

Weekly Legislative Summary

This is one in a series of weekly summaries prepared by the legislative staff of the Institute of Government on the work of the North Carolina General Assembly in 1961. It is confined to discussions of matters of general interest and major importance.

tee. There are reports to the effect that a bill revising Congressional districts will be introduced by April 15.

Finance

Latest tax bill is HB 383, by Rep. Woodard of Northampton, which would levy a 3% sales tax on retail sales of electric power and pipe gas, whether sold by private utilities, cooperatives, municipal systems or others. Sales to governmental agencies and hospitals, churches and schools would be exempt.

At hearings before the Joint Finance Committee during the week, spokesmen for new and used car dealers, soft drink bottlers, newspaper publishers, the State Farm Bureau, and State Grange were heard. The Grange opposed the food tax, except as a last resort, and suggested a 4% tax on the present base, and 1% increase in the income tax as major alternatives.

The Farm Bureau opposed the food tax. Both organizations opposed the proposed 1% tax on feed, seed, fertilizer and farm machinery.

Automobile dealer spokesmen feared for the existence of their business, and soft-drink spokesmen appealed for fair play. Newspaper publishers protested their inability to pass the tax on to the consumer.

State Government

HB 379 and SB 166, the Administration bill to reorganize the State Highway Commission, was introduced Tuesday. The bill would increase the size of the commission from its present seven members to 19 members, including a full-time chairman who would replace the Director of Highways as chief executive of the commission. The Director of Highways would become administrative officer of the commission. Commission members would serve 4-year terms concurrent with that of the Governor. The 18 commissioners would be assigned to particular geographic areas to handle relations with the public concerning highway matters.

A Director of Secondary Roads would be appointed by the commission, with the approval of the Governor; this director would, in consultation with the commissioner assigned to an area, prepare annual plans for maintenance and construction of secondary roads in each county. Policies governing preparation of these annual plans would be made by the commission, and would include provisions for consultation with and recommendations from county commissioners and interested citizens, reports to persons making recommendations, and filing of a copy of the plan with the

county commissioners. The bill moved rapidly through the House Committee on Roads and Highway Safety. It was reported favorably, with a technical amendment, on Thursday, and is scheduled for floor consideration next Tuesday. The Senate bill was reported favorably Friday.

SB 79, fixing terms of members of the State Ports Authority at 6 years, SB 80, empowering the Department of Administration to make rules governing the form and publication of reports and other publications issued by state agencies, and SB 138, governing responsibility for state property, all passed the Senate Thursday.

HB 207, reorganizing the Board of Conservation and Development into a 28-member body, passed the Senate Friday and is ready for ratification.

Health and Welfare

HB 384, introduced by Dr. Davis of Lenoir, would establish statewide medical assistance for the aged. The bill, reportedly approved by the NC Medical Society, Hospital Association, Dental Society, and Pharmaceutical Association, would provide essential medical care to residents over 65 who are not receiving old age assistance and who are unable to provide for themselves without deprivation of the necessities of life. Determination of eligibility for assistance would be made by the county superintendent of public welfare with the approval of the county welfare board and in accordance with regulations of the State Board of Public Welfare. Counties would be required to provide one-half, and the State would provide the other half of non-federal funds necessary to effectuate the act.

The act would create an Advisory Council for Medical Assistance for the Aged composed of 3 medical doctors, 2 dentists, 1 pharmacist, 2 community general hospital administrators and 2 county commissioners, all appointed by the Governor, and all except the dentists nominated by their respective professional associations. The bill would provide benefits to a considerably smaller number of persons than would a plan outlined late last year by the State Board of Public Welfare. No bill embodying the Welfare Board's plan has been introduced.

HB 303, changing the designation of the county superintendent of public welfare to county director of public welfare, was ratified Friday.

Local Government

SB 175

would allow information as to county tax rates to be furnished to the taxpayer on a separate sheet, rather than requiring the information to be on the tax receipts and stubs.

SB 28, authorizing county com-

Sunday School Lesson

Cont'd. from Page 6—Section 2

Sin does have its consequences in suffering; when we violate some part of the laws of the universe in which we live, suffering is an ordinary result of this violation. Eat poison, and you will suffer pain and die. Take a life, and the retribution set in motion through the law of the land, by which we live, can quite easily be death or imprisonment for life. Yes, indeed, it must be remembered that man produces a good measure of his own suffering. When the drug shall constitute a complete defense, the bill has passed the Senate. HB 204, extending the life of the Compulsory Insurance Law (now scheduled to expire May 15) was reported favorably in the House and placed on the calendar for Tuesday.

Mrs. J. M. Phelps was sworn in Wednesday as the representative from Washington County, succeeding her late husband.

Half a fact is a whole falsehood. —Elias L. Magoon.

Much suffering is due to man's ignorance, and thus serves as a constant spur to greater learning. This is all to the good, and must be a part of man's destiny.

But perhaps the most important factor in dealing with undeserved suffering is found in man's reaction to it. Job, who lost his servants, animals, home, his wife, friends, and, finally, his health, could have become bitter and sour. Instead, he justified God's confidence in him by emerging from his trials with a new appreciation of the mystery of God's relationship to man, and with unshaken confidence in his Creator. This can work for us, too. The righteous do suffer, and we can only glimpse into the possible reason for this. But it is clear that the Christian reaction is one of acceptance and praise to God, confident in our faith that suffering can serve some positive function in our quest for Christian maturity.

(These comments are based on outlines of the International Sunday School Lessons, copyrighted by the International Council of Religious Education and used by permission.)



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