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BACKWARD GLANCES AT THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

We have purposely waited for an opportunity of gaining a perspective before giving to our readers a general summing up of the late General Assembly. There are two times when legislation should be discussed—just before the enactment and quite a number days after the enactment. We can hope to consider on this page only the more important questions connected with the legislation of the recent General Assembly.

The personnel of the body measured up in all respects to that of any preceding Legislature that we have seen in session. It was a revolutionary body whose zeal was ready at all times to run away with its wisdom, and some radical legislation was enacted. Both Houses had men of decided ability, able to hold their own in the National legislative bodies; yet on looking back we can see that in voting there was, in general, a decided subserviency to the few. In other words, there was a patent lack of that independence of view and action that we like to see in our legislative bodies.

Anti-trust questions provoked more feeling and discussion, and consumed more time, than any other. The law which was passed came as a kind of resting place for those who did not feel justified in singling out one trust for punishment and for those who were unwilling for the session to close without some anti-trust law. Whether the law passed will prove effective or not, remains to be seen.

The railroad legislation was of a varied character. Some of it was distinctly anti-railroad. Some of it was necessary. We believe that in view of the fact that the railroads are in the midst of plans for betterment, involving large expenditures which tax the resources of the roads, and all this while everything else seems to be going up in price, it would have been the wise thing to have fixed rates, if lowered at all, at not less than two and a half cents per mile. North Carolina has been congratulated in the past for being the only State in the South to have a second-class fare. Personally, we regret that this cause for congratulation has vanished. We regard it very unfortunate that the Ashboro and Aberdeen Road was fixed in the rate class with the larger roads. We have as yet seen no justification for such a classification. The people will form their own ideas about it, and the matter will probably linger in politics. Charters were granted to over fifteen projected railroad lines.

The Legislature was very wise in its attitude to the demands of general education. With a few exceptions, all the counties in the State have now a chance to establish compulsory education. Children between eight and fourteen years of age must attend the public schools sixteen weeks in each year. The provision for a system of high schools in those counties voting for it is, we believe, an unnecessary step, as the State should first perfect its regular public school system. The establishment of the Eastern Training School and the School of Technology at Spray was a forward

educational movement. Increased appropriations were made to the higher State institutions. All in all, the action taken by the Legislature, with regard to education, was in every way worthy of our great State, and is a cheering guide post to higher goals.

It is good to think of what the Legislature did for the State's unfortunates. No longer will our jails and poor-houses be filled with those who hitherto have not been able to find a place in the Hospitals for the Insane. Larger appropriations, more nearly than ever before in keeping with the demands, were made for the regular institutions, and in addition, the sum of \$125,000 per annum was appropriated for the establishment and maintenance of an institution in which those who have not been able to find access to the Hospitals, may be placed. The movement for a Reformatory crystallized, in the enactment incorporating the Stonewall Jackson Training School with a small appropriation. This is not what the thousands of our people calling for a Reformatory desired. But it is a beginning, and we should make the best of it. Two years from now, the Legislature, we trust, will be willing to do its full duty toward such an institution.

The Legislature took a decided step in dealing with the question of immigration. The Preston bill, which was passed, places the whole question in charge of the Department of Agriculture. This Department must select the kind of immigrants that come in and use their discretion in determining whom of these to admit. The bill carries an appropriation of \$5,000 annually from the agricultural fund, and \$5,000 from the general fund.

We regard the legislation on child labor as being a great step in the right direction. We believe that it will meet the approval of the majority of the mill-owners in the State. It is reasonable and far from being drastic. It provides that no child under fourteen years of age shall work after 8 p. m. in the mill; that no child under thirteen years of age shall work either night or day except as an apprentice, and then only on the condition that he or she has attended school for four months during the preceding twelve months. Under no condition may a child under twelve years of age work in the mills.

It is difficult to characterize clearly the temperance legislation. There was not very much legislation either for or against temperance. We believe that the General Assembly as a body was in favor of temperance in general. Several counties were made dry; several were continued wet, when public sentiment was for prohibition. Several places were allowed to vote for the dispensary. In several instances the temperance cause was defeated through that monstrosity called "Senatorial courtesy." We are inclined to believe that the temperance principles of the late General Assembly were political rather than moral, and that any temperance law would "have stood a poor chance if party fealty had come in as an opposing force. If this be true, we can see a

stronger reason why the temperance forces of the State should renew their activity in strengthening the moral temperance sentiment of the State. Af- all, however, there is no decided ground of complaint. Every temperance advocate should feel encouraged that a law was passed requiring scientific temperance instruction in the common schools, and rigid anti-jug laws were passed in several counties. It is also a matter of encouragement that a law was passed enabling towns in which there are dispensaries to vote them out, if possible, without recalling the saloons. Hitherto no dispensary town has been able to vote out a dispensary without voting in the saloon.

There can be nothing but commendation of the legislation appropriating an additional \$125,000 for the pensioning of the old soldiers. The State can never do too much for the old soldiers. They have a good Home now at Raleigh.

We do not think that the General Assembly was very liberal in the matter of the salaries of State officers. The salaries were equalized, and all fees will be turned into the State Treasury. Every salary should be increased. Very few of the officers can live on the salary which they now received. The salary of a Superior Court Judge was increased \$250. It should have been increased at least \$750. It is false economy for any State to place its officers on a bare living basis. Such a policy is not conducive to obtaining the best men. The State determined to do better for the State Librarian. The salary paid him in the past has been a pittance. An increase was made at the late session, but it was not large enough.

The session lasted sixty-two days. There were over 1,500 bills ratified. There can be no criticism of the industry of the legislators. They were inclined to work and utilize all their time.

OUR OWN SHORTCOMINGS.

A great many people are concerned over others' shortcomings, whose greatest shortcoming is their unconcern over their own shortcomings. Much earnest thought is given by us to the improvement of our neighbor's manners, or his habits, or his crude opinions, which might better be spent in squaring our own ways of thought and life with the ideals that we wish our neighbors might live up to. Perhaps if our own front yards were neat and clean the folks next door would listen with greater respect to our speeches at the meetings of the village improvement society. Perhaps the children in our Sunday-school classes would be more quiet, if we were less noisy in getting them quiet. And perhaps our preaching, our teaching, our bits of well-meant advice by the wayside, would take hold with a more engaging grip than they now seem to have if we had a little more concern about living up to these things ourselves. How would it do to try it?—Sunday School Times.

Make yourselves nests of pleasant thoughts. Treasure-houses of precious and restful thoughts, which care cannot disturb, nor pain make gloomy, nor poverty take away from us—houses built without hands, for our souls to live in.—John Ruskin.

We ought not to be weary of doing little things for the love of God, who regards not the greatness of the work, but the love with which it is performed.—Selected.