H. LYNCH