

Weekly Legislative Summary

(By the Institute of Government)

ROADS AND STREETS

The end of the city street squabble may be in sight. On Thursday the House finance committee held a public hearing on the question, and, after some astute parliamentary maneuvering by both sides, voted to give a favorable report to Senator Powell SB 120 and an unfavorable report to Rep. Gidger's HB 331. This week should see the House come to a final decision on whether to follow the Senate's lead and, without raising taxes, give the cities money from the Highway Fund for work on streets not a part of the highway system. The latest road development was the introduction this week of companion bills (SB 216 and HB 377) calling for the establishment of a commission to build toll roads, financing them by issuing revenue bonds to be paid off from tolls and roadside concessions. When paid for, these super-highways would be made toll-free and come under Highway Commission supervision and maintenance. Whether trucks should be required to comply with lighter maximum weight limits will be the subject of a public hearing in the Senate chamber next Thursday afternoon when the roads committee meets to consider SB 183.

LIQUOR REFERENDUM

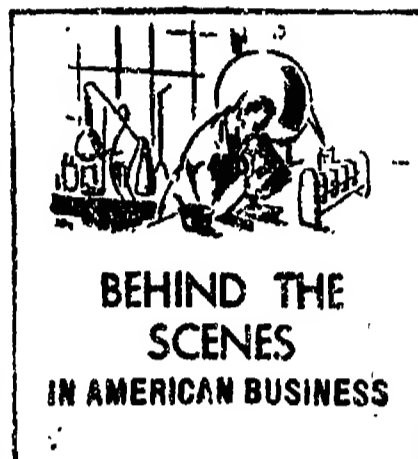
True to their name the committees on propositions and grievances listened long this week to aggrieved drys advocate their proposition for a state-wide liquor referendum and listened to equally aggrieved wets propose defeat for such a referendum. The bills concerned (SB 4, SB 177, and HB 186) came in for little detailed discussion; the argument followed the pattern of recent years and, with only a few remarks on the question of alcohol itself, turned on whether it is more democratic to let the people of the whole state vote on the issue for the whole state or to let each locality decide its own fate under the present system. The committees listened but so far they have said nothing.

APPROPRIATIONS

The General Assembly is ready to face its money problems. The appropriations committee has concluded hearing state agencies request about \$60 million more for operating expenses and \$20 million more for permanent improvements than recommended in the \$450 million Advisory Budget Commission budget. They have heard the United Forces for Education press for money for a \$2,400-\$3,600 teachers pay scale and reduced teacher load. They have received HB 410 asking \$8.6 million to increase the state's share with the cities and counties for care of indigent hospital patients and 3 bills calling for "cost-of-living" increases for state employees, either on a flat 10% basis or on a graduated scale weighted to benefit those making less than \$3,000 annually. There seems to be an assumption that some of these requests can be met from tax collections that may exceed original estimates by an undetermined amount. Some may also be met by possible tax changes or by revision of appropriations now contained in the tentative budget. An effort to place strong sentiment on record for the largest individual request, over \$30 million asked by the State Board of Education, was made in the House on Tuesday. A resolution was introduced, signed by 78 representatives, to place that body on record as favoring "the appropriation of sufficient funds to provide the essential services which should be rendered by the public schools," including funds to meet inflationary cost increases and a \$2,200-\$3,100 pay scale for teachers. While a motion to pass the resolution immediately under suspension of the rules failed by half a dozen votes to secure the necessary 2-3 majority, many of those opposing suspension of the rules had signed the resolution or pronounced themselves in accord with its objectives but felt that passage would imply lack of confidence in the appropriations committee. Meanwhile the joint subcommittee charged with re-examining permanent improvements appropriations made in 1947 and 1949 re-endorsed projects already allocated more than \$29 million and reported that \$4 million more will be needed to complete them. It also recommended withdrawing previous



FIRST BIRTHDAY STROLL . . . Renato Roberto-Giusto Giuseppe Rossellini, celebrating his first birthday, couldn't take his eyes off the photographer during his birthday party. Screen director Roberto Rossellini's son by a former marriage, Renzo, helps little Robertino walk across the room, while a doting mother, Swedish actress, Ingrid Bergman, lately of Hollywood, Calif., looks on.



BEHIND THE SCENES IN AMERICAN BUSINESS

(By Reynolds Knight)

New York — An outbreak of "peace" would find the U. S. economy vulnerable, careful observers believe. There is much evidence of

appropriations of \$794,450 for state parks and \$150,000 for state fair projects and re-examination by the full committee of a 1947 contingent \$1 million appropriation for an art gallery.

MUNICIPAL PROJECTS

Prompted by a belief that off-street parking is necessary to adequate alleviation of the serious traffic congestion in many cities, legislation to enable municipalities to issue bonds for financing off-street parking facilities was introduced on Wednesday by Senators Carlyle and Price. Envisioning the possible construction of multi-level structures both underground and above, as well as providing for municipal parking lots, these bills (SB 243 and SB 244) authorize cities to pledge revenues from on-street parking meters and from the charges for use of off-street parking facilities for payment of the bonds. If benefited property owners petition for the construction of such facilities, the legislation permits the assessment of such property as an additional means of financing. To enable cities with as many as 5,000 inhabitants to participate in the federal slum clearance program, SB 378, sponsored by the League of Municipalities, provides for the establishment of city redevelopment commissions to buy up blighted areas with federal or other funds and then sell them to agencies or individuals who agree to develop them in accordance with plans approved by the city.

STREAM POLLUTION

The 5-man subcommittee appointed several weeks ago to consider HB 53 dealing with stream pollution distributed copies of a tentative committee substitute in the House on Monday night. The proposed substitute spells out in much detail procedures the contemplated state agency would follow and provides that it could take no action against any polluter in a given area if corrective action is impracticable with reference to another polluter in that area. On Friday the subcommittee held a public hearing and received amendments to the tentative bill.

AMENDING THE U. S. CONSTITUTION

Identical Senate and House bills designed to gain legislative endorsement of the congressionally-approved amendment to limit presidents after Mr. Truman to two terms in the White House reached the floors of the houses after narrowly escaping unfavorable committee reports. With more fervent argument than has been heard on any other single issue this session, the Senate bill passed both Houses and established North Carolina as the 34th state to ratify the amendment.

consumer scare buying — not widely excited buying but a sustained tendency on the part of the public to regard "things as more valuable than money."

Commodity prices are on the high side, business leaders say. Latest reports show the official government index of all wholesale prices some 18 per cent above a year ago, after 10 successive weeks of rising prices.

The urge to save has been weakened. In the first half of January savings deposits of 16 of New York's leading thrift institutions tumbled by \$10 million. However, around the rest of the country the deposit figures were somewhat more favorable. Moreover, as civilian goods become less plentiful, savings will, of necessity, increase as they did in World War II.

The trouble with our present setup is that business leaders do not know exactly what to plan for, since we are in a twilight zone of neither peace nor all-out war. The situation could take a few turns in either direction before settling down to any clear-cut decision and this tends to produce much uneasiness in thoughtful business quarters.

SMALL BUSINESS WOES — Real efforts are being made in Washington to help small business in a make a happy adjustment to the military economy. It is not easy. In the first two years of World War II many of the smaller business firms were forced out of business either because they couldn't get raw materials, or couldn't get government contracts, or couldn't get loans. A combination of those problems hurt the smaller business man.

It is not fair to blame government, either, for not spreading out its war contracts more broadly. The plain truth is that it is difficult for those charged with responsibility for getting out war work to find small business enterprises that have the facilities and the personnel to get essential jobs done.

There are some 4,000,000 small business firms. Their best bet is to prepare a complete record of their facilities, their personnel and their experience in handling a given type of work. Then, they would be well advised to seek from government officials the names of large firms to contact to seek sub-contracting business. In this way they would have experienced business guidance in getting out production. The alternative of milling around Washington in the

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hope of getting prime contracts is not promising, for few small business firms are in a position to turn out volume production with a minimum of delay.

BITS O' BUSINESS — Steel production in the past week exceeded two million tons for the first time in history. . . Non-farm employment is at new record highs of 46,400,000, or 2,700,000 greater than a year ago.

Possible revival of O.P.A. in a strict form, says administrative headaches; in the last war there were hundreds of definitions covering certain types of foods to guard against quality changes and other possible evasions. . . City, state and municipal governments complaining they have no priorities and can't get materials.

He that places himself neither higher nor lower than he ought to do, exercises the truest humility. — Colton.

All of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. — 1 Peter.

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