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Matters of Moment to be Legislated Upon.

Proposition to Cut Out Capital Punishment—To Help Small Farmers Buy Farms—Gasoline Tax to Replace License Fee—Water Power Fight in Sight.

GOV. MORRISON'S MESSAGE TEEMS WITH BIG SUBJECTS.

(BY MAXWELL GORMAN.)

Raleigh, N. C., Jan. 9, 1923.—The legislators who went home to spend the "week-end" returned Monday night when the first real session since last Friday was held, and the lawmaking machinery is again functioning and at the accelerating speed. The legislature has the floor in the attention of the public, not only in Raleigh, but with the people of the entire State, and it is proper to devote much of these Raleigh Letters each week to that body for the present. This writer has been reporting the North Carolina Legislature along with his newspaper correspondence and other journalistic work for the last twenty years, and I am making the statement now, that there have been few sessions of the lawmaking body that have offered such opportunities to any political party for doing many wrong things. Going a step farther at this juncture, I make the statement that some of the wisest and ablest and best men up here this time, especially among them are experienced, like Doughton of Alleghany, Senator J. A. Brown of Columbus (and a dozen others of that class that I could name, for I talk with them every day) keenly sense the danger already.

I referred briefly last week to the prediction of all deliberative bodies, especially Congress and the legislatures of the various states, when composed of top heavy, overwhelming majorities to overdo things—to their disposition to carry on in an uncautious and defiant manner, to run decidedly to the radical in enacting legislation, and on the part of some, to run roughshod over things they do not approve of and to flaunt the disposition to let the State's good and the public weal be damned.

Dynamite and T. N. T. Under the Capitol Dome.

There is already enough explosive matter, typed into "little bills" or fermenting in the water contained in the heads of some of the fellows nosing around the capitol, "interested" in legislation, to blow the dome off the old State House and into Kingdom Come—and the session is only a week old.

Some of the members of this Legislature who ought to be muzzled are said to be "contemplating" attempts at the enactment of certain legislation that would disgrace the State and place the Democratic party, with all its 80,000 majority, in the hospital for an indefinate period, and that would work untold harm to the party and the State. More definite reference to these matters will be made as the session advances.

The hope of the state and the party at present rests in the possibility that the conservative and dependable element of the Legislature will be able to curb the wild men and radicals and defeat most of the dangerous attempts at unwise legislation and worse.

As to Capital Punishment.

One measure of much interest that is this week claiming attention on all sides is the renewed attempt to abolish capital punishment. One member who needs X-raying has proposed singly a bill to abolish death as the penalty for rape in this State.

When the measure comes up for debate it ought not to consume much time to convince everybody that practically all similar attempts that have been made in other states have proved rank failures. In a number of states that tried it the death penalty was restored after a short trial that convinced other legislatures that the noose or the chair could not be dispensed with for any length of time, as heinous crimes of the worst variety increased so rapidly that it became apparent that more penitentiaries would become increasingly necessary. So electrocutions were resumed.

Attempts to abolish the death penalty in North Carolina have boobed up several times here during the last decade. But there was nothing doing. The record and argument was so overwhelmingly against the proposed change that the measures were lost overwhelmingly when the roll was called in each house. The same result will be reached this time, it is presumed, but not till after some blind men have spilled their misdirected ideas all over the atmosphere.

Morrison's Message

Governor Morrison's message was heard Tuesday, and will be followed by a flow of the bills that will develop the big subjects of conversation and interest. His steamship line bill will closely follow his message, bills covering other recommendations of the executive will go in, the various departments of the State will have their ideas presented for the Assembly's consideration through their bills. The many organizations, associations and federations will begin dumping their legislative wants into the two houses, and the House and Senate champions of a multitude of State-wide ideas will begin to stir.

Farm Loan Commission.

Senator D. F. Giles of McDowell, in his proposal to form a farm loan commission for the purpose of aiding the small farmer to buy land, is one of the most significant pieces of legislation among the proposals announced.

The bill provides for loans from the State to small farmers in their efforts to purchase land. The purchaser will have 20 years in which to repay the loan and the State will see that improvements compatible with proper agricultural development are made on the property. Its chief purpose is to give tenants an opportunity to buy their farms, thereby eliminating farm tenancy in North Carolina and making the State one of many small farms owned by those occupying them. A three-million dollar bond issue is proposed to finance the loan plan, but Senator Giles believes securities on the purchased land could be turned into ready cash through the banks and eliminate the necessity for the sale of bonds by the State.

Would Make Motorists Pay.

Senator A. E. Woltz of Gaston is proposing a bill to "make those pay who ride." He would make the license fee on automobiles nominal and put up the tax on gasoline. The only the big truck would pay increased taxes through the purchase of gasoline, while the farmer who comes to town once or twice a week in his flivver would pay only a small tax through his infrequent purchases of gasoline. The license tags now are sold in accordance with the horse-power of the machine. Under Senator Woltz's plan the size of the vehicle would not make any difference; through an increased tax on gasoline he would reach these machines through their heavy purchases in the frequent operations of the cars or trucks.

Another Water Power Fight.

The Dillard bill to repeal the legislative charter granted in 1909 to the Carolina-Tennessee Power Company of Cherokee county is seen as the bit of explosive that will ignite the water power fight for the General Assembly.

As it now stands, the bill has the aspect only of a local measure, but with the history of the famous power fight of the 1921 session vividly before many of the members a revival of Tennessee and legislative tumult is seen as a possibility in the bill introduced by the Cherokee representative.

Mr. Dillard wants the repeal of the 1909 charter because he considers it so sweeping in its provisions that the beneficiary can exercise dominion over all the undeveloped water power interests of North Carolina. According to western representatives, the move for the repeal of the Carolina-Tennessee Power Company charter is but a continuation of the primary fight of Cherokee county. It was one of the contributing factors to the defeat of the Republican senator in that erstwhile Republican stronghold, Mr. Dewar, it is claimed.

The people up there are said to strongly favor the repeal of the law granting the charter. What interests legislators here is whether it will go through as strictly a local measure or whether it will furnish the natural [illegible] for a water power fight [illegible] holdings in western Carolina.

NORTH CAROLINA GETS LESSON FROM GEORGIA.

Its Roads, School System Educational and State Institutions.

Atlanta Constitution.

The road system in North Carolina is only one evidence of North Carolina's general prosperity that appeals to the people of other states, and particularly to the people of Georgia, whose natural conditions of living are practically the same.

North Carolina's public school system is maintained more progressively than is that of Georgia, through no fault of Georgia's most excellent department of education.

The higher educational institutions of North Carolina are adequately maintained, while those in Georgia are admittedly starved. The state contributes more to the university system in that state in one year than Georgia does in four.

The same can be said of the other institutions—the eleemosynary, the corrective the penal.

Why is all this?

North Carolina has relatively a quarter of a million less population than Georgia.

All of the five largest cities combined will scarcely exceed in population the one city of Atlanta.

Wilmington, the seaboard metropolis, is a much smaller city than Savannah.

Charlotte, the largest trading center, is not as large as Macon.

Neither Winston-Salem nor Durham nor Greensboro, her great tobacco manufacturing cities, is as large as Augusta.

And yet it is a state of small cities and towns, each filled with the stacks of industry, and each the center of prosperous rural communities.

The reason for it all is—not that North Carolina has any better people than Georgia, for there are no better; not that North Carolina has any more natural advantages than Georgia, for in these both states are practically blessed alike—but that North Carolina has revived her old and antiquated laws and has given the state's provided with laws sufficient to carry on the functions of government in keeping with the demands of a progressive age.

And the people of the cities and the towns and the country have prospered as the state has prospered.

North Carolina is thus an object lesson that the Georgia legislature should heed.

When eggs cost 30 cents per dozen a chick was produced by incubation for nine cents but when the eggs cost $3.50 for a sitting of 15, the chicks cost 29 cents each, reports Dr. B. F. Kaupp.

A fowl may go 365 days without replenishing its grit. Five hens on test at the experiment station were in perfect health and good flesh at the end of this time.

When Senator-elect Clarence C. Dill of Washington takes his seat March 4, Senator Pat Harrison of Mississippi will relinquish his title of "baby of the Senate." Senator Dill is 38 and Senator Harrison 41.

FORGERS REAP HUGE HARVEST

Take Annual Levy of $30,000,000 From Careless Check Writers in United States.

IS ARISTOCRAT OF CRIMINALS

Introduction of Modern Protective Measures Only Hampered Crook's Plans for Time—Safety Paper Is Best Precaution.

New York.—Forgers and penmen are exacting a toll of between $30,000,000 and $35,000,000 a year from the people of this country because of the carelessness of business men in writing checks and handling them, according to Burgess Smith, ex-inspector of the local work in the United States Secret Service, speaking at a meeting of the bankers' section of the National Association of Manufacturers.

"Backed by scientific inventors, check protecting devices and in short, paper that defies alteration, check raisers are now knocking on bank doors and dropping their wares to merchants who have not safeguarded their operations against them. These operations are becoming so extensive, the writer says, that banks do not make public any more the amount of losses being sustained.

"Ninety-five per cent of the business of the nation is done by check and draft," says the writer. "During the last year a total of approximately $[illegible],000,000,000 in checks and drafts passed through the clearing houses of the nation, based on a total currency issue in circulation of about $5,000,000,000. In other words, checks and drafts in circulation constantly exceed currency and bullion at the rate of eighty to one.

"It is only natural, therefore, that the most astute minds of the criminal world should turn their attention toward a form of crime which yields great profits with little chance of detection and conviction—all because of the innate carelessness of individuals."

Grow With Use of Checks.

Tracing the rapid development of the use of credit instruments the world over, particularly within recent years, Mr. Smith shows how losses from forgery have increased with the increased use of checks and drafts.

"The idea of the bank check is as old as Egypt," the writer says, "but it was only a half century ago that the word 'check' meant little or nothing in the daily life of the average American business man. Such a thing as a forged or raised check was almost unthought of. Where today the losses from forgery are increasing at the rate of $1,000,000 annually, with more than $30,000,000 estimated as last year's figures, the total annual toll thirty years ago was only $1,000,000.

"The methods employed by the forger embrace a cunning and skill that is seldom found in other forms of crime. The forger and penman is the aristocrat of the underworld. He is one of the 'higher-ups' in an organization that is conducted in a most business-like way. First, there is the banker, who backs the gang with his wealth and who usually has associated with him an expert criminal lawyer. Then there is the forger himself, who lives in some secluded out-of-the-way spot, where he has his laboratory. There, with pens and inks and [illegible] he [illegible] his [illegible] so skillfully [illegible] that even the experts are deceived. Since the [illegible] the underworld the greatest possible protection. Consequently, there are the 'go-between' men, the hire thieves to rob the mails, bribers and presenters to put down the forged check. These men never come in contact with the forged check [illegible] the [illegible].

"And" Vulnerable Point.

"So far the introduction of modern protective measures, forgery and alteration had become so simple it had almost ceased being called an art. To raise a check from eight to eighty dollars, all this master criminal had to do was to add a 'ty' to the 'E' and the another zero to the numerals. To raise six to sixty, seven to seventy or nine to ninety was just as easy, and to change five to fifty or to tack some other word to fifty, say 100 or 1,000, was equally simple. The word 'and' has always been a most vulnerable point of attack, and in many typical cases of forgery it has been made to call for thousands by writing 'thous' before it.

"For many years the forger had as his greatest foe the designer of check writing machines that shred the amount in colors and at the same time impregnate the paper with insoluble ink. The introduction of these devices only hampered the crook's plans, however, for he could still, with the use of his acids, erase the payee line and substitute for names the words 'cash' or 'bearer.' And, likewise, he could change the number and date lines.

"To meet this new move of the check raiser a safety paper that could not be erased or alterated in any way without detection was needed, and by a gradual evolution which led nearer and nearer to perfection the manufacturers have only recently been able to produce a safety paper which has thus far withstood all tests of the criminal. Thus, the check forger has again been defeated, and check users who today employ the modern measures of protection afforded—the modern writing machine, as well as the safety paper—have no reason to fear that their checks will be altered."

How to Be Doubly Safe.

To make checks as solid as safe against the depredations of forgers and raisers, Mr. Smith suggests the following measures:

1. Write your checks on paper that defies alteration by acids or chemicals.

2. Never type write a check or permit a check to leave your office that contains an error.

3. [illegible] the name of the payee and the amount of each check clearly and [illegible] have [illegible] in [illegible] the [illegible].

4. [illegible] lock [illegible] where every one [illegible]. They are worth is much more [illegible] your credit once they have your name in the right-hand corner—and some one may be able to deceive a bank or a storekeeper into believing that a check with a forged signature is yours.

5. Finally, to be doubly sure, insure yourself against loss by forgery or check alteration. The makers of the best safety check paper and check writing machines are so sure their devices defy the efforts of the most ingenious criminals that they carry their customers' insurance themselves at a merely nominal cost.

COURT GIVES BOY HIS DOG

Orphan's Plea for "Rags" Wins Justice and Pals Won't Be Separated.

New York.—Justice Boyle, in Children's court, set a legal precedent when he yielded to the pleading of a homeless boy, eleven years old, that his dog "Rags" be permitted to accompany him to the Mission of the Immaculate Virgin, Mount Loretta, S. I., when he is committed to that institution.

When the boy was told he would be sent to the mission, he plucked nervously at the little round jacket given him by officials of the children' society for his appearance in court. Observing this nervous gesture, Justice Boyle asked whether there was anything he wished to say.

"Well," whispered Tommy, "I'll be awful lonesome if I can't have 'Rags.' Maybe he'll die, Judge. There ain't nobody to look after him."

Questioning by the court developed that "Rags," a mongrel fox terrier, had been Tommy's close companion and faithful friend through more than five years of an adventurous childhood. The boy said he considered "Rags" the best friend a boy ever had. Judge Boyle hesitated a moment and then ordered papers executed committing "Rags," as well as Tommy, to the mission.

OWES $8 41 YEARS; PAYS $4

Suit Didn't Suit Debtor Till Merchant Talk After Seeking Old Bill.

Winston-Salem.—Six weeks ago James M. [illegible], colored barber, got a letter from John Langdon, who lives near Walla Walla, Wash., which said: "Dear Sir: About 41 years ago you made a suit of clothes for me. I was to go west to Walla Walla the next week. I did not have the money to pay you in full, but gave you a note for the balance. I never came back and settle it as I intended to do. I have kept account of your address and hope you probably remember how long it has been ago. It was September [illegible].

Mr. McAlpine looked it up and found $8 was due on the Prince Albert suit. He sent the bill to Langdon. A letter came from Langdon which said:

"I'm sending $4. The suit never fitted very well and I think this is enough."

Negligence and Consequence.

As showing how the combination of drink and driver works out, we give the terse report of Ben Quinn, an Indian of Kansas. He said: "First mile too slow took drink of booze; next mile faster, took another drink, last mile very fast, took another drink; then saw bridge in road, turned out for it."

Ben is now in the hospital with a broken arm.—Boston Evening Transcript.

HEALING "WOUNDS" IN STEEL

Frenchman Has Devised Machine Which Is Really a Marvel of Inventive Ingenuity.

Very remarkable indeed is a machine set up in France for making repairs to airplanes, remarks the Washington Star. This machine is said to be the only one of its kind, and is due to the ingenuity of Gustave Rabin. It may be described as a device for causing "wounded steel" to "heal" itself in something like the way that wounded flesh heals.

The device is almost automatic, is operated by electricity and is based upon the galvanic principle. It needs only one or two men to watch it, they being guided by a chart, showing in many colors the piece of metal to be repaired, the exact repairs necessary, the composition of the galvanic bath, the current needed, the diameter of the conducting wires and the time of immersion. All this is worked out mathematically to the minutest fraction.

The machine is employed to restore worn or broken parts of delicate machines, most of which are difficult to replace. When an American observer saw it there were lying on a table beside it parts of a [illegible] had just repaired which would have cost $3,000 and much time to replace. In the week previous [illegible] had turned out 300 pieces, [illegible] for nothing [illegible] to it.

FORCED TO BELIEVE HIM

Jury Foreman's Remarkable Explanation for Declining to Credit Defendant's Plea of Guilty.

Some years ago in a Western state, then a territory, a popular citizen became involved with an influential and overbearing character and killed him.

Public sentiment leaned toward the defendant, but the law was against him, and when the day of trial came the defendant, his counsel and friends held a consultation, and, fearful of the consequences, they decided that the defendant should plead guilty and beg the court's mercy.

The jury was charged by the court and retired. Presently it returned, and the foreman said:

"We find the defendant not guilty."

The judge viewed the jury in surprise and said:

"Gentlemen of the jury, how be it? This defendant pleads guilty, and you find him not guilty?"

The foreman answered:

"Well, your honor, the defendant is such a liar we can't believe him under oath."—Progressive Grocer.

Beggars' Trade Union.

A new terror has been added to continental traveling. A recent report from Constantinople states that the beggars of Stamboul have formed themselves into a trade union, says London Answers.

The members go to work quite methodically. Each morning they hold a meeting in the open space in front of the Bayazid Mosque—they cannot afford other offices, although some of the members are said to be rich—and here they discuss the business of the day. Then after the agenda has been read and approved, the brothers in beggary disperse, and set about the business of collecting alms.

Just as other trade unions forbid their members to work for less than certain prescribed wages, so the beggars are not allowed to beg for any sum less than one hundred paras. Any smaller gift is spurned as detrimental to their dignity.

Dog Saves Family; Dies in Fire.

Mount Sterling, Ky.—Awakened by their pet dog, Thomas Richardson and family near Silver Ridge, Montgomery county, found their home in flames and barely escaped with their night clothing on. The dog that saved the lives of his master and mistress died in the flames. The loss was $2,500, with no insurance.

Find Old Oyster Shells.

Laredo, Tex.—Giant fossil oysters said by scientists to be more than [illegible],000 years old and some of them measuring more than three feet in length, have been discovered in a clay bank in Starr county, Tex., near a petrified forest.

Children Saved When Cat Attacked Rattler

A house cat, the pet of the children of Judge A. K. Doss of Ballinger, Tex., saved the children from being bitten by a rattlesnake when it attacked the snake just as the reptile was about to strike the children. The cat jumped at the snake, struck with its claws, and retreated before the snake could strike. It continued to attack until the reptile was killed.

Three Burned to Death in Raleigh Fire.

Raleigh experienced its most horrible fire in many years, last Saturday morning.

Mrs. I. W. Simpkins, her four-year-old son I. W., Jr., and Carolina Hill, a "mammy" nurse, were burned to death in the early morning in a fire that destroyed the Simpkins garage, about 67 automobiles, badly burned the feet of Mr. Simpkins, and caused the breaking of Fireman J. C. Beck's arm in his effort to rescue the family.

Mr. Simpkins had apartments over his garage, and near 5 o'clock in the morning he was aroused by the breaking of a window and the bursting flames. He waked Mrs. Simpkins and they planned their escape. Mr. Simpkins, telling the story at the hospital, said he decided to take their baby of six months down by the gutter. It broke soon after he left the apartment and they fell heavily to the pavement, though the child was unhurt. He then begged Mrs. Simpkins to jump, but a scream and faint and she had lost consciousness in the thick smoke.

Firemen threw ladders on the side of the building and Mr. Beck started the ladder, but an explosion blew him to the ground, breaking his arm. The inmates of the rooms, now overcome, were soon caught in the terrible blaze and burned. Many individuals and businesses lost their entire automobile stock in the fire. The losses in autos alone will go beyond $100,000.

The fire was held strictly to the garage, notwithstanding the oils, gases, and other inflammables. No blaze in the city ever did a piece of destruction with greater expedition. The firemen could do nothing with the burning building, but any let-up would have threatened the whole Highway Commission building.

The losses complete will go as high as $150,000, and may reach $200,000. The death of the child and the mother moved former Insurance Commissioner James R. Young to suggest legislation preventing the use of garages as residences, owing to the peculiar hazards required.

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Office over National Bank of Alamance

THOMAS D. COOPER,
Attorney and Counsellor-at-Law,
BURLINGTON, N. C,
Associated with W. S. Coulter,
Nos. 7 and 8 First National Bank Bldg.

S. C. SPOON, Jr., M. D.
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Office hours: 9 to 11 a. m.
and by appointment
Office Over Acme Drug Co.
Telephones: Office 446—Residence 264

JOHN J. HENDERSON
Attorney-at-Law
GRAHAM, N. C.
Office over National Bank of Alamance

J. S. COOK,
Attorney-at-Law
GRAHAM, - - - - N. C
Office Patterson Building
Second Floor.

DR. WILL S. LONG, JR.
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