

WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY

**NOTE:** This is the 17th of a series of weekly summaries prepared by the legislative staff of the Institute of Government on the work of the North Carolina General Assembly of 1957. It is confined to discussions of matters of general interest and major importance.

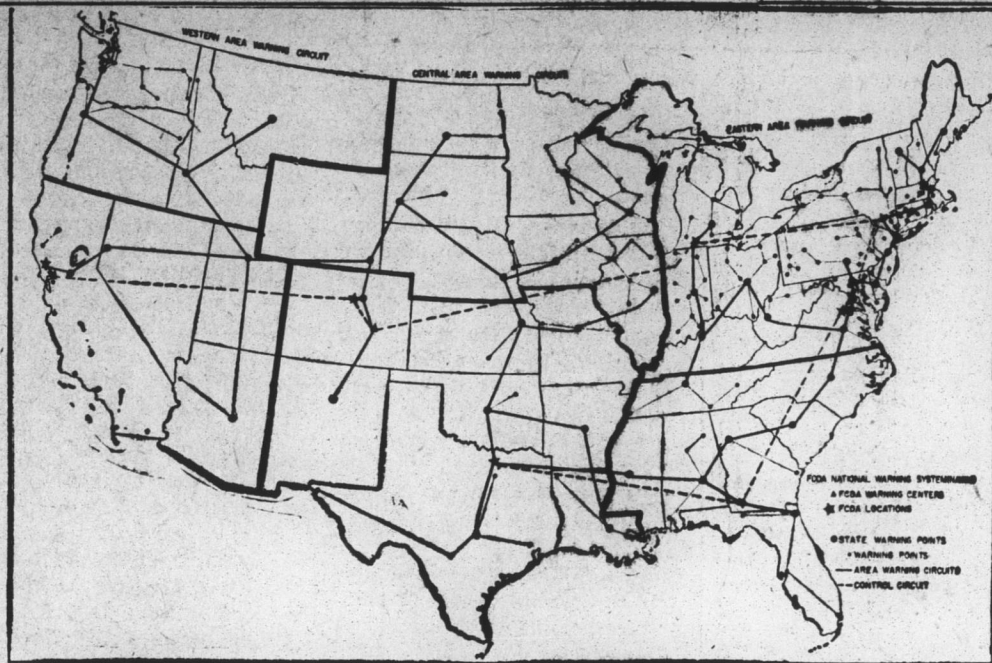
The big question hanging over the legislature at the first of the week was whether it could finish its work in time for adjournment Saturday. Despite multiple sessions all through the week (including a Saturday work day that went from 10 A. M. until 5 P. M.) the job could not be done; there were just too many bills to be dealt with. The best guess as to the adjournment date now appears to be Tuesday or Wednesday, and even that deadline may have to be moved back if the two houses are unable to agree quickly on the level of the teacher pay increase.

Even in the closing rush, the

bills continued to flow in, with almost 100 introductions during the week. At week's end, the General Assembly's total of bills submitted was 1,983, only 16 short of the 1955 legislature's 1,999 in a session 2½ weeks longer. Both houses moved to stanch the flow Saturday by resolving to receive no more bills—except for one providing for adjournment sine die. Neither house has appointed a Calendar Committee to separate the wheat from the chaff, and apparently every bill will be acted upon except those cubby-holed by standing committees.

**Budget Matters**

Major interest, of course, was focussed on the progress of the big money bills. The 300-page Revenue Bill, whose status was in doubt at the beginning of the week, moved smoothly to ratification, after the Senate decided to concur in the House amendments. The bill appropriating some \$20 million for capital improvements also enjoyed smooth sailing. But the course of the main Appropriations Bill was considerably rougher, as the House voted to give school teachers a 16.09% pay increase, while the Senate held out for the administration's figure of 15%. The dispute was tossed into the lap of a conference committee for consideration, and its Saturday afternoon report was that the conferees could not get together and needed more time. With neither house apparently in the mood for compromise, and both wanting to go home, the outcome of the issue is extremely uncertain. The other major issue in the Appropriations Bill—whether the state employees



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should be given an across-the-board 11% salary increase—was resolved by both houses in favor of the Personnel Department's "yardstick" plan for increases.

**Motor Vehicles And Highway Safety**

One of the surprises of the week was the return of the compulsory liability insurance bill to the Senate floor and its passage (along with appropriations for its administration). The House, refused to concur in Senate amendments, however, and the measure is before a conference committee. Earlier in the week the House voted down the proposal to create a study commission to look into the matter between sessions. Efforts to increase the insurance coverage required by the existing Financial Responsibility Law also failed in the House; new bills would require that proof of financial responsibility be maintained under the law for five years (rather than two years) after an accident.

In the course of the debate on the mechanical inspection bill, it was brought out that it is sometimes difficult to locate a highway patrolman to inspect cars brought into North Carolina from out-of-state (as required by present law). To meet this objection, bills were submitted authorizing the Department of Motor Vehicles to license private inspectors, who would make such inspections for a fee of \$1.00.

One of the strongest bills aimed at curbing highway racing, HB 619 (which calls for confiscation of automobiles used in racing, successfully cleared the Senate and is in the hands of a conference committee. . . . A further attempt to plug the "nolo contendere" gap was killed, as were measures (a) providing procedures for court review of drivers' license suspensions by the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles and (b) extending drunk-

en and reckless driving penalties to all places in which the public generally is allowed to operate motor vehicles.

**Liquor**

In the wake of last week's liquor distribution furor, there was a flurry of bill introductions pertaining to alcoholic beverages. HB 1412 would require the State Board of Elections to call an election on any issue presented by a petition of 15% of the registered voters voting in the last general election. . . . HB 1420 would forbid lobbying by members of state and local ABC boards. . . . HB 1432 and SB 514 (both already killed) would fix maximum mark-ups on malt beverage prices. . . . HB 1424 would authorize local ABC boards to spend up to 5% of their profits on rehabilitation of alcoholics. . . . HB 1422 would require all manufacturers, brewers, bottlers, salesmen, etc., of malt beverages to have permits from the state ABC board. . . . A local act permitting Wilkesboro to have an ABC election was killed on Senator Eller's plea of senatorial courtesy, but with Representative Vann refusing to intervene, the bill authorizing such an election in Clinton narrowly passed.

**Local Government**

A measure authorizing a \$1,000 homestead exemption from property taxes on a local option basis was introduced by Representative Speight and killed during the week. Another tax proposal would repeal all laws granting tax exemptions for tangible personal property; it is aimed at a number of local acts exempting particular types of stored agricultural products—acts which opponents charge have placed counties in competition with one another. . . . HB 281, providing for centralized tax listing with the State Board of Assessment by companies having inventories in more than one county, was reported unfavorably in the House.

New bills would prohibit JPs from maintaining offices outside their townships and would require return of fines and costs imposed by a JP upon appeal to superior court. . . . HB 385, requiring JPPs to maintain standard records, was ratified with about one-fourth of the counties still under its provisions. . . . HB 905 (providing for retirement of superior court solicitors) was voted down in the House, but HB 712 (allowing time as solicitor to be included in computing judges' service for retirement purposes) squeaked through to ratification.

County commissioners' association bills giving counties authority to name roads in unincorporated areas and changing the required emblem on county vehicles have completed the legislative journey, as have other measures (a) giving counties and municipalities refunds of 6c of the gas tax which they pay and (b) reducing the share of right-of-way cost which municipalities must pay for highways through town.

**Miscellaneous**

The administration's anti-NAACP bills (requiring detailed reports from organizations supporting or opposing segregation in the use of public facilities, and imposing severe penalties on persons or organizations inciting or contributing to the cost of litigation) easily survived House attacks but were shouted down in the Senate. . . . An Anson County bill requiring all dues-collecting organizations in the county to register with the clerk of superior court was quickly passed.

New bills calling for study commissions with regard to nursing homes, problems of municipal government, the appoint-

ment of UNC trustees, and the state's revenue structure were introduced; they follow earlier measures to set up commissions studying state government reorganization, revision of the State Constitution, school finances, the need for a uniform map law, the practice of osteopathy, motor boat regulation, cancer, negligent uninsured motorists, sex crime laws, and the need for a new capitol annex—several of which have already been killed. The big revision of the state's

health laws has been ratified. . . . Proposals to create a psychologists licensing board were defeated in the Senate. . . . Efforts to amend the so-called "anti-Jonas" election law have been thwarted. . . . A new minimum wage bill was submitted in the House, but proponents could not garner the two-thirds vote necessary for immediate floor consideration. . . . Board of Higher Education bills creating a college revolving loan fund

for constructing dormitories, setting up a community college plan, and standardizing the organization of the state's teacher colleges, have been ratified.

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