The Chatham Record

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H. A. LONDON, Editor.

THE LEGISLATURE.

On next Monday the Legislature will formally adjourn, and its members will return to their respective counties and their aggregated wisdom be scattered throughout the State, and, as a little leaven leaveneth the loaf, it is hoped that those scattered specimens of wisdom will infuse some of their wisdom into their constituents and save the country until another Legislature is elected. For several days past both branches have been rushing bills through with lightning rapidity, trying to make up the time they wasted in the earlier days of the session. In this they make a great mistake and may commit a great wrong. Hasty legislation is to be dreaded more than disloyalness, and we fear that many a bill will be slipped through without half a dozen members knowing it. Many of the most important measures will fail because of the want of time to consider them, and we venture the prediction that when the work of the session is finished it will be found that this Legislature has fulfilled fewer of its promises than any Legislature that has met since 1870. The people have expected much—too much—and they will be sadly disappointed. The slowness with which the House has transacted business may be illustrated by their action on the revenue or tax bill. This bill is usually discussed more thoroughly and considered more carefully by every Legislature than any other bill, but at this session the House was so slow in its action upon it that it reached the Senate only in time to be considered last Tuesday, when it should have been sent to the Senate two weeks ago. The result is, the Senate has not had time to consider it with proper care. Both branches have placed the tax levy at 20 cents on the hundred dollars valuation of property, which will cause a deficiency in the treasury, and may render a special session necessary. Probably this is what many of the members desire, as they know that they can never be elected again. The appropriations are larger than ever before, and yet they attempt to deceive the people by reducing the rate of taxation. They propose to give $150,000 a year for the support of the penitentiary—a larger sum than ever yet appropriated for that institution—because they have given so many convicts to the C F & Y V R R Co. and to the swamp lands. If these convicts were hired out, instead of being given away, the penitentiary would be made nearly self sustaining.

On last Tuesday the House discussed all day the appropriations to the University and the proposed industrial and agricultural college, and much drivelling was indulged in. We heard many of the speeches, and were ashamed to hear such sentiments expressed by any men pretending to be respectable. They were such as to make every true North Carolinian and friend of education ashamed of his State having such legislators. We cannot believe that the Senate will disgrace itself and the good people of North Carolina as the House has done.

The House has incorporated in the revenue bill a clause to tax lawyers and conveyancers ten dollars a year. This was done, we suppose, to express the prejudice and spleen of certain narrow-minded men against lawyers. But in doing this they have gone farther than they intended, for this clause will include every man who writes a mortgage or deed for another. It is well known that nearly every magistrate, register and clerk is frequently called upon to do this, and they will all have to pay this special tax of ten dollars a year or stop writing deeds and mortgages, and leave all this business for the lawyers to do. Thus by trying to tax and spite the lawyers they will give them more business to do! But it showed such a mean and contemptible spirit, picking out one particular class of men to tax!

The most ridiculous act of legislation that we ever heard of any Legislature attempting was the passage by the House of a resolution construing a clause in the State Constitution. We had supposed that only the judicial department—the courts—could construe the constitution: that this was their exclusive duty. But it has been reserved for this mongrel House to make itself the laughing stock of everybody by usurping to itself the powers of the judiciary. No doubt many of its members think they know as much about the constitution as the judges know. Well, after this we think it time for them to adjourn and go home, where most of them are likely to remain.

Our Washington Letter.

[From our Regular Correspondent.]

WASHINGTON, Feb. 26th, 1887.

But five more working days remain to Congress, unless that body decide to work on Sunday, as Congresses have often done before. This Congress will probably however work nights during the short remaining term of its life, and this will partially make up lost time and neglected legislation. It has been the custom of former Presidents to spend the last few hours of a congressional term at the Capitol, in order to sign the bills that Congress may hurry through in its last moments. But President Cleveland it is said will not sign those until he has had time for their critical examination. Congress has been unofficially advised of this fact and it is quite probable that some half cooked measures may fall for lack of the presidential signature.

Statesmen of both House and Senate have been too busy during the past week to give much attention to the question about an extra session, but it is not improbable that one will be called. There are pressing questions that cannot well be put aside until the regular meeting of the fifteenth Congress.

It is beginning to be very generally conceded that the Congressional session ending at noon on the fourth of March is all too short for the interests of the country. It might have done for 1787, when the entire country had a population a fifth to that of the state of New York and not one tithe of its wealth. But we have grown apace in the last hundred years—grown in almost every thing, for the industry of Congressmen. They still retain their stage coach habits and traditions. Something must be done to get out of this. The prolongation of the session will be only a partial remedy; and since a day can not be stretched over twenty-four hours, and since a Congressional daily session is only about one hour per day, interrupted by a recess at noon and, sometimes, one or two others, and long, drawling speeches, it can be seen how all too short time is left for deliberate investigation of national questions. Here on the very eve of the adjournment of a session important to every section of the country, Naval, Subsistence, Deficiency, Fortifications, Military Academy, Post Office, District of Columbia and Indian bills have not yet been placed before the President for his signature.

By a vote of 37 to 15 the Senate decided that it would be wise to detach the Weather Bureau from the Army and place it under the proposed new Department of Agriculture and Labor. The decision was taken on adopting the proposition as an amendment to the bill to raise the present Agricultural Department to the dignity of an executive Department. After this had been done the bill was passed without resort to a roll call. The measure having already passed the House will now go to a conference committee of members of each House. It is not certain that the conferees will retain the amendment, but it is generally believed that the Weather Bureau will be taken from the War Department by some method, if not in the way suggested by the Senate.

During the debate on the bill Mr. Miller stated that there were many and serious difficulties in the way of a transfer of the Weather Bureau because of the fact among others that those now engaged in that bureau are enlisted men and officers of the army, and as the supposes instruments and other material of the bureau are the property of the army if the conference committee can prepare an amendment that will remove these troublesome difficulties to a minimum, or wipe them out altogether, the proposition will receive a good many more votes than the seventeen it already. As for the special object of the bill, which is to make the commissioner of Agriculture a cabinet officer, that has now been agreed to by both houses, and Congress will hardly let it be killed because of any failure to agree about the transfer of the Weather Bureau. Unless the President sees fit to object to the measure, he will have an opportunity to add another to his present list of advisers.

Selling a Vagrant.

CINCINNATI, February 23.—A special from Augusta, Ky., says: The trial of Henry Dodson, charged with being a vagrant, came off yesterday before George L. Bradford and a jury. The jury, after hearing all the evidence, returned a verdict of guilty and ordered him sold to the highest bidder at public auction for a period of seventy five days. Judge Bradford has fixed the 5th of March as the day of sale. This is the first case of the kind that has occurred in this county for a great many years, and much interest was manifested. The proof showed Dodson to be a worthless, incident vagabond, who lived in a state of filth and misery. He ill-treated his family in every way imaginable.

Six Boys Killed.

EASTON, PA., Feb. 26.—Seven boys, ages ranging from 12 to 15 years, who had been hunting muskrats, were walking home on the track of the Lehigh Valley Railroad today. They saw a coal train approaching them on one track and stepped to the other to avoid it, when a fast passenger train ran into them at the moment the coal train was opposite them.

The boys were all struck by the passenger train. Some were knocked against the coal train and some to the opposite side of the road. Six were horribly crushed and instantly killed. One escaped unhurt, having been struck by the body of his brother and knocked off the track.

Sustain Your Home Papers.

We copy from the Statesville Landmark the following, which we commend to the careful consideration of our countrymen:

The Winston Sentinel says of a certain juvenile journal published in Boston, that it has 12,000 subscribers in North Carolina, more than the entire circulation of any native journal. We are prepared to believe it. It is seen everywhere. There is no guessing how many copies of it are taken in Statesville. We saw it recently in the hands of a boy here whose father does not take The Landmark and who did not pay for it when he did take it. The subscription price of the Boston paper is $1.75 per year. Thus we see that it drains North Carolina annually of $21,000. Yet it is repeatedly being said that the papers of this State are of a lower standard than those of other States, and we are daily told that the price of The Landmark is too high. Why? Because a handful of people have to support it. It has about 1600 subscribers. $1200. The locality pays its expenses, to say nothing of the support of the editor. If it were not for the advertising and the job office he would have to starve or go out of business. It costs as much to publish a paper with small circulation as one with a large one. The only additional expense for the large circulation being in the cost of white paper, which is cheap, and in the postage, which is one cent. The Landmark 2,500 subscribers and a year and a half ago the price was $1.50. Given good times it will soon reach $1.75; $2.00 and it will drop to $1.00, give it 12,000 and it will be published at $1.00 per year, and double its size. But no. If it were twice as large, its editorial staff were doubled, and its subscription price were reduced one-half, it would not have 12,000 subscribers in half a century. People would continue to send them home to Boston for a paper no better than it, and a paper such people say has to read the words. North Carolina, as it is, barely manages to keep The Landmark weekly, and the time for North Carolina and speedy has every dream of such. There are scores of people in Intelligently about us like The Landmark but are too [illegible] to take it. The Landmark is not ashamed of the [illegible] paper and who honest holds The Landmark as much to the state [illegible] it more appreciative than when it ought to be to support the public welfare than it is at present.

We are not a great deal [illegible] hope the time will come when we can depend for support upon paper and we are only asking now in behalf of the newspaper business what we have been urging year after year in behalf of every other business: keep your money at home.

Earthquake in Italy.

2,000 Persons Killed.

ROME, Feb. 24.—Ash Wednesday was observed here at Nice with great pomp. The Pope made a speech which excited the people with fervor. The Holy Week will be full of [illegible] and [illegible] and it was believed a few moments later that a violent earthquake had occurred. The panic-stricken people rushed into the streets. The shocks were felt at 5:40 precisely, and lasted for 12 seconds. The direction was from [illegible] to Bordighera. It was severely felt at Diano Marina, Cervo, Andora and Oneglia. The shocks were also felt at Genoa, Savona, Alassio, Porto Maurizio and Ventimiglia. The inhabitants took refuge in the streets. The [illegible] were thrown down. The [illegible] were damaged. The [illegible] were broken. The [illegible] were destroyed