

WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY

This is the third in a series of weekly summaries of the work of the 1947 session of the General Assembly of North Carolina. These summaries are not intended as a report upon all legislations, but are confined to discussions of matters of general interest or of major importance.

In spite of the considerable amount of time spent on the supplemental pay bill for the balance of the current fiscal year (as one observer put it, "finishing the work of the 1945 Legislature"), the work of the 1947 session seems to be moving along at a better-than-average rate of speed. Many of the major administration and departmental bills are already in the mill and under consideration by appropriate committees, and so far the committees have been making good progress with them. Judging from the number of bills introduced, this session is ahead of the 1945 session for a comparable period of time. At the end of the 21st legislative day, 80 bills had been introduced in the Senate and 201 in the House, for a total of 281, as against 78 bills in the Senate and 156 in the House for a total of 234 for the same period in 1945—a little better than a 20% increase in speed.

The apparently greater speed with which the General Assembly is going about its work does not necessarily mean, of course, that this session will be shorter than the last, nor that it may not even be a great deal longer. The fact that a greater number of bills have been introduced thus far may mean not only that there has been faster drafting at this session. It may also mean that the members of this Assembly have a greater number of different legislative ideas to present for consideration, that the

total number of bills will be greater than before, and that consequently more time will be required to consider them. As for the work of the committees on the major pieces of legislation, the really controversial issues have not yet reached the open controversial stage. With respect to the controversy over the pay of State employees in general and teachers in particular, a small preview has been afforded in the fight over the supplemental pay bill. As in the case of the number of bills introduced, the supplemental pay bill fight may mean either a longer session than in 1945 or it may mean a shorter one than has been generally predicted. It may foreshadow a long, hard struggle over the biennial appropriations bill, or it may have served to demonstrate the relative strength of opposing viewpoints with the result that the committee may be able more quickly to report out a bill which will command the majority support of both houses.

There are, of course, many other important and highly controversial matters to be disposed of before adjournment sine die can be pronounced. There is the medical care program in general and the 4-year medical school and teaching hospital at Chapel Hill in particular, the proposed increase in the "Post War Reserve Fund" by the addition of \$9,300,000 from the current General Fund "surplus" (tied in with such issues as teachers' pay, the medical care program and corporate franchise tax reduction), and certain items in the budget revenue bill, among others. Brewing are such controversial measures as one which would provide for a State-wide referendum on the sale of intoxicating beverages. (On the same day that the Allied Church League for the Abolition of the Beverage Alcohol announced from its meeting in Raleigh its intention to draft and have introduced a bill providing for a State-wide liquor referendum, the representative from Catawba County introduced a bill to provide for a vote by the electorate of Hickory on the question of the operation of liquor stores in that city which is approximately the politically "dry" part of the State. And on Wednesday there was dropped in the hopper a bill designed to bring to a head a long-heralded fight. SB 66 (introduced simultaneously in the House as HB 133), entitled simply "A bill to be entitled an Act to create the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission," would abolish the Division of Game and Inland Fisheries of the Department of Conservation and Development and take control over game and amateur fishing from the Department of Conservation and Development and vest it in a newly created 9-man gubernatorially appointed "Wildlife Resources Commission." The State's Nimrods and Isaac Waltons seem overwhelmingly in favor of this "bill of divorcement," while the Department of Conservation and Development seems to be resolutely—and thus far, successfully—set against it. As for the legislative fight, more than a majority of House members and less than a majority of Senate members signed the bill, and it may be supposed that the sponsors got as many signers as they could. Which may mean that the fight may boil down to a contest between the two houses, as was the case with the supplemental pay bill, and that a compromise will have to be worked out.

Bills pertaining to schools and school teachers were much in evidence during the past week. The House and Senate received on the same day separate versions of a school building equalization fund. HB 118 would set aside \$11,000,000 from the General Fund as a "Special Building Fund" to be allocated to the various counties as grants-in-aid for school plant construction and improvement, the amount of the grants to be determined principally on the basis of the value of property locally assessed per child on average daily membership in the schools. SB 55 would set up an initial fund of \$10,000,000, which would be increased by \$15,000,000 out of any General Fund surplus of the next biennium, to be distributed to the various counties for school plant improvement on the basis of need as determined by a number of factors. Of the amounts to be appropriated, the House bill would permit \$1,000,000 and the Senate bill \$1,500,000 to be buildings). And finally came HB 194 embodying the South Piedmont Plan for teachers' pay, ranging from \$1560 to \$3000 per year (9 months) for holders of "A" certificates, and from \$2000 to \$3600 per year for holders of "Graduate" certificates. Among other bills introduced during the week, SB 59 would substantially increase the punishment for drunken driving (a second conviction would bring a mandatory minimum punishment of 90 days imprisonment and \$200 fine); HB 126 would rather extensively overhaul the law relative to trucks; HB 132 would exempt sales of farm machinery from the sales tax; SB 67 would require the confinement of dogs during the months of April, May and June (the breeding season of rabbits, quail and other wild game), and authorize game wardens to seize dogs running at large during those months and to destroy those not claimed within 10 days; HB 185 would set up a joint used for school bus acquisition. HB 163 would provide that school bus drivers must be at least 21 years of age, while HB 164, introduced by the same representatives at the same time, would limit the salary of school bus drivers to \$60 per month. HB 137 would permit the enrollment of children who were 6 years old on or before January 1 next preceding the opening of school. HB 155 would prohibit carnivals and other shows from using school grounds (but not legislative committee to study the barber law and to inquire into activities of the Board of Barber Examiners; HB 192 would authorize the Department of Conservation and Development to render scientific forestry service (for a fee) to forest land owners and to give free forestry advice; and HB 184 would ask Congress to do right by our Cherokee Indians. To round out a rather full legislative week, HB 5 was ratified on Thursday, so that towns of less than 20,000 population may now install parking meters, and HB 148, introduced Wednesday, would make of the second Wednesday in August of each year a new holiday which would be known as "State Farmers Day."

HB 181, introduced by John W. Graham on January 30, calls for "amending Section 160-229 of the General Statutes of North Carolina relating to municipal ordinances for the protection of health and contracts for medical treatment and hospitalization of the poor to apply to the Town of Edenton." The bill will authorize Edenton to contract with public or private hospitals or institutions, for a period not to exceed 30 years and for annual payments not to exceed \$10,000, to provide for medical treatment and hospitalization of the sick and afflicted poor of the town. The bill was sent to Judiciary Committee No. 2.

Eight Families Violate School Compulsory Law

W. J. Taylor, school attendance officer, reported to the County Commissioners Monday that eight fam-

ilies were referred to him as having children out of school during January in violation of the compulsory school law.

Five of the families reported children back in school after being contacted. Two of the other three were given until February 3 to have children back in school, while the third was referred to the County Welfare Department and also to the County Attorney and Clerk of Court.

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