

# County Agent Lambasts Action Of County Board In Leaving Farm Office

SMITH LOOSES BARAGE AT COUNTY COMMISSIONERS FOR HIS SUMMARY DISMISSAL; SAYS ACTION WAS TAKEN AGAINST WISHES OF RURAL RESIDENTS

County commissioners are casting around for another county agent to replace W. I. Smith, who resigned under pressure January 11, while the latter this morning issued a lengthy statement taking the commissioners to task in strong terms for their action. An early selection of farm agent is expected. Smith quits at 5 p. m. Thursday.

Below is printed the formal statement:

By W. I. SMITH

For seventeen consecutive years I have served farmers as County Agent. Never in all of my experience have I had better cooperation with the people than I have had in Durham county. They deserve much praise for their splendid support they have given me in my work. All these are pleasant memories I shall take away with me which will greatly overcome the feeling of bitterness that arises when I think of the unjust, unnecessary and unexplained action taken against me by the county commissioners within the past few weeks. Never, in all my experience in county agent work has such an occurrence arisen, and it was only because of the embarrassing position in which Dean Schaub was placed that I have not tried more forceably to claim my full rights in holding my position to the end of the fiscal year which could lawfully be done.

I have personally talked with four of the Commissioners and each stated they had nothing against me. The Chairman of the Board made the same remark at the mass meeting of the farmers. While in conference with each of the commissioners I asked the questions: Why they took such action against me, and who or what was back of them, pushing the action? These questions were evaded by all of them. At the meeting in which these honest farmers told the commissioners how they stood fair and square by the man who helped them with their farming and financial problems through good years and bad, and demanded a reason for the board's action, there was still no satisfactory or reasonable answer forthcoming. Chairman Massey attempted to answer but missed the mark. It had been stated by my



W. I. SMITH

district agent that Durham county was lagging behind in the amount of money appropriated for carrying on the work; that adjoining counties were paying their agents more. This statement was misconstrued by some which led others to believe that the county was not progressing. I want to state right here to the misinformed that Durham County ranks with all other counties in the government work in tobacco and cotton acreage reduction, and in the development of all other farm crops. Its livestock program has been on the increase for several years. Twelve registered dairy bulls were sold to farmers during the dairy improvement campaign last summer. Ten of these were purchased by farmers from Mr. Watts Hill's farm, one from Mr. C. E. Crabtree and one Jersey bull out of the county. Two registered beef herds have been established in the county with fifteen registered animals as breeding stock.

Poultry has quadrupled in numbers since the beginning of my work here.

A soil building program has been adopted on the majority of farms for permanent improving by growing lespedeza and other legumes and the rotation of crops. Space does not permit me to list everything in which the county has advanced. Compare the U. S. Government Census report and note the progress made. In 1925 the average yield per acre was: corn, 17 bushels; tobacco, 697 lbs; all clover for hay, 1512 lbs; cow



pea hay, 1660 lbs; seed 5 bushels; soy bean hay, 1512 lbs; seed 12 bushels; Irish potatoes 67 bushels; sweet potatoes 77 bushels; dairy cattle 4040 head.

In 1930 the average yield per acre was: corn, 20 bushels; tobacco, 819 lbs; all clover for hay, 2000 lbs; cow pea hay, 2000 lbs; seed, 10 bushels; soy bean hay, 2000; seed, 12 bushels; Irish potatoes, 80 bushels; sweet potatoes, 90 bushels and dairy cattle 5600.

In 1925 the farmers of the county grew insufficient garden crops to feed themselves. In 1930 there were twenty eight percent increase above the amount required for home use. In 1933 there was about a 50 percent increase above the 1930 production. The country people have learned to live at home and are producing vegetables and other truck crops in excess of their home needs for the market.

The proceeds from the boy's farm crops and livestock clubs together with the girls' garden and poultry clubs supervised by the county agent only amounted to \$20,045.00 this year. Durham county is rated as one of the best organized counties for 4-H club work in the state. When the young people are trained along progressive lines it is the surest indication of future progress for the county.

All communities of the county except four now have access to electric lines in their territory. Some have their own plants. Now that prosperity is returning a great many of the farmers will be able to have their radios, which the chairman of the board is anxious to see in every home.

There are today three Grange organizations in the county. Their membership has gradually increased and will continue to do so. There is also a Pomona Grange, composed of the local organizations which links the farmers with the State and National Grange. In the light of these facts, I ask you is the county progressing?

I was not asked by the farmers of the county to resign but on the other hand they have insisted that I stay on as their county agent. The commissioners brought about this disturbance wholly unknown to me and the farmers. They have been asked by the people whom they are supposed to represent, both by petition and mass meeting, to rescind their action. They have completely ignored the wishes of the great majority of people who elected them as their representatives and have brought down condemnation upon their own heads. The opposing faction back of the commissioners worked their plot secretly because they "feared the uproar of the people" if their plans would be openly discussed.

To clear up the situation so that Extension work may not be crippled in the county, Dean Schaub asked me to turn in my resignation. The following is the original copy. It was revised later because of objections to its wording: "Due to unsatisfactory

conditions existing with the county commissioners and a small faction toward me as county agent, Dean Schaub asked that I submit my resignation. I am only doing this in order that Extension work may be continued in the county. My resignation is to become effective at a date made known in the future, by me, satisfactory to all parties concerned. Owing to the excellent cooperation and support given me by the farmers and other citizens of the county, I am willing to remain in the county until the tobacco and cotton acreage reduction campaigns are satisfactorily completed."

After this was submitted to the board their antagonism had arisen to such a height that they were unwilling to retain me for carrying on the work until another agent could be secured. They had formerly stated that they were "willing" for me to stay on until such time. But now they even demand that Dean Schaub send a State department man here to take over the cotton and tobacco acreage reduction work, which is strictly government business and over which the commissioners have no authority. At the same time they knew that I had no other employment. Still they "have nothing against me."

County agent work is not a political job, but since it has been thrown into politics I hope that it will be made a political issue in the campaign this year for putting on a "New Deal" in commissioners.

## HILL NOT INTERESTED IN GOVERNORSHIP OF N. C.

But Indications Are That He Will Again Run For State Senate

"They mention me for everything," smiled State Senator John Sprunt Hill yesterday, whose name was one of those frequently heard in connection with the position of associate utility commissioners. Because of my interests, I could not have accepted the position if offered to me, but I think the appointments of Dr. Poterat and Professor Hanft were excellent.

"I have already denied that I will run for Governor, but reports that I may be a candidate for the legislature again are a different matter. That matter has not yet shaped up and I do not know whether I will make the race or not."—News & Observer.