

CAPITAL REPORTER

Scott Summers

Raleigh, N. C., Sept. 17. — A tobacco sales holiday may be called soon (perhaps by the time this reaches print) if the situation doesn't ease on the weed markets soon. Redrying plants are jammed and some of the big tobacco companies have pulled buyers off the markets. The result has been less competition and a drop in prices. In at least one instance, sales were halted because of complaints by farmers over the prices bid on their offerings.

A tobacco sales holiday was called by the late J. Melville Broughton several years ago while he was governor. And Governor Scott is reported ready to call a sales holiday if the situation doesn't change for the better soon.

Among tobacco men there's a feeling that major tobacco companies are pulling strings to force

weed prices down. On the face of it, it's a problem of buying more tobacco than the redrying plants can process, with tobacco piling up at the warehouses. But these men say that the big companies could stop the piling up and keep buyers on the market if they wanted to -- thus keeping prices up through more competitive bidding.

The Edwin Gill appointment as Collector of Internal Revenue for North Carolina -- predicted by CAPITAL REPORTER three weeks ago -- brought a lot of comment from the experts. Some tried to make it look as though President Truman was "agin" the Scott administration and National Committeeman Jonathan Daniels. Some said Governor Scott didn't know anything about it. Fact is, the Governor knew about it and did not

try to stop it, despite the fact that he invited Gill, a Charlie Johnson for-governor man, to quit his job as State revenue commissioner. The job for Gill was engineered by some Washington smoothies, this corner hears, and they weren't Senators.

The appointment of Charlie Johnson, ex-state treasurer and opponent of Scott in the gubernatorial race, as customs collector at Wilmington caused a lot of raised eyebrows. He was named by Senator Hoesy, never a bosom buddy of the Governor's, and objection by Scott could have caused a further rift in the Democratic party in the State -- or at least added fuel to the flames.

Some folks were surprised that Johnson would accept the job, which reportedly pays \$6,400 per year to start. Reports from Charlotte indicate:

1. That Johnson was not too happy in his job there, despite a salary estimated at anywhere from \$10,000 to \$15,000 per year.

2. That Johnson's boss and the former State Treasurer were exactly pals.

3. That other Charlotte bankers did not cotton to the addition of Johnson to their ranks.

The new job will give Johnson plenty of leisure time and he is expected to live on his farm, some 12 miles from Wilmington. The new job should hamper him politically, since technically his hands will be supposedly tied by the Hatch Act. That's the law prohibiting federal employees from messing around in politics, it says.

North Carolina bankers are moving to head off at least one Yankee invasion. A bunch of New York money men recently came to the State to investigate possibilities of a time-payment plan for cattle buyers.

It would work just like buying a car or refrigerator. So much down, so much a week or month. In some instances, they said, no down payment would be necessary.

The New Yorkers liked what they saw, went back home for their money bags and said they'd be back this way soon.

Well, sir, Tar Heel bankers reacted like a heifer jabbed with a pitchfork. The North Carolina Bankers Association has called a meeting of "representative agriculture-minded bankers". They'll meet here in Raleigh October 17 with State Commissioner of Banks Gurney P. Hood, C. B. Batchford of the N. C. State College Extension Service, and other interested people.

Their aim? It's to set up a committee and begin work immediately on a livestock-financing program. Maybe we could stand having some more Yankees coming down to show the way. If you're gonna borrow money, it's always nicer to owe somebody you know.

Over at High Point there's a gas line price war going on. Some folks started a self-service station, where you fill up your own tank, and were able to lower prices.

The result, believe it or not, has been that every major gas company slashed prices some four cents a gallon in High Point. For example, the same gas that sells in Greensboro for 31 cents a gallon sells for a neat 27 cents in High Point.

This has revived some talk last heard during the Better Schools and Roads campaign. Then the gas companies were fighting the \$200,000,000 road bond issue. It was suggested that since the gas companies raised prices without apparent rhyme or reason, (incidentally, another price hike of about a penny a gallon is reported coming soon), and since gasoline has become a public necessity, that per-

haps it might be a good idea to put the gasoline industry under the State Utilities Commission.

That brought a howl, of course, but no explanation of how gas prices were determined by the big companies.

Now, some folks are wondering how the same gasoline can be sold by the big companies some four cents a gallon cheaper in High Point than it is in nearby cities. Operators of the High Point self-service station charge that the price cut is being made by the major companies in order to run them out of business. If that isn't the reason, they charge, then the big boys would cut prices all over the State.

It has raised the distinct possibility of a bill being presented to the legislature calling for the Utilities Commission's control of the gasoline industry in North Carolina, however.

Since milk has become a necessity for families with children, it also has been suggested that the dairy industry should be put under the Utilities Commission. The argument is that milk, at least, could easily be classified as a public utility. It may not be possible under the law, but it makes interesting conversation, anyhow.

One prominent dairymen, now living in Raleigh, was asked about the idea. He said that if he were allowed the same margin of profit as the power companies, he would welcome such a move.

"The dairy industry would make more money than it does now," he said. "And the cost of milk would go up to about 38 cents a quart here in Raleigh, making milk cost as much as Coca-Cola."

CAPITAL REPORTER hears that several prominent N. C. State College alumnae will ask the 1951 Legislature for \$5,000,000 to move the railroad tracks which now run through the middle of the college's campus. The trains have killed several students in the past, and also damage delicate instruments used at the school.

An other \$4,000,000 will be asked to build a center to house the State Art Gallery, the Museum of Natural History, the Hall of History, and State Archives. All now are scattered, and the proposed building would put them under one roof and more accessible to more than 200,000 people who visit them every year. One argument to aid in the financing of such a building may be that the space now used could be turned back into offices, perhaps eliminating some of the proposed new office building.

If the 5,000 farmers here for the State-wide Farmers Cooperative Exchange meeting can be used as

a barometer, Kerr Scott has not lost strength with the folks down on the farm. His speech, asking their support for flood control, was well received. Seemed like everybody wanted to shake his hand and say howdy.

In fact, folks were of the opinion that farm people generally are stronger than ever in their support of the Governor. This was particularly true of the western part of the State, they said.

A number of farm women and men, interviewed by CAPITAL REPORTER, expressed the same opinion. It was reminiscent of a public hearing on roads at the 1949 legislature. Farm folks streamed in from over the State to tell the lawmakers how they felt about voting on the road bond issue. They summed up the situation, as concerns the Governor and his program, with the same words at the FCC meeting: "Kerr Scott's our boy. We want what he wants."

In another speech at Wilmington, Scott said \$80,000,000 in new industrial construction now is going on in North Carolina. In 1949 construction of new industrial plants in the State totaled above \$300,000,000. He sees this as a vindication of his often-repeated claim that road-building and expansion of utilities will bring prosperity, and sees a possible new industrial building total of \$480,000,000 by January 1.

"Mr. Fair" -- Dr. J. S. Dorton of Shelby -- staged his fall "coming out" party this week. He ramrodded the Cleveland County Fair at Shelby. Two weeks hence he'll be in the middle of the Southern States Fair at Charlotte, and October 17-21 he'll be here in Raleigh managing the 1950 N. C. State Fair -- the granddaddy of them all.

Next Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday the N. C. Communications Commission will meet in Raleigh with its advisory committee of 30 business men, industrial people, educators, newspapermen and radio men.

The Commission was created by the 1949 General Assembly to study the part of audio-visual facilities (radio, motion pictures, and other media) should play in formal education. The report is expected to cause quite a fuss, particularly from the N. C. Education Association. It seems Mrs. Ethel Parkins Edwards, NCEA executive secretary, doesn't like some of the provisions.

Speaking of NCEA, I hear that the rank and file of the classroom teachers are not disturbed about their failure to get a hunk of the State's 13,000,000 bank balance as of last June 30.

As you know, the legislature had written a rider on the appropriations bill giving the teachers a bonus raise "if the State had a surplus". Well, the decision was made whether or not it had a surplus until the end of the biennium.

NCEA leaders talked a lot about the pay raise being due "now". But the classroom teachers didn't raise any fuss.

Incidentally, the NCEA has three sections -- one for principals, one for superintendents, and one for classroom teachers. The classroom teachers are unhappy -- and have been for years -- about what they call their lack of voice in their own organization. In some sections of the State, even now, pressure from superiors keeps teachers from belonging to the Classroom Teacher Association although they are members of NCEA. Principals and superintendents, along with State NCEA officials, have been "railroading their own ideas thru for years," one teacher told me.

"And when your boss is breathing down your neck, you've got to go along with his ideas even in your own organization," she said.

The State has earned more than \$1,500,000 cold cash by investing its idle money -- a hot 1948 gubernatorial issue -- during the fiscal year which ended June 30. Additional accrued interest, not yet paid, totals more than \$600,000. That will send the total the State earned through investing instead of letting its cash lie around to more than \$2,000,000.

State Treasurer Brandon Hodges will do the honors for the Governor

at an international meeting in Miami, Fla., October 12. The Columbus Day session will draw some \$50 big shots from this country and Latin America. Governors from North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and Florida are hosts. Idea of the powwow is to cement inter-American relationship on major objectives of our government in its program of national security. Number one speaker will be U. S. Secretary of Commerce Charles Sawyer.

The Young Democrats' proposed code of ethics for political campaigns can't come too soon to suit most folks. The idea brought kind words from the Republicans, who seconded the motion and said they'd take a slice of that, too. The only trouble is that there's always someone who thinks the ends justify the means, that it doesn't matter how he wins so long as he wins. It's kinda like spring house-cleaning. Just about the time you get everything spic and span, some one comes strolling in wearing muddy boots.

From Washington via Raleigh: Look for a draft speed-up, with all physically fit, non-veterans between 19 and 23 being tapped soon. Drafting of married men of that age bracket can be expected soon. Young veterans now exempt are likely to lose their exemption in early 1951. The 26-30 group is not likely to be touched, barring a spread of war. Top brass, my informant says, doesn't believe sudden spread of war likely. They think Russia will take no chances, but in the same breath say the place to watch is Berlin.

SMITH TOWNSHIP NEWS

Mr. and Mrs. Troy Smith visited Mr. Black Williams Sunday night who is seriously ill.

Mrs. H. P. Hood of Rocky Mt. returned home after spending a few days with relatives here.

Mrs. Dora Williams of Durham has been visiting Miss Pennie Smith and others here.

Mr. and Mrs. Leland Smith and son, Miss Pennie Smith, Mrs. Dora Williams had supper with Mrs. Ike Stroud Wednesday night.

Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Smith and son, Mr. Clayton Smith and daughter Edna attended The Duplin Story last week.

Mr. Leland Smith, Aubrey Smith, Graham Smith, Alvin Smith, Clayton Smith, Troy Smith, Fred Sackett and Raymond Smith fished at

Snead's Ferry Saturday night.

Mrs. Bryant Smith Jr. and baby have returned home after visiting her mother Mrs. Bill Stroud for a few days.

Miss Pennie Smith, Mrs. Aubrey Smith, Mrs. Graham Smith Mrs. Alvin Smith and daughters attended a Stanley Party at Mrs. Melvin Stroud's Friday night.

Mrs. Hiram Williams of Durham visited her father-in-law who is very sick.

The Senior Class of B. F. Grady is sponsoring a dance Wednesday night, September 20, at the gym. Bob Garris and his band will furnish the music. Admission 50 cents each. Everyone is invited.

Mr. and Mrs. Rhodes Baston of Roanoke Rapids spent the week end with Mrs. J. R. Smith.

Mr. and Mrs. R. J. Smith of Kingston visited Mrs. Lizzie Smith on Sunday.

Mr. and Mrs. Fitzhugh Smith and son of Mt. Olive spent Sunday with Mr. and Mrs. Johnnie Smith.

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