

# From The Gallery: Legislators Weary Of Study, Delay, Controversy

By Mildred Huskins  
**RALEIGH** — Members of the 1979 General Assembly are tired and want to go home. They have spent the past two weeks facing up to legislation which has been causing much study, delay and controversy in the various committees. These are the tough ones and they just had to be handled before the session could adjourn. Of course, the big one is the state \$10-billion budget for the biennium which has been under consideration by joint committees since the session got underway in early January. It is still not quite ready to be considered by the membership but is expected to be before them ere this week is over. The committees, sub-committees and the super-subcommittees have been in session going over the requests and means of financing them. The main problem, as usual, there is just not enough money to go around so some cuts have to come. So, the taxpayer awaits the verdict.

Dr. Albert Edwards, house chaplain, opened the early Monday evening session with his usual timely prayer: "Lord, help these men and women to remember they were made to smile and laugh as well as to groan and frown. Help them to remember they sought the job, the job did not seek them. But, Lord, let them cast their burdens on Thee and You will sustain them." Before the week was out most of the members had some doubt about having been sustained for the burdens were not light. The big ones had been before them. There were almost two entire sessions taken up with the only insurance bill which could come out of committee and the wildlife measure had been languishing in Rep. Jim Lambeth's committee since the session was hardly a week old. Besides those, there were literally hundreds of other bills to handle and Speaker Carl Stewart, Jr., kept them in long sessions, some of them continuing for as much as

six hours. It is during these lengthy sessions, when members can't be off the floor long enough to pick up a sandwich and drink, that the rule forbidding food and drink from being brought in is suspended and pages run the errands to the snack bar for some refreshments. However, some bring their own. We noticed Rep. David DeRamus of Forsyth was passing a plastic bowl of carrot and celery sticks among his colleagues and Rep. Douglas Clark of Duplin furnished those not on rabbit food candy from a basket on his desk.

Rep. Billy Watkins of Granville had a bit of trouble with his bill to require motor vehicles to show a sticker which would indicate the tax had been paid on that vehicle. But he persevered. There had been considerable debate when

Rep. Howard Coble of Guilford sent up an amendment excluding his county from the bill. "Let's say final rites over this bill and lay it to rest right now. Guilford wants out," he declared. But the Gentleman from Granville would have none of that for he didn't want his bill to be declared unconstitutional. The amendment was defeated. Rep. Foyle Hightower of Anson wanted to know, if a fellow wanted to go to the coast and didn't have a sticker, would he be given a citation. "Well," said Mr. Watkins, "he's got no business going to the beach if he can't pay his taxes." Then Rep. Chris Barker of Craven got into the act and addressed Mr. Watkins as Mr. Watson. "How would you get the sticker off if you needed to remove it?" was Mr. Barker's concern. "You could just go by your friendly auto dealer and he would do it for you...or you could just use a razor blade," was the Watkins answer to that one. He was

again addressed as Watson and after several of these he prefaced his answer with "You can just call me Billy..." Then someone suggested an amendment to make it possible for the city and county to cooperate with only one tax sticker and the speaker remarked: "That would be known as the city slicker sticker." What really happened, the bill was sent back to committee, "cleaned up" as they say around legislative halls, and returned later in the week to a more receptive house which passed it. The senate may now take a look at the measure.

The only bill the insurance committee could get out of its box came up before house members as a special order of business Wednesday and debate went on for hours. There were a number of amendments attempted but none could make it past the committee. At one point Rep. Ernest Messer of Haywood, opposing the bill in its form at the time, prefaced his

remarks on an amendment by pointing out that house members had been thoroughly lobbied and he didn't feel too optimistic about his amendment passing. Well, he was right on one count, at least, it didn't fly. Soon after that it came time to debate the bill and there was little left to be said. Rep. Howard Coble had a word or two on his mind. He began by saying he objected to the gentleman from Haywood implying that house members did not vote their own convictions but were tied to special interest lobbying. He called on his colleagues to be calm but, during his remarks, he became so excited he was making like an evangelist calling sinners to the bench. "Now that Mr. Coble has calmed us all down, I call the question," said Rep. Jay Huskins of Iredell, who had chaired the insurance committee and had enough of the whole business.

When the insurance bill camp up on third reading Thursday, a noisy electrical storm was in progress. Rep. Messer had another amendment and he wanted to explain it. He recalled that two years ago when the insurance bill was before the house there was a lot of thunder and concluded: "It may have been an omen." Rep. Mary Seymour of Guilford arose to oppose the amendment and just as she finished there was a loud clap of thunder. "I warned you earlier about that," the gentleman from Haywood said good-naturely.

Sen. Joe Palmer's old pulpwood truck has been declared an item of historic property by the senate. The senate approved the resolution May 14 on a 33-11 vote. The resolution was introduced by Sen. Rachel Gray of Guilford, who noted that Palmer, a Haywood County Democrat, mentions his truck every time motor vehicle legislation comes before the senate. Mrs. Gray explained that when a bill requiring motor vehicles

to be equipped with gas caps came up, Palmer said his truck would be in violation because it didn't have a cap. And in discussion of a bill requiring use of windshield wipers and lights during a rain, the gentleman from Haywood declared his truck not only didn't have lights or windshield wipers, it didn't even have a windshield.

"The old pulpwood truck of Sen. Joe H. Palmer is hereby declared to be an item of state historic property, and is hereby proposed for entry in the National Registry of Historic Property," the resolution said. The senator from Haywood said he thought the resolution was a joke but he didn't bother to tell his colleagues he no longer owns the truck.

A bill that would make it easier for police to arrest female prostitutes and male transvestites acting as prostitutes was introduced by Rep. Louise Brennan of Mecklenburg and she was

## Tennis Lessons Offered

Residents of Edenton who are interested in tennis can learn to play the popular sport and earn college credit simultaneously, according to Norman L. Norfleet, dean of instruction at College of The Albemarle. The community college is offering the physical education extension course during the summer quarter, the dean said. The first class will begin on Monday. Classes will meet on Monday and Wednesday afternoons from 4:30 until 6 o'clock at the public courts near the National Guard Armory on North Broad Street.

Bobby Backus, a local resident, will teach the course which is designed for beginners and others who wish to improve their basic techniques. Students may register during the first class meeting. Tuition for the one-hour credit course is \$3.25.



Lord Halifax said, "If a man loves to give advice, it is a sure sign that he himself wants it."

## Methodists Remember

(Editor's Note: Following is a statement made by Mrs. Julia Bond at the concluding service of Edenton United Methodist Church Sunday morning prior to the move to a new building on Virginia Road.)

Being one of the older members of our church, I was asked to reminisce a few minutes. My remembrance of this church goes back to the early nineteen hundreds, but I will go back further than that to state that many others before us experienced a change of churches, when the Methodist Church on Oakum Street was left for the Eden Street Church and then later to this Broad Street Church. Through the years I have realized that life is made up of continuous changes and the only thing we can do is to accept these changes as gracefully as possible.

When a child, I visited my aunt, my mother's sister, Mrs. William M. Bond in Edenton for a couple of weeks in the summer. She, as well as my husband's mother, Neila Bond, was very interested in the church. Aunt Laura Bond sang in the choir and taught the Woman's Bible Class.

On one of my visits, I remember going to the church with her daughter, Julia, who was the organist, to practice and the organ was hand pumped by the sexton. In 1921 my church membership was transferred from Epworth Church in Norfolk, Va., to the Edenton Methodist Church. At that time Rev. H. I. Glass was our minister. In those days we had a Ladies Aid Society and a Missionary Society. For

Continued On Page 2-B

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