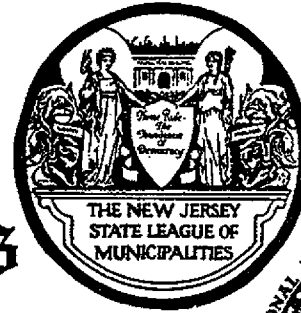


New Jersey

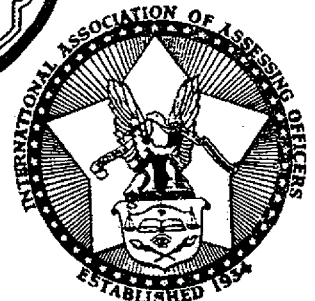


Assessors

Bulletin



AFFILIATES



VOL. 2 No. 1

Association of Municipal Assessors of New Jersey

MARCH, 1963

THE TENTH REPORT

The Tenth Report of the Commission on State Tax Policy was submitted to the Governor and Legislature of the State of New Jersey on January 10th, 1963. The Commission, originally constituted under the Laws of 1945 Chapter 157, rendered its Report in response to Joint Resolutions of the Legislature, No. 6 of 1961 and No. 5 of 1962. The Joint Resolutions covered two major requests to the Commission, the first as to the adequacy of the present program of State aid to public schools and how the aid should be provided, the second for a comprehensive re-examination of the entire State and Local tax structure. Underlying these requests was the mounting pressure for broad based State taxes for the support of schools and the reactions in some quarters to the so-called assessment reform law, Chapter 51, Laws of 1960. The latter legislation was the direct result of recommendations in the Ninth Report of this Commission.

The Commission heard extensive testimony from interested citizens and officials over the late summer and fall of 1962. They were assisted in their deliberations by an Advisory Committee, among the members of which was Sydney E. Margolin, Assessor of Morristown. The members of the Commission were: Archibald S. Alexander, Chairman; David L. Yunich, Vice-Chairman; C. Malcolm Davis; Wayne Dumont, Jr.; James Kerney, Jr.; Elmer M. Matthews; and John E. Toolan. The Staff Director was Dr. William Miller of Princeton, and Aaron E. Neeld of Trenton served as Consultant. The Report was signed by the entire Commission with an additional statement by C. Malcolm Davis, who challenged the need for broad increased aid to education, and a "minority statement" by Elmer Matthews who felt the Report had not effectively resolved the problem of spiraling property taxes in their relation to school aid and who held the case for a broad base tax was not proven in the face of the postponement of Chapter 51.

In the summary of the Report the tax climate was again reviewed by the Commission. The State's heavy and historic reliance on local prop-

erty taxes to support government and schools was again noted, and found inadequate to fill the needs. The Commission recommended the State follow a general policy of increasing State aid to local governments in established programs for the purpose of reducing the proportion of the total State and Local government costs borne by the local taxpayer.

In the area of School Aid, State participation in the financial support of school districts was thought to be inadequate. The present formula was approved in principle but recommendations were made for increases in state aid for current expenses and in state aid for school buildings and other capital purposes, and the use of current enrollment figures for both operating and capital aid, instead of the figures for one or two years previous to the period in which the aid is paid as at present.

Of personal property taxes the Commission contended:

"the taxation of tangible personal property in New Jersey remains inequitable and capricious, as pointed out in previous Commission Reports. The tax on inventories is costly to administer soundly due to the fluctuation in value and volume during any year. And in any case such a tax ad valorem is grossly inequitable because of the large variations in turnover and profit margin of inventories among different industries. The tax on machinery and equipment, not equitably administered at pres-

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THE TENTH REPORT

(Continued From Page One)

ent, if carried out in accordance with present law would involve a serious added tax burden on business?"

In this area the Commission also expressed concern about the competitive position of New Jersey with respect to taxation of business personality, pointing out that personal property taxes were not levied in Delaware, Pennsylvania and New York. The Commission therefore recommended that the tax on business inventories be repealed and the tax on machinery and equipment be standardized on the basis of a flat valuation of 50% of cost to the taxpayer without further depreciation, and with assessment at a ratio of one half the ratio of the common level of real estate in the district. It was also recommended the State replace only the amount of taxes currently levied on inventories, and the distribution of this replacement be on the basis of the relative value of the commercial and industrial real estate in each district. Corporations were singled out for the replacement revenue by a recommendation to increase the corporate net income tax to five percent. The estimated revenue from this source was set at thirty million dollars while the replacement demand was set at forty million dollars. The ten million difference is part of the proceeds from a new tax.

In the consideration of certain other special tax problems the Commission felt with regard to farms, the Governor's special committee appointed to study this problem, should be given the opportunity to report. With regard to the railroads' tax problem, the Commission made the sweeping recommendation that all railroad taxes be collected for State use, with a replacement, derived partly from the railroads and partly from a new tax, to be paid the affected municipalities to save them harmless. A recommendation with regard to the gross receipts tax was directed toward placing a greater share of the common county burden on districts which realize heavy revenue from this source.

Looking ahead to the foreseeable revenue needs of the State in the near future, the Commission estimated additional revenues of forty million dollars annually would be required to support only the existing programs. For programs other than recommendations for added school aid embodied in the Report, the Commission found an estimated need for one hundred and seventeen millions additional revenue or eighty four millions if part of the payment for such programs was deferred by the issuance of bonds for capital purposes.

Summarizing the revenue needs of the State, the Report points to the additional forty million mentioned above, another eighty four million to finance the increased State aid recommended in the Report, and an additional ten million dollars to make up the difference in the replacement of the tax presently collected on inventories. To meet these increased needs for State expenditures, the Report recommends the imposition of a broad base tax, the choice of the Commission

being a sales tax of three percent, with food and prescription medicine exempt.

The Tenth Report itself is liberally sprinkled with tables and charts emphasizing and illustrating the bases for the judgments made by the Commission. Successive tables are used to show New Jersey ranks last out of the fifty states in the per capita total State taxes, the State's percentage of combined State and local taxes is at the lowest ratio in New Jersey, and the per capita real estate tax is at its highest in New Jersey. In the summary of the Report it was stated the total burden of State and local taxes combined is moderate, on a per capita basis when compared to other states. The Report does not hold out hope, however, for maintaining this position, since it points out that it is unrealistic to expect local property taxes to be reduced or even maintained at their present level. The gist of the Report seems to be that the State and collectively, its municipalities, need more income to meet the demand for additional State services and State aid to local taxing districts.

Part II of the Report, the section dealing with State aid to schools is a review of current conditions in considerable detail. Such factors as class size, district size, rate of growth, teacher and administrative salaries, their relationships and costs are tabulated and discussed. Essentially the gist of the recommendation is for an increase in the maximum of the foundation program from \$200 per pupil to \$350 per pupil, but at the same time increasing the rate for the computation of local fair share from five mills to eight mills and basing the payment on current enrollment figures. When this new approach, combined with recommendations for the elimination of personal property taxes on inventories and its replacement with State funds allocated on a basis prorated to the value of commercial and industrial real estate, is applied to the various taxing districts, the results are widely divergent increases and decreases in aid. Assessors in districts where efficient productive administration has resulted in the greatest return from inventory taxes, are quick to point out that the decreases in aid fall on their taxing districts and feel that they should not be penalized. It has also been noted that in those districts where laxity has been shown in this area, the greatest rewards are to be reaped in terms of increased State aid.

Assessors displayed the greatest interest in the section of the Report treating with the taxation of personal property, Part III. Nevertheless, there was disappointment expressed by Assessors and tax officials alike in that the Report offered no immediate solution to the problems of administration brought about by Chapter 51 and complicated by its continued postponement. Although pretty much agreed that the elimination of property taxes on inventories would lighten their work load by removing the onerous administrative task of assessing this class of property, Assessors contemplated the suggestion with mixed feelings. For those who found the inventories impractical or impossible to deal with, the relief from the ob-

(Continued On Page Three)

THE TENTH REPORT (Continued From Page Two)

Oligation of trying was a welcome one. For those who had been successful in deriving considerable revenue from this source, the resultant shift in burden was viewed with misgivings. It was also pointed out that the replacement revenue, being obtained from a corporate income tax, would leave home free even the most lucrative partnerships and proprietorships, thus creating an inequity where none existed before, at least in the law itself.

The failure of the Commission to deal with the problem of farm taxation gave little solace to hard pressed Assessors in rural areas. Reactions to the recommendations for the treatment of railroad taxes ranged from satisfaction to bewilderment as to what actually was being accomplished and what the next step might be. Assessors generally recognized the proposal on the gross receipts tax as a very small step in the reallocation of this type of revenue. Few Assessors have expressed a firm conviction with regard to the recommendation for a sales tax. In general, the consensus seems to be if the State needs are justified and recognized by the Legislature, the means of raising the revenue is a corollary problem and a matter of legislative policy.

At a meeting in Trenton on January 15th, Director Kingsley of the State Division of Taxation reviewed with the Assessors Advisory Committee, the implications and the potential effects of the Report. The conference was called not so much to analyze long term effects as much as to appraise the likely results in terms of legislation related to assessing practice which might be expected in the current session of the legislature. During the debate in 1962 on the bill for postponement of Chapter 51 for the second time, it was frequently contended that a more informed approach would be available upon the Report of the State Tax Policy Commission. It was therefore reasonable to assume the Report would produce either broad revision or amendment of Chapter 51, or its outright repeal and the passage of substitute legislation. While the Commission did not deal with Chapter 51 per se in its Report, the recommendations with regard to the taxation of personal property used in business pointed to amendment rather than repeal. Director Kingsley pointed out that technically the listing date prescribed by Chapter 51 for personal property, January 1, had already passed. The returns provided by the law and regulations would be due on May 1st. The Director reviewed some five alternate possible courses which the Legislature might follow in the adoption or rejection of the recommendations of the Tenth Report, ranging from the possibility that no action would be taken

MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR



Governor Hughes

It is indeed a great pleasure for me to extend a warm greeting to the members of the Assessors' Association of the State of New Jersey.

Long before my election as Governor, I was fortunate to have the opportunity to talk to members of your profession concerning many of the problems which confront you. There is no doubt in my mind that the problems are indeed great ones which must be solved if the assessors of our State are to receive the fullest recognition for the valuable service which they perform and continue their work to the advantage of the entire State.

I want you to know that I fully appreciate the great work which you are doing and shall make every effort to help you overcome the obstacles which you have brought to my attention.

Richard J. Hughes
Governor of New Jersey

and Chapter 51 would be permitted to go into effect as is, to the possibility of outright repeal of Chapter 51 with the recommendations of the Report embodied in a new law. The Assessors expressed opinions as to the most practicable solutions and discussed the limitations of time inherent in the alternates. It was pointed out that legislation had already been introduced to postpone or repeal Chapter 51. The Director asked that in the light of the information at hand, the members of the Advisory Committee and the State Association Executive Board study the Report, review the possible alternate courses suggested, and make recommendations to the Director as to the preferences of Assessors. Since this request was made, other legislative proposals have emerged, among the foremost of which is the Governor's long range solution to additional income needs in the form of a bond issue, supported by Turnpike receipts when available to the State.

From the point of view of the people of the State, possibly the most noteworthy feature in the Report was the recommendation for the imposition of a sales tax. This seems to have been abandoned in favor of an alternate solution. From the Assessors' point of view, the important sections that dealt directly with their problems are relegated to secondary consideration. In general, observers have not been able to identify any well defined policy or program which can be said to have been introduced as a result of the recommendations contained in the Tenth Report.

Association of Municipal Assessors of New Jersey

NEW JERSEY ASSESSORS BULLETIN

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EDITORIAL COMMENT

CHICAGO — SI — ATLANTIC CITY — NO!

There is something about the job of being an Assessor that leads a man away from politics. Perhaps it is the day to day need to be objective and fair. Perhaps it is the moment of truth each of us faces in dealing with a particularly knotty problem where the easy answer is "take care of your friends," but where justice dictates another course. In any event, except possibly among the judiciary, there is nowhere to be found a group of men appointed or elected through a political system, as devoid of politics as are the Assessors.

And so it is not surprising that the maneuvering and chicanery at the Detroit Conference of the International Association of Assessing Officers was received with a sense of shock by the New Jersey delegation. The pre-election caucusing and bargaining was reminiscent of the least attractive features of the national party conventions. Even so, were it not for the apparent bitterness inherent in the wheeling and dealing, it could have been fun. But add the naked lust for power and prestige and the fun evaporated. Those who were successful in the game will enjoy their new found power and personal prestige at the expense of the prestige and professional standing of the organization.

The Assessors of New Jersey had long sought the privilege of being host to the annual conference of I.A.A.O. Justifiably proud of their accomplishments within the State, they were anxious to further advance the cause of their profession everywhere in a tangible contribution to its progress. None could have been prouder than our State officers when it became known that we had been selected as host State for the 1963 Conference. Plans were taking shape for this important event as long ago as last summer. Reservations were already made with the hotels for the accommodation of our guests. And all of this enthusiastic effort and expectation went down the drain with the single irresponsible and vindictive action of the new International Association Executive Board, as they resolved to deprive our State of this opportunity to serve our fellow Assessing Officers.

To date no reason or apology has been received for this inexcusable affront.

The 1963 Conference will not be held, as previously announced, in Atlantic City. It is in Chicago, if anyone cares.

WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOR

Assessors who remember their oath of office will remember these words. Some of us are very much aware that the words are not necessarily compatible. The determination to administer the office without favor will frequently generate fear of the consequences; conversely, if there is nothing to fear, favor may be dispensed with impunity.

Existing hold harmless legislation does much to encourage us to fear nothing. Legislative reluctance to rectify the conditions that produced the "century of inequities" reference 10 years ago, gives us little incentive to do any better than we have to. When direct contravention of both the letter and spirit of the law and the Constitution is condoned year after year by annual amendments to the hold harmless legislation, would we wonder just who was being held harmless? Is there no harm in the breakdown of morale, the loss of integrity, the scorn, derision, contempt, and the agony of decision and judgment foisted on him by those unwilling to shoulder their responsibility? just how "harmless" can the Assessor be held?

Is it fair or constructive to encourage a man not to do his job in accordance with the laws the legislature lacks the courage or sagacity to change?

S. M. A. Sets New Exam

State President Marriott Haines and Chairman Russell Wilson of the Society of Municipal Assessors Committee announced plans for the next examination. The Committee proposes to give the examination to qualified candidates shortly after the Rutgers Conference to be held June 17-21. The Conference planning committee has asked the S.M.A. Committee to hold a briefing session at the Conference to orient prospective candidates on the format of the test.

Those candidates who took the exam last April and who have not submitted their appraisals are being urged to do so. Applications for candidates for admission to the Society may be obtained from State Association Secretary Margaret Jeffers. The submission and approval of the application is a prerequisite for taking the examination.

"As Others See Us"

The Assessors Role In Planning & Zoning

by Robert Maddox, Mayor, City of Plainfield

In the recent Tenth Report of the Commission on State Tax Policy, appeared the following: "It is evident that the future development of the State will depend in a considerable measure upon the use of its land. If there is inadequate planning or inability to execute proper plans, the State, with its high population density and its corridor position between New York and the South and West, could become a crazy quilt of inefficient planning and zoning with manufacturing, business, transportation, residences, public buildings and parks placed in a mutually destructive hodge-podge.

"At the present time, much of the planning and zoning in New Jersey might be called 'fiscal zoning,' that is, the result of municipal decisions on questions of land use regulation mostly with an eye to the attraction of nonresidential ratables, rather than to the ultimate aim of a better community and the more efficient use of total land resources. This sort of zoning is forced upon municipalities if they must raise a very high proportion of the funds required for necessary services, including schools, from the local property tax.

"It would seem imperative to make it possible for municipalities which hold the legal authority to decide the future use of land, to plan such use without undue pressure from the scramble for ratables."

It is not surprising the Commission made this observation, since it has become a recognizable policy in the great majority of municipalities. It is a sort of municipal fact of life. A candidate for local office must be for more industry in town, whether he can produce it or not. The opposite position would be the equivalent of a stand against motherhood or the flag.

For many municipalities it wouldn't be wrong to seek industrial ratables just because it is an obvious answer to a persistent fiscal problem. The physical and geographical features of the place may very well justify advertising these advantages. But for many other towns the temporary alleviation of the fiscal problem might call for the more difficult determination of who is encroaching on whom, and what happened to existing property values.

That which is notable on this subject in the Report is the suggestion that the condition, although prevalent, is not necessarily inevitable, and that something should be done about it.

More and more, planning authorities locally are seeking the opinion of the Assessor on the potential tax yield involved in a proposed zoning change, variance or subdivision. Some Mayors have tried to insure the availability of his advice on a regular basis by making the Assessor a member of the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Adjustment, or both. Frequently the Assessor finds himself a full-fledged voting member of the groups he used to haunt for information pertinent to changes in value and to beg for reasonably oriented subdivision maps before final approval.

It is almost inconceivable that an Assessor, reasonably fulfilling the obligations of his office under current conditions, doing so many more things over and above the prime obligation of appraising all the property in his taxing district

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Robert C. Maddox is a resident of the City of Plainfield. He is married and the father of two children. Mr. Maddox is a graduate of Washington Lee University and an Attorney at Law. He is presently the Assistant Counsel for the Prudential Insurance Co. He has been active in civic affairs and politics for many years. Before his recent election as Mayor of the City of Plainfield, he served four years as a Councilman. His governmental experience is complete in all phases at the local level and extends to many committees of the Metropolitan Regional Council. The accompanying article shows that Mayor Maddox is an excellent student of government and that is well aware of the importance of the assessor especially in the zoning and planning function.

and making a list of his findings, could possibly have any time and energy left to devote to other activities. But whether he is a member of the Planning or Zoning Board or he is not, as an Assessor he bears an unavoidable relationship to these bodies.

The very nature of municipal planning suggests change. In providing for the orderly growth of the town, it becomes their duty to head off undesirable trends as well as to make possible desirable development or redevelopment of areas subject to uncontrolled conglomerate activity. In this function of the Planning Board the Assessor, member or not, has a two fold obligation. For the performance of his own job, he must make himself aware of the actions of the planners, their purpose, and the effect on value such actions have. Aside from the long term effects which may reasonably be anticipated, on the properties directly involved, on contiguous properties, on whole neighborhoods, and even on the character and complexion of the entire taxing district, there are almost always immediate and calculable results. The need for the Assessor to know of the changes wrought, and the manifest effects, extends beyond the appraisal function. Sales which take place after such zoning revisions are very properly designated not usable in the compilations used for the determination of ratios in the Director's equalization tables.

Planning Board approval of subdivisions must

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AS OTHERS SEE US

(continued)

necessarily result in the movement of lines on the tax map or the cutting up of larger parcels into home sites or plant sites. In larger municipalities, employing full time Engineers, subdivisions may be incorporated in the tax map as they occur, or from month to month. But for most taxing districts, funds are provided only for an annual revision, by the Engineer or by contract. In some cases, revisions are made only within the regulatory requirement of five years. There are a few districts which do not even have a tax map. In every case however, the Assessor, in order to properly describe and estimate the value of the property, must keep himself abreast of the subdivisions as they occur. Where a tax map exists, contact with the Secretary of the Board or the Subdivision Committee, while a proposed sketch plat is under consideration, may alert them to the desirability of using a numbering system compatible with that used on the tax map, making identification easier, during improvement and later in drawing deeds to convey the parts.

Action of the Zoning Board of Adjustment in permitting or denying a nonconforming use, or permitting the extension of a nonconforming use, or authorizing a variance of set back or yard clearance, is almost sure to affect the market value of property granted such variances, or property the use of which is limited in some manner by the denial of a variance. A valid and equitable assessment can only be made in the light of these factors. In addition, a variance, which constitutes a deviation from zoning regulations, may very well enhance or depreciate the value of contiguous properties. Since the Board of Adjustment is not required by law to inform the Assessor of its judgments, it devolves upon him to make himself aware of any and all of such actions. It is all very well to suppose that owners whose property is depreciated will soon be in to complain and there is time enough to recognize an increase in value if and when there is a sale, but the bugaboo of the ratio and the equalization table may make this kind of procrastination very expensive indeed.

The very least an Assessor can do, short of attending every meeting of each Board, is to see that he obtains a copy of the minutes of every meeting and of each subdivision map or sketch. Property mentioned in the minutes should be scheduled for review before the next Tax List is filed.

All of the foregoing constitutes what the Assessor needs to do to help him discharge the statutory duties of his office. His civic responsibility, however, carries with it an additional obligation. This obligation may not easily be defined and is subject to an infinite variety of circumstances. It is affected by the Assessor's own ability and experience as well as the ability and perception of the members of the Boards that need his counsel. The point is that no other local official has anywhere near the volume of knowledge and information at his disposal, and the Assessor has an obligation to put this information

at the disposal of the Planning or Zoning Board to the extent that it is needed. Too often, perhaps, such assistance is neither offered nor requested. In the interests of good public relations and to help secure the cooperation he needs from the Board, as suggested above, the Assessor might inform the Board of the nature of his records and the kind of statistical information he must compile to effectively appraise property. He might post them on the factors which are professionally recognized as being the elements of value; tell them of any trends which current sales and market conditions indicate are developing; point out sales history in existing subdivisions, particularly as resales occur, to be used as criteria in future deliberations. The important thing to remember in trying to establish a cooperative relationship is to avoid presumptuously giving gratuitous advice. Stick to facts. If an opinion must be expressed, label it.

The Assessor should be willing to consult with the Boards on any problem in which his special training and experience would be helpful to them. But care should be taken to give assurance there is no desire to encroach on their responsibility or authority.

If the Mayor of the town thinks the Assessor is spending too much time at home with his family, or that he has too little to do in his own function as an Assessor, or, he seriously believes the Assessor may make some constructive contribution to the orderly planning of the growth of the community, he may have appointed him to the Planning Board, or to the Zoning Board of Adjustment. In such a situation, it is well for the Assessor to remember that he is an Assessor, and he may become a planner. It is not reasonable to suppose that a member of the Planning Board could become an Assessor overnight. It is no more reasonable to suppose that an Assessor could become a good planner overnight. It has been shown above that the Assessor can be of genuine assistance to a Planning Board in the performance of their function. This in itself is not to say that the Assessor possesses, by virtue of his office, the perception, imagination, or the particular kind of wisdom it takes to be a good Planning Board member. It should be remembered that this sort of dual job holding requires the wearing of two separate and distinct hats, not the same one turned backwards. There is a need for objectivity in his performance of either job. There are areas in which just human nature will tend to create what borders on conflict of interest. As a member of a Board bent on engaging in the "scramble for ratables," he, subscribing to the same philosophy, might very well make decisions which would affect his judgment as to the value of property at some time in the future in his role of Assessor. On the other hand, if he can avoid the pitfalls of prejudice and preconception, the addition to a Planning Board or Zoning Board of an Assessor as a member, could be extremely constructive. He would bring to their deliberations, not only a body of knowledge available nowhere else, but a point of view enhanced by the professional, critical observation of property and its value.

Harmless, Who He?

Within a period of twelve days, two months after October First, which he had always been led to believe was the date on which he was to begin making assessments for his tax list, an Assessor received four memorandums.

The first, dated December 3rd, was from the County Board. The first paragraph read, "The investigation of Veterans exemptions and exempt properties emphasizes the necessity of strict compliance and thorough checks on all exemptions each year."

Next came one from the Local Property Tax Bureau, dated December 12th, offering a copy of Formal Opinion 1962 No. 3 of the Attorney General and summarizing it, "The gist of the Attorney General's Opinion is that in a district where the common level of assessment is less than 100%, the exemption must first be deducted from the true value of the property and the local assessment percentage is to be applied to the remainder. The Attorney General ruled that this method of computation applies to the exemptions granted to veterans, veterans widows, senior citizens and parsonages and household furniture and effects, whether under Chapter 51 or under present law before Chapter 51 becomes effective."

In the same envelope under date of December 12th was a note to the effect that on December 5th, the Governor signed into law Assembly Bill No. 812 which became Chapter 180, laws of 1962. Attached was a copy of the bill itself with the amendatory clause underlined, which, as the note explained, "protects the assessor who employs a common level of assessment below 100% from civil or criminal penalty if he does not apply Veteran, Senior Citizen, or parsonage exemptions to the true value of the property for the tax year 1963." Reference to the bill itself however revealed that it also says, "provided however, that this act shall not relieve any assessor from the duty of making such assessments or applying such exemptions in a uniform and impartial manner, nor from the duty of complying with the order of judgment, heretofore or hereafter made of any court having jurisdiction in a cause to which he is a party, according to the terms thereof."

And, "This act shall take effect immediately." (December 5th).

Slightly confused, the Assessor figured that he should get a copy of the Opinion. He found it dated December 10th, five days after the approval of Chapter 180. It stated unequivocally, "We have concluded that the Supreme Courts decision requires that these exemptions be computed by deducting the amount of the exemptions from the true value of the taxable property." There followed nine and a half pages of reasons.

Thoroughly ashamed of himself for not being able to see the sheer logic of the Court without having read the compelling reasoning of the Attorney General, and now being sure of what was required, he set to work on his Tax List.

The final communique in the series arrived as he was knee deep in property cards and addressograph plates, exemption forms and adding machine tape. This one was from the County Board, dated December 14th, and read, "Chapter 180 of Laws of 1962 signed by Governor Hughes on December 5th has the effect of permitting exemptions to be taken from the assessed valuations rather than the full value of property for the year 1963."

"Happy Holidays and get your Tax Lists in on time."

He was last seen at the State House looking for someone named Harmless to hold him. Must have been schizophrenia though, because when they restrained him he insisted his name was I. M. Harmless.



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Committee Appointments

President Marriott Haines announced the appointment of the following committees for the year 1963:

PUBLICITY

Chairman — Daniel P. Kiely, Jr. — Plainfield
 Norman Harvey — Middlesex
 Theodore F. Swarer — Scotch Plains

MEMBERSHIP

Chairman — Clarence N. Delgado — Ridgewood
 Frank E. Osborne — Wayne
 John F. Hogan — Denville

LEGISLATIVE

Chairman — John J. Connolly — South Orange
 Alfred J. Greene — Clifton
 Anthony B. Berenato — Atlantic City

IN-SERVICE TRAINING

Chairman — Edward P. Markowich,
 for PMA I — Cranford
 Alfred H. Greene,
 for PMA II — Clifton
 Daniel P. Kiely, Jr.,
 Conference Group — Plainfield

PROGRAM

Chairman — George J. Linger — South Plainfield
 A. James Reeves — Cinnaminson Township
 Samuel Befarah, Jr. — Asbury Park

ANNUAL MEETING ARRANGEMENT

Chairman — George J. Linger — South Plainfield
 All elected State Officers

MUNICIPAL LEAGUE CONTACT

Chairman — State President
 State Secretary
 Chairman Program Committee

COUNTY CHARTER

Chairman — Edward P. Markowich — Cranford
 Everett G. Manning — Paramus
 August J. Church — North Plainfield

S. M. A.

Chairman — Russell T. Wilson, SMA, CAE-E —
 Orange

Alfred J. Greene, SMA, MAI — Clifton
 Clarene N. Delgado, SMA, CAE — Ridgewood
 Edward P. Markowich, SMA — Cranford
 Sargent Dumper, SMA, MAI — Millburn
 Joseph Rubenstein, SMA, CAE, SRA, MAI —
 North Bergen

Mrs. Evelyn M. Moore, SMA — S. Brunswick

ASSESSORS BULLETIN

Chairman — George J. Linger — South Plainfield
 Daniel P. Kiely, Jr. — Plainfield
 Norman Harvey — Middlesex

CIVIL SERVICE

Chairman — Lloyd Koppe — Scotch Plains
 All Committee Chairmen were advised by the President that they are authorized to make any additions to the committees necessary to carry out the purposes of the committee.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To The Editor:

I have just had the unfortunate experience of hearing a tax assessor testify as an expert for a taxpayer in a tax appeal. This created the ridiculous spectacle of one tax assessor testifying and criticizing the work of another tax assessor. This lunkhead, a poor excuse for an assessor, also had the unmitigated gall to use his assessing experience in his qualifications as an expert. Fortunately this assessor was a lousy witness and did his client more harm than good, but that is beside the point.

Do we, or do we not, have any ethics? If one of the aims of our organization is professionalization, let's at least act the part. Seems to me I've seen a code of ethics somewhere. Has it ever been officially adopted by the organization? If so, shouldn't this so-called assessor be reprimanded and denied membership in our organization, if it happens again?

Ted Swarer

To The Editor:

I wanted to take this opportunity to compliment you and your editorial staff, as well as the officers of the New Jersey Association of Municipal Assessors, on the fine job you are doing in the publication of the Assessors Bulletin.

The quarterly publication, I find, is an in-

valuable aid to me in keeping up with activities in the assessment field. I found the article by Mr. Rosenblum in your August issue on the Second Switz Case of particular interest.

I certainly appreciate your including me on your mailing list. Please keep the issues coming.

Pierce H. Deamer, Jr.,
Senator Bergen County

To The Editor:

I want to congratulate you and your Editorial Board on the very fine publication, **New Jersey Assessors Bulletin**, and more particularly to commend you on the excellence of the August issue. The articles are highly informative and interesting and the format is noteworthy.

I can appreciate the time and effort which has been spent by you and your associates in publishing and distributing the bulletin. I know it represents a sacrifice and often times personal inconvenience. However, you should be happy in the knowledge that the bulletin is a long stride forward in the education and professionalization of assessors as a group.

Again, my congratulations and my very best wishes for the continuation of your fine publication.

Alan F. Hart, State Supervisor,
Local Property Tax Bureau

To The Editor:

At our meeting held on September 27, 1962, a motion was carried to send to you, your officers and members our appreciation for the work and study you gave in helping to prepare the Tangible Personal Property Tax forms and the Senior Citizens exemption forms.

We hope we may always depend on your cooperation and interest in all matters of tax methods, and we will always welcome you to the meetings.

(Signed) Ralph M. Bull, Secretary
N. J. Association of County Tax Board
Commissioners and Secretaries

EDITOR'S NOTE

The letter from Ralph M. Bull was originally addressed to President Marriott G. Haines, who gave permission for its inclusion in this feature. Ed.

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ANOTHER COUNTY HEARD FROM . . .

ATLANTIC COUNTY

At the regular February meeting of the Municipal Assessors Association of Atlantic County a general discussion was held on the broad base tax, P. L. 51, and the proposed \$750,000,000 bond issue.

Resentment was expressed at the transferral of dedicated funds to general tax purpose use, and the emasculating of P. L. 51 by the removal of the 20% floor on business tangible assessments and the elimination of the business inventory tax.

The following resolutions were passed by the Association.

1. P. L. 51 should be repealed and the existing laws be used to their fullest extent.
2. The Association opposes the issuance of bonds to be paid for by monies from the New Jersey Turnpike which should be used for needed roads.
3. Any broad based tax to be established by Constitutional amendment after referendum and 100% of the money earmarked for education, schools and colleges.
4. That a sales tax be used to collect a broad base tax as opposed to an income tax.

BURLINGTON COUNTY

Election of officers took place at the November 29th meeting of the Burlington County Chapter. The Secretary conducted the election at the request of President Reeves.

The results of the election was as follows: Three of the present incumbent officers were re-elected to office, they being President, A. James Reeves, Cinnaminson Twp., Secretary and assistant Treasurer, E. Arthur Smith, Beverly City and Treasurer, Chas. L. Andrews, Moorestown Twp., Theo. A. Shaw, Mt. Holly Twp., was elected to the office of Vice President, Mr. Stecher, due to business reasons declined the nomination.

Members elected to the Advisory Board are as follows: Chairman, A. Rowan Bright, Delanco Twp.; Hobart Stecher, Burlington City; Russell

Bigelow, Riverton Boro; Josp. Lawrence, Bordentown Twp.; George Lange, Chesterfield Twp.; John Traino, Eavesham Twp.; William T. Stead, Pemberton Twp.; and Edward Snow, Riverside Twp.

In addition to the twenty five members in attendance, there were present, Mr. Charles Nairn a correspondent of the Burlington County Times, George Acolia, Supervising Field Representative of the Local Property Tax Bureau and Elmer Dounton, Sr., Senior Field Representative of the L.P.T.B. Mr. Dounton spoke briefly.

CAPE MAY COUNTY

At the January meeting of the Cape May County Assessors' Association the group was selected by the Local Property Tax Bureau for a real property sales study in a Pilot Program instituted by the Bureau. This study would examine sales of real property in a municipality, both vacant land and residential, and assemble the data for electronic processing to determine a front foot value and square foot value for each piece of property. This information would be made available to the individual assessor for him to use as a new tool in his appraisal technique.

The Cape May County group, was selected for this Pilot Program because they have been leaders in the State wide effort to equalize assessing practice. The Charter was presented making the Cape May County group a member of the State Association and group dues will be paid to the State Association making each individual Assessor a voting member of the State Association.

A discussion was held in reference to the effect of the State Tax Policy Commission report on Chapter 51. The fact that Chapter 51 has been postponed twice in the last two years and the Report has recommended changes in the law, it is the consensus of opinion of the Cape May County group that Chapter 51 should be postponed once more until the Tax Policy Report can be studied and the proper legislature introduced to make Chapter 51 operational.

HUNTERDON COUNTY

Frederick G. Wille, Town of Clinton Tax Assessor, was elected to his third term as President of the Hunterdon County Assessors' Association, at their quarterly meeting on Monday night, January 28. Reynier V. Jones, Franklin Township Assessor, was renamed as Vice-President, and Joseph F. Gessner, Kingwood Assessor, as Secre-

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tary-Treasurer.

Wille reported on a recent Trenton meeting which he attended to hear comments by William Kingsley, Director, State Division of Taxation.

Chester Pomatowski, Union Township Assessor, led a discussion of various current subjects including veteran exemption forms and procedures. A general discussion was held concerning Chapter 51.

Guest for the evening was Walter O'Rourke, President of the County Tax Board. He received the thanks of the group for the recent letter from the County Board recommending a "\$2.00 per real estate line item" as a basis for salary payments to Assessors by municipal governing bodies.

MERCER COUNTY

The Mercer County Assessor Association held their January meeting at the Bromley Inn on January 28, in the Township of Hamilton, with the Assessor of the Township of Hamilton, Roger J. Whatley being host.

The following Assessors were elected to office for 1963:

Pres. — Mr. Norman Friedly of Pennington Borough; Vice-Pres. — Mr. Edward Warren of Princeton Borough; Sec'ty-Treas. — Mr. Samuel K. Hunt of Hopewell Borough; Delegate to State — Roger J. Whatley, Twp. of Hamilton.

All the municipalities of the County were present but two. Also, Mr. Alan Hart and Charles Trier of the Local Property Tax and Mr. Russell Smith and Anthony Panaro of the County Tax Board.

MIDDLESEX COUNTY

Edgar Renk, Assessor of South Brunswick was elected President of the Middlesex County Chapter at their meeting of January 31st. Elected Vice-President was Assessor Harry Bolotin of New Brunswick. Bill McCowatt and Norm Harvey were continued as Treasurer and Secretary respectively. The Chapter authorized a letter to the State Executive Board and to the Director asking for a review of the unit values on gas station equipment that had been recommended for use under Chapter 51.

MORRIS COUNTY

The January meeting of the Morris County Assessors Association featured as its speaker, Assemblyman Harry L. Sears of Morris County. The membership took the opportunity to express their sentiments regarding pending and proposed legislation. He was asked to sponsor legislation concerning qualifications for office, tenure, and the elimination of the restriction of one increase in salary for each term of elected assessors.

OCEAN COUNTY

The Ocean County Assessors' Association met in November in the Ocean County Court House. At this meeting the following slate of officers was elected for 1963: Burnet B. Lynch, Secretary of the Board of Assessors of Point Pleasant Beach, was elected President; Joseph R. Fay, Sr., Lanoka Harbor, Vice-President; Leonard Turtora, Lakewood, Treasurer; Ralph P. Frahke, Toms River, Secretary. The discussion at this meeting

concerned 100% valuations and the assessment of business machinery, equipment and inventories. The goal of the Ocean County Assessors is equal assessments throughout the County.

A meeting held on January 24, was attended by Alan Hart, State Supervisor, Local Property Tax Bureau, J. Chester Holman, Secretary of the Ocean County Board of Taxation, Alvin Bills and Jack Ramey, Field Representatives from the Local Property Tax Bureau.

Mr. Hart spoke on the problems new legislation will pose for assessors, the future of Chapter 51 and summarized the Tenth Report of the State Tax Policy Commission.

PASSAIC COUNTY



Passaic County Assessors recently held installation of officers who will guide the organization during the current year. Installation was held at a dinner meeting of the group with Marriott Haines officiating. Haines is President of the State Municipal Assessors Assn. Left to right are Haines, congratulating Passaic Assessor Albert Galik upon being reelected to a new term; Les Freeland, Vice-President, West Milford Assessor; Louis Pisacane, North Haledon Assessor and Chairman of the dinner meeting; Clayton Schulster, Bloomingdale Assessor and Treasurer; Bert Nawyn, Secretary and Assessor of Prospect Park; and Galik. The dinner was held in Le Neve's Restaurant, Haledon. The Passaic Assessors Association includes all assessors of Passaic County. They are also enrolled 100 percent in Municipal Assessors Association.

SOMERSET COUNTY

At the January meeting of the Somerset County Assessors the following letter was authorized to be drafted by the Secretary, Ida Blaufuss. It was sent to the Senator, William E. Ozzard, and to Assemblyman Raymond H. Bate-man.

"The Assessor's Association of Somerset County meeting in session in the Administration Building, Somerville, on Wednesday evening January 23, 1963, moved and unanimously approved a motion directing the secretary to write to you, stating that the Association goes on record favoring giving dollar value to Senior Citizens Exemptions S.C.R. #5 and any bill to do the same for Veteran's Exemptions.

The Association also favors making these ex-

(Continued On Page Twelve)

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SOMERSET COUNTY (continued)

emptions applicable in 1965, and would like a "save harmless" bill to protect Assessors in 1964.

The Association thanks you for your interest and work on their behalf.

Somerset County Assessors Association
Ida A. Blaufuss, Secretary

UNION COUNTY

The first meeting of the Union County Assessors' Association for 1963 was a dinner meeting held at the Ye Olde Log Cabin, Clark, N. J. on January 31. Guest speaker for the evening was Sid Glaser, Assistant Director, Division of Taxation. Sid's topics were:

1. The consequence of the Tax Policy Commission's recommendations on the inventory tax.
2. The impact on certain municipalities caused by the recommended change in the Public Utilities Tax.
3. Senate Bill #70 — Assessors Tenure Bill.

Other guests present were Edward Biertuempfel and Seymour Letwin, Field Representatives for the Local Property Tax Bureau.



Sid Glaser, Assistant Director of the Division of Taxation, appearing as guest speaker at the Union County Association meeting. From left to right are Bert Layng, Springfield; Jim Ahle, Roselle Park; Sid Glaser; and Bud Bernard, Westfield. The Union County Charter with the State Association can be seen in front of Mr. Glaser.

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