

It Happened This Week

Reorganization Starts
More Lawyers
Cabinet Predictions
Pass Bankruptcy Bill
Taxes and Bad Checks

PASS 3 REORGANIZATION BILLS

Three of the 10 bills introduced by the joint committee on reorganization of the state government, were passed by the senate on Monday, abolishing the office of executive counsel, the director of personnel and the tax commission.

79 TAKE BAR EXAMINATION

A class of 79, the smallest in recent years, on Monday stood the Supreme court's semi-annual test for those wishing to qualify for the practice of law in the state.

FOUR PICKED FOR CABINET

Advisers of President-elect Roosevelt say he has finally determined on four members of his cabinet: Senator Glass, Virginia, as secretary of the treasury, Senator Walsh, Montana, as attorney general, James A. Farley, of New York, as postmaster general and Miss Frances Perkins, New York, as secretary of labor.

NEW BANKRUPTCY BILL

The house of representatives on Monday by 201 to 43 passed the bankruptcy bill permitting debt-ridden individuals and corporations to adjust, scale down or extend their obligations, subject to approval of federal courts. It is expected to save railroads and other corporations on the brink of receivership. Speedy action on the bill is forecast in the senate.

REPORTS DELINQUENT N. C. TAXES

Revenue Commissioner A. J. Maxwell last Friday reported to the general assembly a total of \$42,967 in bad checks given in payment of state taxes, and items past due for over 60 days totalling \$1,227,696, together with a list of those delinquent in payment.

RECOMMENDS FREE TEXTBOOKS

The state school book commission recommended Friday to the state board of education that free textbooks be supplied children in elementary grades in North Carolina's public schools. It is estimated the cost would be around \$500,000 per year.

METHODIST JUNIOR COLLEGE

Bishop Edwin Mounson disclosed last week that the education commission for the Western North Carolina conference of the Methodist Episcopal church has decided to form a large co-educational junior college in the western part of the state by consolidating present junior colleges.

STATESVILLE BANK FAILS

The First National bank of Statesville, started in 1887, failed to open for business last week. A notice said it would be liquidated to the best interest of depositors.

LONE BANDIT IS NABBED

Robert Whiteside, of Raleigh and Asheville, picked a bad time for his attempted holdup of an Asheville theatre, Saturday night. Three county officers were passing in a car. They saw Whiteside and his gun, stopped and nabbed him as he was scooping up the cashier's receipts of the day.

DE VALERA HOLDS IRELAND

Final returns from last week's national election in the Irish Free State show Eamon De Valera, champion of a united free Ireland, winner of a clear majority in the Irish parliament.

MINNESOTA FARMERS REVOLT

Over 3,000 irate Minnesota farmers on Saturday forced a stop to foreclosure sales of farms in three counties.

FRENCH CABINET OVERTHROWN

The 40-day-old French government headed by Paul-Boncour was overthrown by the chamber of deputies, Saturday, on its financial program. President Lebrun asked Edouard Daladier to attempt the formation of a new cabinet.

GERMANY LOOKS TO HITLER

General Kurt von Schleicher and his cabinet resigned control of the German government Saturday in face of united Reichstag opposition. President Hindenburg offered the government leadership to Adolph Hitler, German fascist chief.

EPPELSON IS SUDAN POTENTATE

Jesse H. Epperson, Durham, was last week chosen potentate of the Sudan temple of the Shrine in annual meeting at New Bern. Durham was selected for the spring ceremonial.

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RATIO OF FARM TAXES SMALLER

State College Professor Cites Comparative Taxation Figures

NO DISCRIMINATION

Farmer May Be Overburdened But He's Not Taxed Unjustly

BY PROF. G. W. FORSTER
N. C. State College
(Reprinted from the University News Letter)

Taxes levied on farm property in North Carolina were approximately seven million dollars in 1920, and rose to \$14,468,373 in 1927, or an increase of 107.5 per cent. After 1927, however, the taxes levied began to decline. The greatest decline came between 1930 and 1931 when taxes levied dropped to \$8,527,617, or a decline in one year of approximately 41 per cent.

Pay Smaller Ratio

Taxes levied on farm property amounted to approximately 21 per cent of the total taxes collected in 1920, and about 10 per cent of the 1931 total. The annual percentage figures varied between these two extremes. For the post-war period of 1920 to 1931, inclusive, the proportion that farm taxes were of the total declined about 53 per cent.

The farm property tax levy in 1920 represented about 21 per cent of the total taxes less the highway fund. The percentage declined almost constantly throughout this period reaching about 13 per cent in 1931-32.

Not Discriminated Against

Thus it is clear that the farmers' share of the total taxes declined throughout the post-war period. It should be emphasized, however, that this does not prove that the farmers' tax burden is not excessive or that other groups in our state are not receiving more favorable treatment than the farmer. It is obvious, however, from this data that the state has been collecting a larger and larger per cent of its total taxes from other than farm property. It seems reasonably safe to say also that if our tax system was fair and just to the farmer in 1920, (about which there may be some question) it would appear that our system was fair in 1931. Or our tax system as modified from time to time has not apparently discriminated against the farmer in favor of all other classes combined.

Although it may be true that our tax system has not discriminated against the farmer, it may be true that farmers are paying out more in taxes in proportion to their wealth than other classes in the state. It is interesting, therefore, to examine the relation which exists between the farmers' share of the total wealth and the share of the taxes which they pay.

Comparing the per cent of wealth controlled by farmers and the per cent of taxes levied on farm land as compared with the total taxes of the state, it seems evident that in 1920 farmers were paying a higher per cent of the total taxes than they controlled of the total.

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Second Library Meeting To Be Held Monday

A dozen persons met in The Franklin Press office Monday night and discussed plans for reopening the public library in the Masonic building. Mrs. Lashie Kelly Cunningham, who was chairman of the old Library association, which disbanded several years ago, said there were about 3,000 volumes in the library, most of them standard reference, history and time-tried fiction. The Eastern Star, she said, now has supervision over the books and would be glad to have the library reopened if a responsible organization will see that it is properly managed.

A second meeting was called for 8 o'clock next Monday night in The Press office, at which time it is hoped that a number of members of the old Library association will be present. Rather than start a new association, it is planned to revive the old one.

900 MEN GET RELIEF WORK

\$3,668 Received by County From Reconstruction Corporation

During the past three months around 900 men have been given employment on relief projects in Macon county. The work is under the supervision of Miss Rachel Davis, superintendent of public welfare in the county, and J. Earle Lancaster, chairman of the county Red Cross chapter.

The state has sent to Macon county through the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, a total of \$3,668 and the county is scheduled to receive around \$2,000 during the month of February.

The money is being spent on public improvements. At present there are four road projects under way in the county under the supervision of the State Highway commission. With the exception of a few school districts, there has been some work done all over the county, and plans call for these districts to be aided in the near future.

There are many other projects, which are to be done at an early date, such as: Road work, beautifying the Franklin cemetery, and improvement of the Franklin high school grounds.

The men are being paid at the rate of \$1 per day for common labor, and at \$1.20 per day for skilled labor. For a while the men were paid in cash, but for the past several weeks they have been drawing scrip, which is in three forms, for clothing, groceries, and other needs.

Many organizations in Franklin have cooperated with the Red Cross in a splendid way. Ladies of the Methodist, Baptist, Episcopal and Presbyterian church and members of the Eastern Star have worked faithfully in making garments for men, women and children, so that the superintendent of public welfare could have them for distribution. Approximately 125 garments have been made by the ladies of these organizations.

Report Shows Destitution In Macon Relatively Low

Percentages of destitution in the various counties of the state are widely divergent, ranging from a low of 4.8 per cent of the population in Lincoln county to a high of 54 per cent in Anson county, according to figures released by Dr. Fred W. Morrison, of Raleigh, state emergency relief director.

Dr. Morrison's report showed that only 7.2 per cent of Macon county's population was destitute, placing this county sixth from the lowest.

500,000 Aided
Nearly 500,000 individuals have been provided with the necessities of life by relief and welfare organization in the various counties, the relief director stated. Food has been supplied to a total of 122,281 families. Families in Macon county aided during October, November and December numbered 533.

Interesting Sidelights
The comparative rankings of the percentages of destitution in the

various counties provides many interesting sidelights. It reveals that no one section of the state can be singled out as a spot where the rate is particularly high or low with possibly two exceptions. A dozen counties in the western section of the state, largely mountainous, have the smallest percentage of destitution and similarly the eastern counties have the highest rate, although there are exceptions even in these two sections.

It is interesting to note that the rate apparently is in no way based upon the general economic make-up of any county. The rate in Forsyth, for instance with all its industry, and in Currituck with no industry, is the same. The rate in Cherokee and Dare, representing the extremes of East and West, is virtually the same.

Perhaps the most interesting revelation of the study is the fact that Stanly county, ranking second from the top with only 5.5 per cent of destitution adjoins Anson with the highest rate.

Consolidation of Counties Seen as Means of Lowering Heavy Cost of Government

The depression has resulted in many and varied proposals for economy in government. One of the most vital suggestions concerns the consolidation of counties, proponents of legislation to this end contending that good roads and automobiles have shortened distances so tremendously that county consolidations could be effected without working any hardships upon the people. They also claim that it would greatly reduce the costs of local government by reducing the number of office-holders.

A bill proposing a constitutional amendment to authorize county consolidations was junked by the 1931 general assembly after considerable committee debate. The question is likely to come up again at the current session of the legislature.

An interesting article on the subject, written by Paul W. Wager, has been published in the University of North Carolina News Letter. The Press quotes the article in full, commending it to its readers for serious consideration:

The legislatures of thirty-six states are convening in regular session this year. Probably others will meet in special session. In most of these assemblies important legislation will be introduced looking toward a reduction in the cost of local government. In some states taxpayers' organizations are submitting comprehensive, if not revolutionary, programs of reorganization and retrenchment.

In the improvement of county government North Carolina has already advanced beyond most states, thus there exists less need for radical changes than in some other states. For the most part the shortcomings which now exist in North Carolina are not due to faulty laws but to weaknesses in administration. The enabling legislation has already been enacted. For instance, the way has been paved for competent accountants and strict budgeting control, the abolition of the treasurer's office, the appointment of a purchasing agent or county manager, and the joint support of certain services or agencies by two or more adjoining counties. Moreover, a state agency has been created to assist counties and other local units in solving fiscal and administrative problems. The failure of certain counties to measure up to the high standards contemplated by the law or to take advantage of its provision call for local enterprise rather than legislative action.

For Tax Relief
There is one major reform, however, to which the legislature should give its attention. This is one which is being agitated in no less than thirty-two states, and which will probably be given legislative attention in a number of them. Reference is made to the problem of county consolidation. There is pretty general agreement that there are more units of rural local government today than are needed with modern methods of transportation and communication. Specifically, in the South, there are too many counties. This is true in North Carolina. The state has one hundred counties differing widely in population and wealth. Many of them lack the capacity to support the services essential to the development of an enlightened and cultured rural civilization. This is mainly because there are more seats of government than there are trade centers, more taxing units than there are trade and resource areas. There are forty-six counties which do not have a town of 2,500 population. There are at least thirty counties whose county seats are not developing into active trade centers. The people of these counties are doing their banking and trading in the larger towns of adjoining counties. The result is that the accumulating wealth of these larger towns is taxed to support a smaller area than that from which it is recruited. The strictly rural counties thus suffer a high tax rate, or inferior governmental services, or both. As a matter of equity county boundaries should be recast to conform with the new and larger economic areas which modern transportation has brought into being.

Lower Cost, Better Service
Again, it will be generally found that it is the poorer counties which have the most inefficient offices, the most lax financial practices, and

the highest overhead costs in relation to volume of business done. It is reasonable to believe that if each of these weak counties were annexed to a richer adjoining county the administrative staff of the larger county would have to be increased hardly at all, a better quality of service could be extended over the whole area, and the tax rate enjoyed by the whole area would be only slightly, if any, above that of the more favored county now. That is it would probably be true except for the item of debt service. If the debts of the two or more counties entering into the consolidation were not in the same proportion to assessed value no injustice need result, for each could remain a taxing district for debt purposes until the debt was liquidated or equalized.

An Aid to Democracy

The consolidation, or better the redrafting, of counties might therefore be expected to reduce and equalize the cost of local government, improve the quality of public services, and increase the dignity of the county offices. Most important of all, the enlargement, in some instances, of the local unit of government, making it coterminous with an economic area and giving it a strong trade and culture center as its capital, might prove to be the tonic necessary to revive and strengthen local self-government. It is important that local self-government be preserved, but if it is to be preserved the local political unit must be expanded to conform to the larger social community which modern transportation has created.

A reduction in the number of counties will necessarily mean that some county-seat towns must surrender the courthouse and such advantages as its presence bring them, but most of these towns are declining despite the presence of the courthouse. Farmers and villagers that used to trade near home are now going ten, fifteen, or twenty miles to do the bulk of their trading. The perpetuation of superfluous seats of government will not check this trend. It is one of the products of the automobile. Progress has always involved economic injury to certain individuals and certain communities. Many of the little country villages are doomed as trade centers unless their merchants and tradesmen are unusually alert. The presence or absence of the courthouse will not greatly affect them. It is not fair to the taxpayers nor to the cause of democracy to postpone a logical and needed political reorganization in order to give a doubtful benefit to a few merchants.

Survey Needed
It is not suggested that there be a hasty or wholesale consolidation of counties in North Carolina. It is suggested that the legislature consider the absorption by stronger adjacent counties of six or eight small weak counties that are so lacking in unity and taxable resources that their perpetuation as separate counties is obviously impractical. Then it would be desirable to provide for a state-wide survey covering the distribution of

(Continued on page six)

Dogs Kill 26 Sheep in Sheriff's Flock

Last fall Sheriff A. B. Slagle had a fine flock of 60 sheep. Now he has only 34. The sheriff revealed last week that stray dogs have made away with 26 of his sheep. Under the law, the county is supposed to pay for sheep killed by dogs if they have been listed for taxes.

Other sheep raisers also have reported serious depredations by dogs. Many of them fear that it will be useless to attempt to raise sheep unless the late Representative J. Frank Ray's dog law is left untouched and is strictly enforced. Senator R. A. Patton has succeeded in having a bill passed in the upper house of the legislature to amend the law so as to permit one dog to a family free of taxation.

SINGING MEET ATTRACTS 400

Bad Weather Cuts Attendance; Next Convention Set For April 30

Owing to the disagreeable weather the Macon County Singing Convention which met at the courthouse Sunday did not draw as large a crowd as heretofore, and the attendance was the smallest in the history of the convention. Between 400 and 500 people were present.

Some excellent numbers were rendered, but many of the best classes which have been attending were absent. The next convention will be held at the same place on Sunday, April 30.

FELIX E. ALLEY GOES ON BENCH

Appointed by Governor To Succeed Late Judge Moore

Governor Ehringhaus announced last week the appointment of Felix E. Alley, of Waynesville, to succeed the late Judge Walter E. Moore on the Superior court bench, and said Judge N. A. Townsend, of Charlotte, who had been serving temporarily during Judge Moore's illness, soon would retire to private life.

Alley will be resident judge of the 20th judicial district and will serve until the next general election in 1934.

He was a member of the General Assembly in 1905 and from 1911 to 1915 was solicitor of the old 16th district. The new judge is 39 years old. Judge Townsend was appointed early in December by former Governor Gardner to serve temporarily during the illness of Judge Moore, who died Monday in Asheville. Townsend has sent in his resignation.

In announcing the appointment of Alley, Governor Ehringhaus described him as "a capable lawyer, a man of fine character, one of the

(Continued on page six)

Attempt To Cut Salaries Riles Railroad Employees

Considerable resentment has been stirred up among employees of the Tallulah Falls Railway company by the reported action of J. F. Gray, the receiver, in seeking a further reduction in their salaries.

"Judge" Gray is said to have circulated a petition among business men of Franklin and other points served by the railroad endorsing approval that the salaries and wages of station agents, trainmen and track workers be curtailed. It was reported that he submitted the petition to Judge E. Marvin Underwood of the U. S. Court for the northern district of Georgia, who has supervision over the receivership; but that Judge Underwood declined to sanction a further reduction. No formal announcement has been made concerning this, but the report became current this week among employees of the railroad.

"Judge" Gray was in Franklin last week conferring with shippers. It is not known whether he in-

cluded his own salary in the proposal for reductions.

Relations between the receiver and the rank and file of the employees of the Tallulah Falls line have become perceptibly strained during the past year. The employees say their pay already has been cut 43 per cent. "Judge" Gray's salary, variously reported at \$4,000 to \$6,000, they add, has been reduced only eight per cent.

The attitude among most of the employees is that they want to do all in their power to prevent service from being discontinued over the line; but they feel however, that more could be accomplished with a new receiver in charge.

HEZZIE AVANT DIES IN CHAIR

Contending to the last he had not premeditated the murder of Mrs. Smith E. Calder, Hezzie Avant, Scotland county man, died in the electric chair at state's prison, Friday.

Use the Want Ads

Classified advertisements in The Franklin Press bring results. If you have something to sell or trade, try a classified ad. The cost is small only one cent a word with a minimum charge of 25 cents for each insertion.

HOUSE PASSES COUNCIL BILL

Would Reduce Number of Councilmen from 6 to 3

STIRS DIFFERENCES

Town Officials Say They Were Not Informed Of the Plan

A bill introduced by Representative C. L. Ingram of Macon county to reduce Franklin's town council from six to three members was passed by the house last week and sent to the senate.

Officers of the present members of the council expire in May and the law proposed by Representative Ingram would take effect at that time.

While in Franklin about ten days ago the Macon representative said he had introduced the bill at the request of a number of Franklin residents, but he did not divulge their names. He said he thought it was a good measure and intended to do all he could to secure its passage.

Sentiment Divided

Sentiment among citizens of the town seems to be much divided. Town officers, who say they knew nothing about the measure until they read in the daily papers that it had been introduced, are wondering what motivated its introduction. Some of them think that it is an attempt to slip something over them and put control of the town's affairs in the hands of some particular faction.

Likewise, some of those who are inclined to favor the bill are of the opinion that it would prevent factional control of the council. Opponents argue, however, that it would be far easier for one group to control a council of three members than one of six members.

Beaten 4 Years Ago

A similar bill was introduced by Representative Solesbee four years ago but was defeated after Mayor George Patton went to Raleigh and argued against its passage.

Thus far no hearing has been asked on Representative Ingram's bill and, as far as The Press could learn, no one has taken definite steps to prevent its passage in the senate.

Patton's Bills

Following is a summary of bills introduced by Senator R. A. Patton of Macon and the disposition that has been made of each:

SB 12, to exempt Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Macon and Swain counties from provisions of absentee ballot law. Introduced Jan. 10 before Senate committee on elections law.

SB 13, relating to dog tax in Swain, Macon, Graham, Clay and Cherokee counties. Introduced Jan. 10, passed Senate Jan. 16, and now before House.

SB 53, to permit unlicensed hunting for coyotes, wildcats, foxes and crows in Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Macon and Swain counties. Introduced Jan. 16, before committee on game.

SB 54, to provide bounty for killing coyotes, wildcats, and crows in Macon county. Introduced Jan. 16, before committee on game.

SB 126, relating to Clay County bank, Hayesville. Introduced Jan. 16, passed Senate Jan. 25 and passed House Jan. 28.

SB 135, relating to tax foreclosures in Macon county. Introduced Jan. 26, before Senate committee on judiciary No. 1.

Senators Patton and Francis introduced SB 35, permitting teachers to keep certificates without attendance at summer schools during 1933-35 biennium. Passed Senate Jan. 27 and sent to House. They also joined with seven other senators in a bill to repeal the workmen's compensation act.

Red Cross To Elect Officers Saturday

A meeting of the Macon county chapter of the American Red Cross has been called by J. E. Lancaster, chairman, to open at 2 o'clock Saturday afternoon in the courthouse. The principal business to be considered will be the election of officers for the ensuing years.

Mr. Lancaster was appointed chairman of the chapter last fall when Miss Elizabeth Kelly, who died 10 days ago, became ill. Mr. Lancaster urged that all members of the Red Cross attend, especially those who are members of community relief committees.