

# An Appeal To Patriotic Republicans Of Lake County

By a Veteran Republican

Thousands of men and women whose heritage is the land of the Stars and Stripes are now more anxious for the welfare of their country than ever before. The time when blind partisanship will elect a sordidly selfish tax squanderer to a public office — especially when the masses of toiling people are as sorely oppressed by taxing authorities as were the inhabitants of ancient Palestine when the Blessed Babe was born in a manger—is surely passing.

An outstanding journalist and thinker has repeatedly asserted that the present era of ruinous and protracted business depression is caused solely by the cruel burdens of many forms of taxation imposed by rapacious taxing authorities, and by the wanton dissipation of public funds throughout the entire range of the public service from the township or school district to the federal government. "Grafter" and "racketeer" are new words which have been added to our language in the last few years to express the practice of acquiring money dishonestly from public appropriations or from illegal traffic. These words and the disreputable or criminal practices they represent are now so common that they are met with a tolerant smile by many citizens who would be indignant if directly charged with dishonesty in private life or with disloyalty to the government.

This thought naturally brings to mind the immortal words of Alexander Pope, the beloved English poet:

Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,  
As, to be hated, needs but to be seen;  
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,  
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.

What will arouse such Americans from their lethargy? What will renew in them the flame of patriotism? What will show them the stupidity and the non-patriotism of voting the "straight ticket," under any and all conditions, or of neglecting to vote at all? What will teach us that circumstances should direct our course in discharging our duty to our country just as they do in business, social or family affairs, as just as they sometimes change the course of a ship at sea commanded by a wise captain?

I have been a loyal Republican for more than fifty years. In my earlier years I made it a practice to devote a large portion of my time to work for the party for two to four weeks preceding every election, and I never received a dollar for political work. I hold no stock in the present nor the future of any candidate for office at the election now so near at hand and I have no desire for any manner of political preferment for myself. Hence no person can have a semblance of reason for questioning the purity of my motives after reading what I say in this article.

On Sept. 22nd last the Board of Supervisors of Lake County voted to increase the salaries of the Recorder of Deeds and the Clerk of the Circuit Court from \$3,500 to \$4,000 each. The minutes of the meeting show a unanimous vote of 34 supervisors present in favor of these increases of \$500 each for these two offices for the coming terms. This act was done quietly and word was passed out to those who would be most apt to learn of it to the effect that the adoption of the resolution was a mere matter of form as it was mandatory on the part of the board by reason of the fact that the population of Lake County is now supposed to be in excess of 100,000. While talking with the publisher of a newspaper in a small town in the western part of the county last week the gentleman said: "They had to do it, didn't they?" I met others who had a similar belief. Where did this misinformation originate? Who prompted the Board of Supervisors to adopt such a resolution in these times when thousands are losing their homes because they cannot pay the interest on their mortgages and cannot pay the taxes? Is it not fair to assume that the persons interested in getting an increase of \$500 brought the influence to bear on the supervisors to take this step? As both of the offices named are purely clerical offices there are probably hundreds of citizens of Lake County, both men and women, who are competent to perform the duties of either of said offices and could easily learn to do so in a very few days.

As soon as I learned of the act of the county board and of the impression which evidently somebody had passed out in an effort to forestall bitter criticism I sent a letter to the publisher of the Waukegan Journal in which I quoted section 10 of article 10 of the constitution of Illinois, which puts the responsibility for fixing the salaries of said officers squarely and plainly on the county board of supervisors. They had a right to decide that, in view of the fact that the incomes of practically all taxpayers have been seriously decreased, and of the further fact that the cost of all necessities of life have been decreased by 20 to 25 per cent, that the salaries of those county officers for the coming terms should be reduced to figures which they had a right to name. Instead of taking that course they increased the salaries as stated. Immediately many citizens throughout the county began to manifest indignation. Many taxpayers demanded that a meeting of the Board of Supervisors should be called before Nov. 8th to rescind the resolution named, as the constitution provides that the salaries of these county officers may be neither increased nor decreased during the terms for which they are

elected. Thus, the interested parties knew that if these increases could be voted only a short time before election and public indignation avoided until after election they would be secure in getting \$4,000 a year for the next four years. One of these men has held the same office for upwards of 30 years and he drew salaries from the county for three or four years before the beginning of that period. Would it not have been a graceful act of appreciation of the kindness shown this man if he had said to the Waukegan Journal when called upon by a representative of that paper: "Yes, in view of the distressing conditions under which all people except those drawing good salaries are now laboring, I am pleased to announce that should I be re-elected I will forego receiving the advance voted by the Board of Supervisors for the coming term?" Did he do so? Nay, Nay, he did not! This man had his son-in-law in the same office as an employee for some years until the office of Clerk of the Circuit Court was established. Since that time the son-in-law has been drawing \$3,500 per year, and should he be re-elected he will receive \$4,000 annually for the next four years. He, likewise, refused to make a public pledge that he would turn over to the county treasurer the \$500 annual increase should he be re-elected. This man, I am told, has his son at work in his office. Thus, practically three generations in the same family have been drawing salaries as stated and are now in line to have those salaries increased at a time when the incomes of practically all taxpayers have been reduced 50 to 100 per cent.

The article of the constitution appertaining to the salaries of county officers was not carefully considered when written. Instead of providing that all fees taken in should be turned over to the county treasurer and that the officials should receive their salaries in checks, according to the practice of any good business corporation, the constitution provides that the official shall pay himself and his employees in his office out of the fees received and turn the rest over to the county treasurer. Thus either of these county officers may keep as many employees as he pleases and pay them, in the aggregate, the total amount of the fees received whether their services were needed or not. I am told that in this period of business paralysis when only a few deeds or mortgages are being recorded daily there are twice as many employees as are necessary in the office of the recorder. Of course this would make many thousands of dollars difference in the sums turned over to the county treasurer annually to help defray the general expenses of keeping the court house in order and paying for fuel. The same conditions govern the other office under consideration. I am told that the man who has audited the books in the county offices for several years does not furnish, as a part of his report, a detailed list of the employees in each office and the salary received by each, and that the Supervisors do not require any such report, nor any statement tending to show whether or not the taxpayers are receiving fair treatment in these matters. Is not the time opportune for a change? It seems entirely probable that while the savings to be effected by the two candidates who have made public pledges will amount to \$4,000 in a single term many thousands of dollars more might properly go into the county treasury to help lighten the burdens of the taxpayers if good business methods were enforced in the management of these two offices.

The 30-year recorder candidate for re-election (since the voters have begun to take an interest in these conditions) has published advertisements in which he says:

"Great stress is being laid on the fact that certain candidates will turn in \$500 of their earnings the first year in office. Without any promise, which is a violation on the law, the first year I was Recorder I turned in \$9,401.67 earnings in excess of expenses."

Is it not quite plain that this is an attempt to deceive the voters by comparing the fees received in excess of the salary requirements and turned over to the county treasurer with a promise to turn over a part of the actual salary voted by the Board of Supervisors? This is a false comparison and hence looks like an attempt to befog the real situation. Again, the statement that to assure the voters that if a candidate is elected he will forego a part of the salary voted by the Board of Supervisors "is a violation of the law" is a plain falsehood. Hence, there are two attempts in that one advertisement to deceive.

The other candidate (probably equally alarmed by the prospect of defeat) has secured the endorsement of his work from the Circuit judges. That is easy. I performed the duties of Clerk of the Circuit Court while doing all the work of the county clerk's office, acting as clerk of the Board of Supervisors, clerk of the board of election commissioners, the board of poor commissioners, etc., when I was only 23 years of age. There is nothing abstruse or difficult about any of these duties. As the judges and the clerk are in close touch in the lines of their respective duties it is easy to secure an endorsement, one for the other, at any time. Moreover, nobody has questioned the efficiency of the work done by the present circuit clerk. But that does not justify the conduct now being criticised. The indignation which has arisen against him comes from the fact that while the county has been paying him a large salary for several years he now insists on receiving a substantial increase