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Raleigh Report

BY STATE SENATOR VOIT GILMORE

Road Bond Proposals

Three hundred million dollars: that's the big legislative news of the week. Five years of the most colossal road-building boom in state history—\$230,000 every working day, half of it to go to rural primary roads, the other half to be split between secondary roads and highways inside municipalities.

Exactly seven days after Governor Moore's message to the General Assembly urging the road bond plan, the bill to approve it hit the legislative hop-

per. North Carolina voters would ballot later this year whether or not to issue the bonds, and assurance will be given that this added debt can be financed without a tax increase, as a result of continuing in force the one cent per gallon tax which has financed the secondary road bond issue of 1949.

I am a member of the Senate Roads Committee and am carefully watching the bill's formulas for allocation of funds within the 18th Senatorial District. As proposed, our counties would share as follows in the \$75 million allotted to rural secondary roads, based on their proportion of the state's total: Harnett, \$947,800; Hoke, \$212,000; Lee, \$251,200; Moore, \$856,700; Randolph, \$1,931,700.

Municipalities would share \$75 million for improvement of highways within their corporate limits, based upon population. Of the 18 incorporated communities in our five-county district, the greatest share would go to Sanford (\$480,500) and the smallest to Cameron (\$11,700).

The \$150 million for rural primary roads would be allocated to each highway division on the basis of its proportion of the state's total primary highway mileage. This half of the bond issue is of crucial importance in the 18th Senatorial District because some outdated portions of highways such as U. S. 1, 220, 401 and 421 vary in condition from miserable to downright dangerous.

When assured that this \$300 million road improvement program will neither bring on new taxes nor jeopardize the state's financial integrity, every one I have asked has been for it.

Highway Safety Problem
New, safer roads will answer part of the cries for an all-out attack on highway accidents. Legislators must tackle the safety problem from three directions since hazards of the highway exist generally in three forms—the roadway, the vehicle, and the driver. Safety-engineered roadways are needed, as are vehicles in safe operating condition. The toughest part to legislate on is the driver. To increase his safety he must be further educated—or punished. Too often neither approach has seemed to be the desired result.

One novel approach I heard of is this: a "safety sweepstakes" in which safe drivers can win big cash bonuses. The plan would give each licensed driver the opportunity to buy a \$1 ticket annually, half of the ticket going into a giant sweepstakes bowl held by the state. At the end of the year if there had been, say 1,000 highway fatalities in North Carolina, then 1,000 tickets would be drawn from the bowl. If the kitty totaled, say, \$1 million, then each winner would receive \$1,000. The challenge to safer driving would be this: if a winner was found to have had any traffic violation during the year, he could not collect and his winnings would be divided among the others.

"I know this idea sounds like legalized gambling," said the author of this plan, "however, I

think we ought to try anything new to stop our slaughter." Comments are invited and new ideas are solicited.

Legislative Interns

Ralph Hendren of Southern Pines and Robert Wicker of Sanford, both undergraduates at UNC-Chapel Hill, are two of ten pioneers in a history-making program in the current legislature. They are "legislative interns," transferred for this school semester to the N. C. Center for Education in Politics at N. C. State in Raleigh and assigned to help senators and representatives in research, study and the drafting of legislation.

Selected from six N. C. colleges, the interns each receive a \$500 grant. They work daily in the legislature in addition to attending classes. At present, two interns are assisting me in studies of state policies in the fields of conservation and women's rights. I can attest to their great value to the legislature and I feel sure their practical experience is equipping them for valuable future service in public life.

This program is a "first" for any state legislature. I was once a "government intern" in Washington, operating on a Rocke-

feller grant and assigned first to the White House and later to the Senate. That incomparable experience fills me with a special interest in the success of the new intern program at Raleigh.

Honey, Peanuts, Etc.
Mecklenburg produces good honey, and the lone lady senator, Martha Evans of Charlotte had a jar of it on each senate desk last week to prove it. Eastern Carolina grows champion peanuts, and a bag was on each senator's desk last week as evidence, except that the peanut "lobby" made the awful mistake of forgetting to give a bag to the senate's presiding officer, Lieutenant Governor Bob Scott. Now the question is: with our district's superlatives ranging from Kennedy rocking chairs to bricks to choice hams and turkeys to soap and candles, what should we bring to Raleigh as our "trade marks. Nominations, please!

Bicentennial Approaching
With the 200th anniversary approaching for the Moravian town of Salem which was founded in 1766, there are 40 buildings still standing of the town's original 60. Twenty-one of them have been restored in a continuing historical restoration project at Old Salem in Winston-Salem.

Our Southern Pines Office has been consolidated with our Charlotte Office.

Harold E. Hassenfelt

will serve the Southern Pines area from Charlotte. The address is 110 South Tryon Street and the telephone number is 333-5492. Mr. Hassenfelt will also be available for consultation in Southern Pines on the weekend. He may be reached at Oxford 2-3261.

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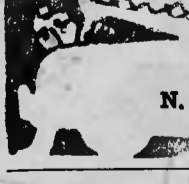
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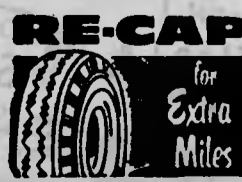
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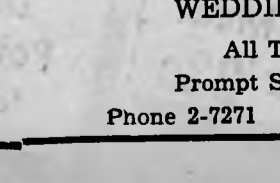
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