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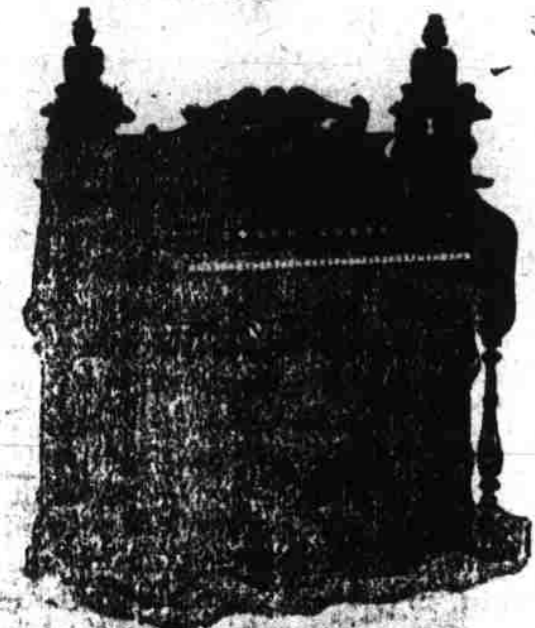
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#### BOARDS OF AUDIT AND FINANCE.

Sessions Held Monday and Tuesday—Session to be Held Next Tuesday and Report Will Probably be Made Next Week.

The county board of audit and finance was in session in Lumberton again Monday and Tuesday, when several county officers were examined. The board will be in session here again next Tuesday, at which time it is hoped that final examinations will be completed, and the board hopes to make its report some time next week.

Messrs. C. A. Oliver, A. L. Bullock and A. R. McEachern, of the board of county commissioners, appeared before the board of audit and finance and were examined. In response to questions as to per diem and mileage allowed by law to commissioners these gentlemen stated that they understood the law to allow them \$3 per day and ten cents per mile each way for attending to the business of the county. This is provided for in a special act for the relief of the commissioners of Robeson county passed by the Legislature in February, 1905. Editorial mention of this act will be found in this paper. They were also questioned in regard to allowing members of the board to pay for supplies furnished the chain gang, and each of them testified that they understood the law to provide that commissioners may furnish supplies to the county, provided only that they charge for same the rates at which supplies may be bought in open competition. This, they testified, had been done, and an inspection of the bills upon which the commissioners have passed and allowed, was invited. Mr. McEachern, in testifying in regard to certain amounts paid to the firm in which he is a member by the county, stated that a large part of the amount his firm had collected from the county represented money advanced to pay off the chain gang, which money was advanced by his firm merely as a matter of accommodation to the supervisor, and that in return for the money so advanced the supervisor gave orders on the board of commissioners for the amounts. The supplies were sold also in the interest of economy and convenience, and this they were entitled to do under the act which provides that members of the board of commissioners may sell supplies to the county at the prices at which they may be bought elsewhere. He invited the board of audit and finance to inspect the bills submitted by his firm to the board of commissioners.

Mr. McEachern was asked if some two or three thousands of dollars had not been collected from the county by Mr. J. W. Carter, chairman of the board, and Mr. McEachern replied that Mr. Carter had furnished supplies to the county in the same way that his firm had done, and that he had heard it said that the roads of Maxton township had been better worked than the roads of any other township in the county, and that the fact that they had been better worked and were in better condition was due to the fact that Mr. Carter had had personal supervision of the work.

Counsel for the board of audit and finance said that hearsay evidence would not be admitted and ordered the stenographer not to take down what Mr. McEachern had heard about Maxton township roads. At this point Messrs. S. McIntyre and E. J. Britt, counsel for the commissioners, asked that what Mr. McEachern had said be copied in the records, and a lively dispute arose between counsel for the finance board and Messrs. Britt and McIntyre, Messrs. McIntyre and Britt contending that it was not fair to the men under examination to refuse to admit any evidence that would throw light upon their actions. Col. McLean contended that the board could not accept hearsay evidence, and that counsel for the defense were there only by courtesy of the board. A ruling was asked for from the chairman of the board and he held that counsel had no right before the board except to advise witnesses whether to answer certain questions or not. Mr. McEachern asked that he be allowed to change his statement in regard to the roads in Maxton township stating that he believed they were in better condition than the roads in any other township on account of the fact that Mr. Carter had had personal supervision of the work, and that he based his belief on what he had seen of the roads. This answer was allowed. Mr. McEachern asked that Supervisor C. W. Jones, who was present, be sworn and allowed to testify in regard to monies paid to him for the chain gang by Mr. McEachern's firm, but the board said that Mr. McEachern's statement was sufficient.

Mr. Carter has not returned from his trip North and hence was not before the board. The members of the board of commissioners who testified said that the board had had an immense amount of work to do, much more than could be attended to at one meeting each month.

The board found that the debt against the general county fund is 18,000, the debt against the road fund \$6,900.

Mr. D. W. Bullock, register of deeds, and Mr. A. E. White, chairman of the road commissioners, were examined Tuesday. As mentioned above, the board hopes to make its report next week. When the report of its findings is made the record of its examinations will be open for inspection so that any one may see upon what evidence its findings are based.

Depositions were taken in New York the first three days of this week before former Judge Montgomery, who, as master, is obtaining information which may lead to a solution of the question of the constitutionality of the 2 1-4 cent railroad rate law of this State. The hearing will be resumed in Washington tomorrow.

On Monday, Mr. John M. Daley, superintendent of transportation of the Illinois Central Railroad, was on the stand and testified that competition, and not volume of business, was largely the basis upon which railroad rates were fixed. There were no long hauls in North Carolina, he said. Explaining the case of transportation, Mr. Daley said:

"The expenses are made up by the building of cars, their repairs, crews to man their trains, the coal used in the engine and the tax levied every

day in North Carolina for the privilege of standing a train of cars at the end of the run. Besides, you must take into consideration that after a train runs, say 60 miles in one day, the return run has to be made and the same expenses continue."

To counsel for the Southern Railway, Mr. Daley said that 5 per cent of the business done by that company in North Carolina is inter-State.

W. B. Beymer, auditor of the Central Railroad of Georgia, testified that the Southern Railway realizes a profit of but 15 cents on every dollar paid for domestic transportation. It costs the other 85-cents to move the freight or passengers. He could not separate the freight from the passenger income in this estimate. It costs 15 cents on the dollar earned more to handle business within the State than to handle all the rest of the company's business.

Richard B. Taylor, general superintendent of the Mobile & Ohio Railroad, testified that it costs more to handle local business of a railroad than it does to handle all the other business, explaining that small amounts were handled in local freight and that the freight cars had to move at stated periods whether or not the cars carried a full load.

In long runs the cars were filled to their utmost capacity, stops were fewer and the expenses of handling the freight was less.

Governor Glenn, who went to New York to consult with the attorneys for the State in this hearing, left New York Monday night. Speaking of the clash between the State and Federal courts over the rate law, Gov. Glenn said:

"I am an industrial Governor. I have always made it a point to protect capital and protect the railroads from anything that was unfair. But when the railroads try to run us, then it is time to call a halt.

"There was only once that this matter became serious. Had Judge Pritchard tried to get our prisoner away from us and adjudged Judge Long in contempt, I certainly would have backed up Judge Long with every soldier and every deputy sheriff in North Carolina. Of course, if President Roosevelt sent troops into our State then we would have had to throw up our hands, as one State could not fight the Union, but we would have appealed to the voters of the country, and I think they would have been with us."

A dispatch of the 20th from Columbus, O., states that immediately after opening the Philippine parliament in October Hon. W. H. Taft will resign the secretaryship of war and his formal resignation will come by cable if it is not already in the president's hands—to take effect at that time. Leaving the Philippines, Secretary Taft will make his trip through Russia and Germany merely as an American citizen, and when he returns, after practically completing the circuit of the globe, he will enter actively into the campaign for Republican nomination for President.

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