

OUR RALEIGH LETTER

By M. L. Shipman

Raleigh Feb. 14.—The General Assembly will have been in session six weeks next Wednesday and not a single measure of State-wide significance has found its way to the statute books, although a goodly number are "on the way" and another week may evolve evidence forming the basis for a story of progressive action. Bills galore have been offered in both the House and Senate during the past week and the more important committees reported daily scores of tentative measures for consideration on the floor. Proposals to establish a national park in the Great Smoky Mountains, the effort to create additional judicial districts, the bill to allow the State Highway Commission unquestioned authority in establishing highways and the judicial salary bill are some of the big questions to be determined before the end of another week. The joint appropriations committee is not taking seriously the claims of State institutions and the appropriation bill may contain sweeping reductions in a number of items set forth by institutional executives at committee hearings back in the early days of the session.

Proponents of the Great Smoky Mountain Park scored heavily on Wednesday evening when the Senate Appropriations Committee, by a vote of 14 to 6, reported favorably the bill to provide \$2,900,000 for the purchase of the land to be utilized in the establishment of a National Park in North Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia. Members of the Senate committee voted soon after the conclusion of a public hearing in the hall of the House which developed into a rousing booster meeting for park enthusiasts, who were ably represented by former Judges Frank Carter and Thad D. Bryson, of Asheville and Bryson City respectively, E. S. Parker, Greensboro, Miss Carrie McLean, Representative from Mecklenburg, Senator Ebbs and Representative Nettles of Buncombe, and Representative Squires, of Caldwell. Opposition to the bill was voiced by Haywood Parker, of Asheville and Jones Fuller of Durham, representing the Champion Fibre Company. The question of financing the proposition alone stands in the way and if a way can be found to provide the funds without serious embarrassment to the State treasury the bill will go through "with a

whoop." There is a wide spread sentiment here favorable to the passage of the bill and no inconsiderable number of assemblymen feel that the Senate cannot afford to let the opportunity to "get on the map" of Eastern America in a big way go by.

The proposal to increase the number of judicial districts has been passed on from the Senate to the House and all pending bills relating to this subject are to be brought to the attention of the latter body on Thursday evening of the present week. The Senate has already passed the Smith bill, which would add seven new court districts, by a vote of 34 to 10 and that measure is to be taken up in the House with the Everett bill and the committee substitute as special orders. The House still has an open mind on the subject of additional districts but is reasonably certain to vote for at least four more. The Senate has also put the judicial salary bill behind it and the House must approve or reject the proposal to increase the salaries of the judges \$1500 per year. Other bills approved by the Senate and sent across to the House: To change the date of automobile registration from the fiscal to the calendar year and provide for two license plates; refund the former State Treasurer W. H. Worth \$12,000 for money stolen by his chief clerk during the fusion regime; worthless check bill with "teeth" and has on its calendar half a dozen important State-wide measures.

Bills emanating from the Judicial Conference have been subjects of debate in the House during the week, but the greater number of them "weathered to storm" and have gone over to the "upper branch." The bill to simplify the service of papers in civil action and which would require copy of the complaint to be served with the summons or a notice as to when the complaint would be filed aroused the ire of many members, but after prolonged discussion, and numerous explanations by the author favorable action was taken. Companion measures to this one were approved with few exceptions so that the work of the Judicial Conference, which is to be made permanent, has met with general approval by members of the House. The House has also put its okey on Judge Winston's resolution calling for the appointment of a commission consisting of three members of the House and two from the Senate to study the administration of various State departments and institutions with a view toward consolidation and elimination of duplications

and report to the present or the next session of the General Assembly. Representative Winston's resolution adopting "The Old North State" as the official song of North Carolina also received the approval of the House during the week. His bill providing an equalizing fund of \$4,000,000, with a State-wide revaluation of property values and a property tax of 35 cents on the hundred dollars for the support of the public schools is still pending. It is considered rather sweeping in some quarters.

Whether the eight-months school term proposal is to be submitted to the people at the next general election is a mooted question, the indications pointing to a conclusion of proponents of the proposition to move out in the open with a bill asking for a constitutional mandate authorizing the lengthening of the public school term to the extent suggested. Three other proposals to amend the constitution are: The calling of a constitutional convention; the creation of additional judicial districts with a superior court judge, without a solicitor, and limiting local tax rates to \$2.50 per hundred, with the segregation of intangible property for taxation.

The proposed highway bill which would practically give the State Highway Commission the last word in the location of roads is having "rough sledding." The committee substitute for the Smith-Hargett bill has not proved to be the compromise measure at first supposed. The two road committees are not in unison on the substitute and factional feeling has frequently been showing its head in the discussions. Favorable action by the Senate committee did not faze members of the House committee, although proponents of the measure believe it will pass the House when the Senate sends it over.

Committee approval has been given a suggested cut of 23 per cent in the State's printing bill during the next biennium which would reduce the amount to \$271,900 for all departments; uniform game law for the entire State; for curtailment of loan shark activities, which would prohibit the practice of usury upon the small salaried person who may wish to negotiate short loans; to increase the appropriation for pensions to \$1,500,000; approve a bond issue of \$1,250,000 for the construction of a bridge across the Cape Fear River, the money to be paid back with interest from toll charges; to place the liquidation of State banks in the hands of the Corporation Commission rather

than in the hands of the judiciary receivers; provided that horse-drawn vehicles be required to carry lights when traveling at night; providing for the disbarment of attorneys convicted of a felony; state wide property tax for support of schools providing board to equalize values; change date of holding primaries from the first Saturday in June to the first Saturday in August; increase members of Murphy school board to six with "equitable church representation;" submit question of continuing recorders court to the voters of Henderson county; to place the names of candidates for congress on the State ballot.

During the week the House put to sleep the morality measures proposed by Representative Haywood, of Montgomery, and voted down the Klutz bill to reduce the number of hours per week which women and children may work in manufacturing establishments from sixty to sixty-five and killed the bill to increase the allowance of widows to \$300 and of children to \$200 during the year in which solvent estates are being settled. The bill to make the use of a smoke screen on an automobile a felony, which virtually means giving officers of the law the right to shoot to kill fleeing motorists attempting to hide behind smoke screens, had easy sailing and has gone to the Senate for approval. Important bills recently proposed in the House would provide workmen's compensation; give peace officers the right to pursue an apparent felon into another county to arrest him; erect a memorial at Kitty Hawk where the first airplane was put into action; provide ferry connections with State highways in Eastern North Carolina; deprive anyone convicted of driving a car while intoxicated of the right to drive for a term of six months; declaring it a misdemeanor to manufacture, sell or transport intoxicants in the State, or from the outside, offenders being subject to imprisonment in county jail for not less than six months nor more than two years; increase the maximum penalty of carrying concealed weapons from \$200 to \$1,000; place barber shops and beauty parlors under the supervision of the State Board of Health; require all county officers in the State to furnish bond in an indemnity or guaranty company.

The general appropriation bill and the new revenue measure are daily expected from the committees which have had them under consideration. Three readings in each house on three separate days is required in the passage of the Revenue Act and a start must soon be made if the journey is completed within the sixty days from January 5th.

Hearing on the Poole anti-evolution bill before the House committee on education Thursday afternoon drew far the largest crowd attracted by any committee meeting during the session. The proponents of the resolution had the best argument. The strongest presentations being made by former representative Bowie of Ashe, and Doctor Long of Statesville. No action was taken on the matter at the time, but there is little prospect of the resolution going thru.

Otto Wood, notorious bandit who escaped from the State's prison here on December 8th was shot down while attempting to rob a drug store in Terre Haute, Indiana, on January 26. He was identified by finger prints and notice of his apprehension sent to Superintendent Pou. Wood had been operating under the name of Edward Haser and had pulled a successful holdup in Lynchburg, Va., before being shot down by the Terre Haute druggist he was attempting to rob.

OYSTER STEW AT BUNN

If you like oysters, sandwiches, hot drinks, and if you like to help the unfortunate little chaps of our State, then stop in sometime Saturday, February 19 at the oyster stew at Bunn. The proceeds will be sent to the orphanage at Raleigh.

Preaching at Bunn Methodist church, Sunday February 20th at 11 a. m., and 7 p. m. "Making Christ Near" at 11 a. m., "Facts and Figures on how we Live" at 7 p. m.

The first quarterly conference of the year for the Louisburg Circuit will be held at Prospect at 3 o'clock Sunday afternoon February 20th. Dr. M. T. Plyler, the Elder, will also preach at that time. All church officials of the circuit are urged to be present.

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