

THE ROANOKE RAPIDS HERALD

LONG REFUSES PEOPLE THEIR RIGHT TO VOTE

BULLETIN

Giving "Senatorial Courtesy" as their reason for not killing the amendment which would give the people of Roanoke Rapids the right to vote on the question of amending our city charter, the Senate Committee voted late this afternoon on Senate Bill No. 242, reporting favorably and killing the amendment.

Senators Blue and Walker, members of the Committee on Cities, Counties and Towns voted against the entire bill, branding it as un-Democratic.

In spite of the fact that Senator T. W. M. Long might have been conceded to have "won the first round" in his battle to amend the City charter of Roanoke Rapids, when it was reported on favorably by the Committee this afternoon, the large group of Roanoke Rapids citizens who journeyed to Raleigh to humbly ask the General Assembly for a right to vote on this most important question still have hopes of gaining their point.

The fight will be continued for a chance to vote in the House where our R. Hunter Pope and Frank

Taylor are representatives from Halifax County. Either or both of these two men can gain for the people of Roanoke Rapids the opportunity of voting on this bill. Otherwise, if No. 242 is passed by the House of Representatives, it becomes the law.

Roanoke Rapids men who went to the Capital today to protest against the bill were undaunted upon their return to the city, saying they were confident the fight "would be carried to the last ditch" in the interest of our fair city.

At 10:30 P. M. last night, Senator T. W. M. Long finally decided to refuse the people of Roanoke Rapids the right to vote on Senate Bill No. 242 after delegates and friends had plead with him for several days to either withdraw the bill or attach a referendum.

51 Undernourished Children Are Fed In City Schools

With Federal aid assistance, plus various contributions from local organizations and individuals, fifty-one or more undernourished white and forty colored children from the city school system are being given hot lunches daily during the regular school lunch hour.

The work, under the capable direction of Misses Blount and Tillman of the High School Economics Department, together with a corps of students, and at the colored school by the home economics department is expected to extend through the month of March and perhaps later.

The menu consists mainly of hot soup, crackers, bread, milk and fruit. Encouraging results are already being noted among several of the children. The number being fed has increased steadily from a small selection from the grades until the present group draws from the primary, intermediate and high school.

At 2:30 this afternoon several hundred citizens from here will meet on the fourth floor of the Revenue Building at the Capital, to appear before the Senate Committee on Counties, Cities and Towns to protest against the bill, an act to amend the present city charter.

This morning's (Raleigh) News and Observer comments at length on the situation in their "Under the Dome" column, from which we quote as follows:

"Those appearing against the bill say that it is mandatory, giving them no opportunity to express their opinion, changes the city boundaries, discharges the present elected mayor and Board of City Commissioners, discards the present ward system and calls for an election of commissioners at large.

"They will present petitions signed by 2,896 Roanoke Rapids voters and property owners. This number, they say, larger than the number of registered voters. The bill is disapproved by the town board of commissioners, the Roanoke Rapids Merchants Association, the Kiwanis Club, the Woman's Club, and other organizations, all of whom will present petitions at the hearing.

"Textile plants on the outskirts of the city, whose mill plants are forced in under the new bill, declare they cannot stand increased taxation. These corporations are in the school district and the newly formed Sanitary District and pay 74 per cent. of the taxes in both. Their mill villages were incorporated into Roanoke Rapids in 1931 and they now pay 26 per cent of the city taxes.

City Faces Crisis

Mill Future Endangered By Mandatory Bill

The future of Roanoke Rapids and the welfare of every man, woman and child hangs in the balance.

A bill was introduced in the Senate February 7 of last week by Senator T. W. M. Long of Roanoke Rapids which would force the mill plants and other industries into the city limits, "fire" the present Mayor and Board of Commissioners, throw out the two-ward system and make further changes in the 1931 Act which formed the new city and which was voted in by the people of Roanoke Rapids.

This new act, now before the Senate committee on towns and cities, is mandatory and will not give the people of Roanoke Rapids the right to vote on the bill, but will become a law immediately upon its passage by the Legislature.

Two years ago, on petition of more than 2,500 citizens, the mills agreed to enter a proposition by which they put mill plants and all other property into the Sanitary District and their mill villages into the new incorporated area.

These petitions carried maps of the two proposed areas. They were presented to the Legislature. A bill was presented by Dr. Long, then Representative, to extend the limits of Roanoke Rapids as agreed on.

The only opposition was from a small crowd who wanted the mill plants also included in the city limits. The bill passed the Legislature and was referred to the

people for a vote. It passed by a vote of 2,203 for and 118 against.

Now comes this new bill to change the 1931 Act and break the agreement made by the more than 2,500 petitioners, all the civic clubs and organizations, the then Town Board, and the voters with the mills.

The local mills have been operating at losses for several years. One mill has been on the verge of shut-down several times because the "standstill loss" was less than operating loss.

In the last three years, the three cotton mills have run at a loss of \$478,103. Even forgetting the broken agreement, they cannot afford to pay more taxes. Any more burden may cause the closing down of some of them, curtailment of operating costs in others.

The passage of this bill would cause unemployment and suffering to hundreds of our citizens. It would effect every business and profession. It would curtail the revenue for schools, sanitary district and hospital.

And remember, all this, without a chance for the people to vote on it. Yes, in this Democratic year, Democratic State, with a

Democratic representative.

And that's not all. This Mayor and Board of Commissioners to be thrown out of office by this bill were elected by the people of Roanoke Rapids just as much as any other officer. Yet, not one word was said to them about this bill, which affects the city so vitally and their own offices. They were not advised with or given a chance to register a protest or take the news to the people they represent.

Nor were they given their right to even appoint the election officers for the new election. A special Board is made by the bill consisting of Dr. W. E. Murphrey, J. A. Lipscomb and W. S. Saunders. When this bill becomes a law, this Board will name the election officers to hold the new election.

The two wards, whereby equal representation on the City Board has been given both ends of town, will be wiped out by the act. It will all be lumped into one ward so all city officers will be chosen and voted on at large, thus making it possible to have the Board "lopsided" with representatives from the heaviest populated end of town. And you are not being given a chance to vote on any of this.

Impartial observers rate this bill as the most unfair, un-Democratic, high-handed, autocratic and destructive piece of legislation ever attempted on an American

Resolutions Passed Against Sales Tax

At a special meeting of the Roanoke Rapids Merchants Association Monday afternoon, in addition to going on record as opposing Senate Bill No. 242, to amend the city charter, the merchants passed a resolution strongly opposing a general sales tax, a measure now under consideration by the General Assembly.

Local members pointed out that a sales tax of any nature would be especially disastrous to Roanoke Rapids being situated so near the Virginia boundary.

We understand the excuse given for not giving the people the right to vote on it was because "95 per cent of the people of Roanoke Rapids are for it" so "why stir up a lot of controversy over nothing and get the town all torn up again."

We answered those statements as being palpably untrue; that, given a chance to vote and knowing the facts, the people of Roanoke Rapids would vote against that bill in overwhelming numbers and that nothing in four years has stirred this town up so much as the resentment here this week over the actions in Raleigh.

Presiding Elder Guest Methodist

Rev. L. B. Jones, presiding elder, will preach at the First Methodist Church next Sunday morning, and will hold the first quarterly conference immediately following the sermon. The pastor will preach at the night service, and the members of the Senior Epworth League will have charge of the music at that hour. The public is invited to attend these services.