

WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY

The twelfth week of the 1947 General Assembly was its last; 1949 legislators hope their twelfth week will be the last save one. Lieutenant-Governor Taylor has appointed a committee to meet with Speaker Ramsey to coordinate the efforts of the houses to that end. In longer and more frequent meetings the members have amended and argued at length on a few public measures, and have continued to deluge the calendar with a disturbing number of local bills—all this with the number of introductions this session only a few behind the total for 1947. Following the usual 1949 pattern, minds, ears and mouths were filled this week with school and money matters. The road bond bill is in a House committee, but this week will see that issue opened on the House floor again.

Appropriations
The Biennial Appropriations bill was reported out of committee to the House floor on Wednesday, but was then pushed down the calendar to Tuesday, April 5, just four days before the planned sine die adjournment. This bill carries an increase of almost 38 million dollars over the 381 million dollars recommended by the Advisory Budget Commission. Most of this increase can be attributed to (1) over 26 million dollars additional for raising teachers' salaries and reducing the per-teacher load, (2) three million dollars for increased State aid to county health services, and (3) one and one-half million dollars for merit salary increases for State employees in the second year of the biennium. Since the Revenue Bill provides income sufficient only to meet the Advisory Budget Commission recommendations, the committee moved to meet the possible 38 million dollar deficit by releasing the 30 million dollar Post War Reserve Fund to the General Fund, hoping that available and future General Fund surpluses would take care of the difference.

The Permanent Improvements Bill came up for committee consideration on Tuesday, was swiftly approved, and reported favorably on Thursday in form calling for \$1,027,500 more than the 72 million dollar measure recommended by the Advisory Budget Commission. Significant, however, were new provisions freezing specifications for all approved building projects, directing that unexpended balances resulting from a drop in construction costs revert to the General Fund.

Before voting on any bill calling for specific expenditure of the 30 million dollar Post War Reserve Fund, the House on Tuesday was given the opportunity of voting on the more fundamental question—should the fund be spent at all? Just as debate on SB 203, the school building measure, was opened, a House resolution was introduced calling for retention of the fund as a "cushion" against any decrease in General Fund revenues in the coming biennium. The resolution was soundly defeated on a

roll call vote of 81 to 31, after which the House proceeded to consider whether or not to spend it for county school buildings.

School Building Aid
Two weeks ago when SB 203 arrived in the House, it called for a 50 million dollar bond issue to be submitted to the people, with the proceeds to be allocated \$500,000 to each county for school plant construction. As the bill passed its second reading on Friday, the only change from the Senate version was in the allocation, the House having amended it so that \$250,000 would be distributed to each county, and the remaining 25 million dollars would be distributed on the basis of average daily school enrollment in the several counties. Behind this change in the allocation, however, was a week of bitter wrangling and floor debate, with an ensuing parliamentary snarl that some observers said was the worst in years.

The fight centered around the House Finance Committee version of the bill reported out last week; it called for an appropriation of 30 million dollars from the Post War Reserve Fund and the submission of a 20 million dollar bond issue to the people. In that form it was unacceptable to the "school forces" in the House, as their plan called for the use of the Reserve Fund to provide for an increase in school teacher salaries to a minimum of \$2,200. After several postponements, the bill finally got to the House floor for debate on Thursday and was met by a flood of amendments. When the smoke cleared the proponents of the 50 million dollar bond issue had triumphed and the Post War Reserve Fund was untapped. Though this was hailed as a victory for Governor Scott's school program, it remains to be seen, first, whether the Senate will approve the bill in its present form, and second, whether the Post War Reserve can now be drained for school teachers' salaries as was proposed by the Appropriations Committee.

Port Bonds
Wednesday was, in the minds of many legislators and on the lips of at least one, a "great day in the history of North Carolina" because on that day the House passed HB 936 which authorizes the issuance of \$7,500,000 in bonds for the "construction of seaports" in our State; no opposition is foreseen in the Senate.

Beer, Wine and Stronger Spirits
In interesting contrast to the prolonged struggle over wine regulation two years ago, bills extending State ABC Board regulation of beer and wine (SB 282 and SB 370) have enjoyed smooth sailing so far—weather conditions that might possibly be accounted for by a willingness of the liquor referendum opponents to place curbs on beer and wine in anticipation and preparation for the battle to come two years from now.

Varying in minor details, but agreeing in the principle of reducing the liquor option unit from county to

city in a dozen instances, the House bills allowing municipal ABC elections have been assigned to a subcommittee of House Propositions and Grievances for further study. The one Senate bill doing the same thing passed the Senate without much difficulty, but will undoubtedly find its way to the same subcommittee upon arrival in the House.

Matters Of Local Interest
Two bills by which local government stood to gain financially went by the board last week when they received unfavorable reports. One, SB 329, would probably have resulted in wider realization by counties and cities of tax revenues from inter-urban motor carriers under a formula described in this bulletin when introduced. The other, SB 327, would have allowed rebates to municipalities of all taxes paid on gas used in municipally-owned vehicles.

Three sources of local legislation which can be counted on at every session to contribute a deluge are JP appointments, private claims and county board of education appointments. These are acted upon in three "omnibus" bills whose advent is one of the signs of impending adjournment. The JP omnibus bill was ratified Friday—the other two are on the way.

Propositions And Grievances
Three recent bills have one unpleasant thing in common—their connection, directly or indirectly, with departing this life. SB 369 certainly has as one of its purposes postponing the inevitable event—it prohibits the handling of venomous reptiles under conditions usually associated with the rites of a cult recently come to this State. SB 352, by way of promoting some good out of the generally unhappy, gives legal sanction and encouragement to the donation by will of one's body or parts thereof for medical use. SB 344, indicating belief that "the evil that men do lives after them" and not wishing to prolong the memory, makes unlawful the inscription on one's tombstone of an accusation of criminality and directs the eradication of any such inscriptions already carved. It was not inconceivable that these three bills might all have figured in the same law suit some day—imagine a snake-handler who willed a part of his body to science, had the rest of it buried as the result of a playful nip by one of his pets and on whose monument was written the statement, "Died while violating the Snake-Handling Act of 1949"—but any chances of this are now remote, since 352 itself met an untimely death on Friday when it was reported unfavorably in the House.

New Movie On Corn Attracting Interest

The new motion picture "More Corn Per Acre" has been received with en-

thusiasm by farmers throughout the eastern part of the State, reports Dr. E. R. Collins, in charge of agronomy extension at State College.

The film, first ever produced by the Agricultural Extension Service, was shown in 20 counties last week, and showings have been scheduled in 20 additional counties this week.

Farmers in all corn-producing counties in the State will have an opportunity to see the picture by the end of April.

The 16-millimeter film was made in color and runs for 25 minutes. It tells the story of how several hundred Tar Heel farmers have increased their corn yields to more than 100 bushels per acre during the past few years.

All of the principal actors are North Carolina farmers shown at work on their own farms. Counties in which scenes were taken include Currituck, Nash, Alamance, Forsyth, Henderson, Bertie, Union, Richmond and several others.

The picture is largely the work of three persons—Dr. B. A. Krantz, soil fertility specialist of the Agricultural Experiment Station and the U. S. Department of Agriculture; Dr. Landis S. Bennett, who did all of the photography except animation, and Dr. Collins. Technical assistance was provided by the Motion Picture Service of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

Petition Asks For Road Relief In Upper Chowan

Chowan County Commissioners on Monday were presented with a petition from upper Chowan County residents asking that the State Public Works and Highway Commission take

over a section of the Piney Woods road.

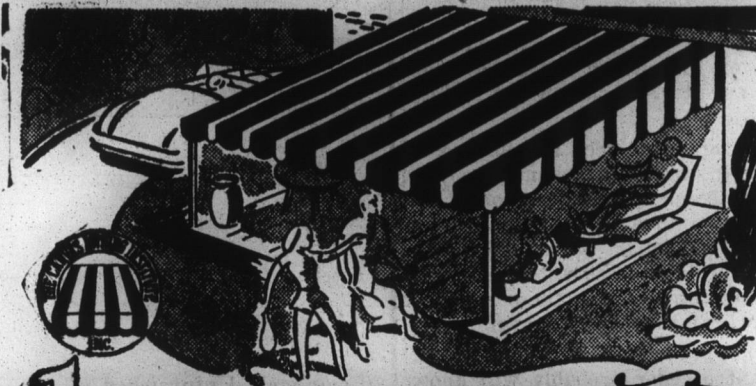
Quite a few names appeared on the petition, which asks for State maintenance of the road which is one mile east of Ryland to the Perquimans County line.

The Commissioners favored the request, but Chairman W. W. Byrum was instructed to ascertain if it was the intention of residents along the road in Perquimans County to make

a similar request for State maintenance, so that adequate relief will be provided.



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