

Elsewhere, newspaper editorials praised the land report and the Center itself. *The News and Observer* in Raleigh said the report had "uncovered enough bad practices in specific cases to justify a full review and judicious tightening of state property management procedures. . . The land report issued Monday offers good promise for the Center's work."

The Greensboro Daily News wrote that the Center "is off to an auspicious start. Its choice of a first topic, covering Democratic and Republican administrations, establishes its non-partisan approach. The report is balanced, informative and highly readable, neither hungry for sensation nor bogged down in technicalities."

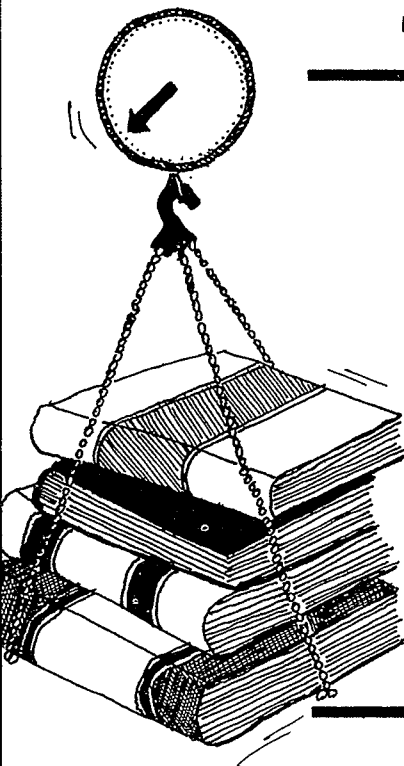
The Charlotte Observer concluded that "The first effort suggests the Center will perform a valuable service for state government---and the taxpayers."

The Fayetteville Times said the Center "has made a useful start," and that if it continued to study areas of state government that are ignored by the press "it will surely grow in usefulness."

The Fayetteville Observer said that the land report "has served a good public purpose" and praised the Center's recommendation that Council of State meetings should be open to the public.

The High Point Enterprise said the Center "has the means as well as the dedication to go the state press at least one better in investigative reporting. . . We believe that subsequent events will prove that it was a good day for North Carolina when this organization was established. It could have the positive effects of a Ralph Nader-type system but without the drawbacks of scattergun complaint. It bears watching."

what's yours ?



The Full Weight of the Law

Frank Marina Sr. of Morehead City makes his living selling "anything I can put my hands on for an honest dollar." Right now, Marina has his hands full.

In early November Marina was the high bidder for 27,000 volumes of North Carolina General Assembly session laws, "casebound and weighing from 2½ to 5½ pounds each," according to the records at the state Surplus Property Agency. The agency operates somewhat like a flea market for state government, selling surplus or other property which has outlived its use. In the case of the books, which cost \$2 to \$19 apiece new, the Secretary of State's office was simply overstocked. John Cheney of the office said the books date back to 1931.

Marina's high bid was \$127, not much by the pound. In fact, removal costs may be even higher.

What's Marina going to do with them? "I'm going to put them on a truck, and I'm not going to stop 'til I get rid of them," he said. He said he'd sell to anyone who wants them.

Cheney said the Secretary of State's office has cut back on the larger printing orders of the past to prevent such stockpiling in the future.