

# NEW BILLS POUR INTO LEGISLATIVE HOPPER

## POSTPONE PROPERTY REVALUING

### Proposed Salary Cut, Sales Tax, Other Questions Loom

(Special To The Herald) Raleigh, Jan. 22.—Revaluation of

property, machinery for which has been set up in many counties is in operation, will be postponed at least until March 15, according to action taken by both houses of the General Assembly which devoted the last two or three days of its session to this subject.

Although revaluation probably has been the most important matter up for consideration has been given to the reduction of salaries 10 per cent of all state and county and municipal employees, a Constitutional conven-

tion in 1933 to rewrite the Constitution and reorganization of the administrative division of the State government, bills on all of which are now before the body.

Three bills on revaluation, in view of the four-year revaluation law, were introduced, one to postpone it for two years, another to allow counties so desiring to keep their present assessments and another to postpone the revaluation until the present General Assembly gets further along on its own fiscal policy. The House passed the Neal bill postponing until April 1, but the Senate changed it Friday to March 15, and the House is expected to concur when it reconvenes this week.

The arguments of many, including the N. C. Tax Relief Association, is that values were inflated at the last property assessment four years ago, the reply to which is that they are depressed now, and if the valuation were too high then, they will be too low now. It is argued that the machinery is ready to go on with the revaluation work now and that to stop it, even temporarily, will be expensive, to which the answer that the machinery apparently is too costly anyway and may be reduced. Many inequalities exist now that should be evened up and much personal property should be uncovered, enough to reduce the tax on real estate, proponents of revaluation say.

Governor Gardner states that a revaluation now which would reduce the taxable valuation to anything like the figures sought by many would endanger the bonds outstanding against practically every unit and make harder refunding some of the bonds which are falling due and which the units will be unable to pay during the next few years. He proposed the two-year postponement.

The 10 per cent salary cut, proposed by Governor Gardner and included in the budget's general appropriation bill, presented last week, is meeting with some opposition, large-

ly on the ground that it will demoralize labor in industry and result in general cuts over the State. It is agreed among lawyers that salaries of the constitutional officers, including seven in the executive branch, 25 Supreme and Superior Court judges and the 170 legislators, cannot be cut during their term of office, but if the bill is enacted, they are not likely to face criticism by not returning 10 per cent of their salaries. Opposition is expressed by State employees in Raleigh and elsewhere, teachers and city and county employees, all of whom would be included, unless their remuneration had been cut to that extent within a year or they receive less than \$50 a month, the cut to become effective next July 1 and for two years only.

The Constitutional Convention proposal to the Governor is before the General Assembly in the form of a bill introduced by Representative Victor V. Young Durham, providing that the proposal be submitted to the people at the next general election, November 3, 1933, the delegates to be elected in the same manner and the same number as members of the House of Representatives, 120, to meet in the House of Representatives at noon on Wednesday after the first Monday in May, 1933, remain in session not exceeding 30 days for receiving suggestions, adjourn for 60 days and reconvene, the total time in session not to exceed 60 days. Apparently the proposal is meeting with favor, the legislators realizing the inadequacy of the amendment-laden constitution adopted in 1868.

While the Educational Commission's report, calling for an eight months' school term, elimination of many charter districts and consolidation to control and purchase to effect economy, is receiving commendation, a trend is seen toward the State taking over and operating the six month constitutional term now provided. A bill to that effect has been introduced and many think this can and will be done, while others believe the State should meet the cost of the eight months term. The State operating the six months term may be a compromise measure, if the eight-month term bill fails of passage.

The sales tax, long feared by the merchants of the state, hit the General Assembly square in the face at the brief session Saturday, when one bill, introduced in both houses, would seek to raise revenue for the six-months school term by a gross income sales tax, based on the West Virginia law, and another introduced in the House, would place a tax on gross retail sales for the same purpose. A third bill, based on the South Carolina law, was promised for Monday night.

The first bill, introduced simultaneously in both houses by the Harnett County legislators, Senator Bittette and Representative Young, places a tax collectable quarterly and within a month, on mining, quarrying, timber operations, manufacturing, real estate dealing, wholesalers, jobbers, banks, steam and street railways, telegraph, telephone, express, electric light and other public service corporations, contractors, all kinds of amusements, all professions, and any other business not included in the list, at rates ranging from 1-20th of 1 per cent to 1 per cent. It exempts mutual savings banks and Building and Loan Associations, educational, charitable, religious, fraternal, labor, agricultural and community trade or commerce bodies, organized for mutual benefit and not operated for profit.

The second, introduced in the House by Representative Day of Onslow county, would require every retail merchant to pay a graduated annual gross sales tax, ranging from 1-20th of 1 per cent for annual sales up to \$400,000 to 1 per cent on annual sales above \$900,000, the tax not to be in lieu of any special State license or occupational tax.

Both have as their objects raising funds for state operation of schools and removing the county or ad valorem tax for that purpose.

Retail trade organizations are already, have been for some time, in fact, lining up their forces to oppose such measures, and lobby activities will be greatly increased during the coming weeks of the session as a result of these bills.

The special judge act, now in effect has been introduced again, providing that the Governor shall appoint four special judges, two from the east and two from the west, and may, if necessity exists, appoint two others, one from the east, the other from the west, to assist the 20 regular judges of the Superior Court.

The Guilford County clerk incident, in which W. M. Gant was sentenced for using funds from Confederate veterans pension checks, is doubtless responsible for the bill

which requires the State Auditor to furnish annually lists of all pensioners to the Bureau of Vital Statistics and to check the pension rolls with the register of vital statistics "to prevent wrongful collection of pensions."

A move to prevent mob violence is seen in a bill which would require that a person charged with a capital crime or attempted rape be confined in a jail of another county than the one in which the alleged crime was committed or in the State penitentiary.

Two worthless check law amendments have been introduced, one limiting the punishment for issuing a worthless check no tover \$50 to a fine of \$50 or imprisonment for not more than 30 days, and another to make it unlawful for the officers issuing or serving warrants to act as collecting agents for the payee named in the check.

A bill to better safeguard city and county funds deposited in banks or other depositories, by requiring a surety bond, no Government, State, city or county bonds, or other security approved by the State Sinking Fund Commission as collateral, has been dropped into the hopper.

An illegal punch board or slot machine is defined in a bill introduced as one which does not produce or give to the person putting in coins a return in market value every time a coin is placed in it.

The General Assembly which is now getting down to business, turned aside Monday night to celebrate the anniversaries of the births of Generals Robert E. Lee and "Stonewall" Jackson. Friday night the members and their wives were guests of Mr. and Mrs. T. L. Bland at a reception at the Sir Walter Hotel and Thursday in joint session the members heard an address by Mark Sullivan, internationally known writer, who spoke at the Press Institute at Chapel Hill, that night.

## TWIN CITY HAPPENINGS

Miss Annie Cherry, Miss Clara Hearne, Mr. A. E. Akers and Mr. C. W. Davis were in Raleigh Saturday.

Mr. W. M. Thompson of the University of North Carolina spent the week-end here with relatives.

Rev. Watts of Emporia, Va., supplied the pulpit at the Presbyterian Church both for the evening and the morning service Sunday.

The Monday Night Bridge Club met January 19th with Mrs. J. W. Ross as hostess. There were three tables for players in the living room. The high score prize for the evening was won by Mrs. Cooper Griz-

zard who was presented two decks of cards. A salad course was served Those enjoying Mrs. Ross' hospitality were Mesdames Julian Allbrook, Frank Hawley, Howard Pruden, Hugh Camp, Cooper Grizzard, David Traynham, George Hayes, Miss Ruth Transou and Miss Margaret Clark. Guests Mrs. Carroll Wilson, Miss Hart Sheridan and Miss Martha Craddock.



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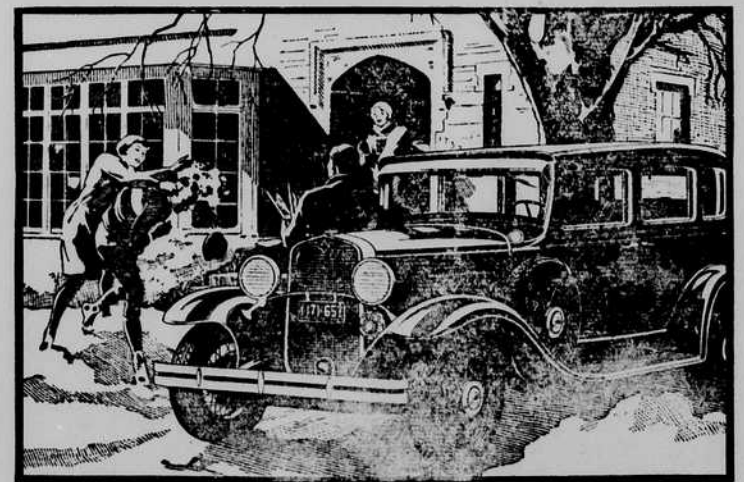
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