

MANY CHANGES IN GOVERNMENT ARE MADE BY SOLONS

Resume of Most Important Measures Passed at This Session of the Legislature Given.

Raleigh, May 18.—Exclusive of the extent of the State's support of the schools, which feature of the biennial revenue bill has kept the General Assembly of North Carolina in session almost twice as long as the normal period and more than 100 days already, the Legislature has enacted a number of important and far-reaching State-wide measures.

The House Friday passed the conference report on the biennial revenue bill 65 to 37 and sent it to the Senate, where its passage by Tuesday or Wednesday is conceded by opponents.

Important Measures.

Among the important State-wide measures are the following:

Local government act, taking over all bond and many financial activities of all local units of government

Reorganization of State Highway department and taking over county roads for maintenance by State.

Creation of department of banking under direction of the Governor.

Establishing division of purchase and contract in Governor's office.

Consolidation of University of North Carolina, State College and North Carolina College for Women into the University of North Carolina.

Creation of division and director of personnel.

Establishing a new department of labor.

Reorganization of State board of health.

Limiting the hours of work for women in industry to 55 hours a week.

Dividing the State into 11 Congressional districts.

Providing for licensing barbers and inspecting barber shops of State except in small towns.

These are among the outstanding State-wide laws so far enacted, while numbers of others are of interest to certain classes or groups of individuals of the State, and still other bills are pending, such as the one to leave to a vote of the people the question of electing or having the Governor appoint all present statutory elective State officials.

Local Government.

Probably the most important piece of legislation is the local government

law, one of the most drastic laws ever enacted by the General Assembly. It sets up a local government commission and a director, taking over the functions of the former county government advisory commission and the local functions of the state sinking fund commission. It has charge of the bond and note and most financial activities of counties, cities, towns, and all other local government units.

All bonds and notes are to be sold through the commission's office in Raleigh and no bonds or notes, except funding and refunding bonds, which create no new debt, except with the approval of objects and methods by the commission. The commission is authorized to investigate all phases of the condition of a unit seeking to sell bonds and can approve or disapprove election proposals as well as sales. Provision is made for funding and refunding bonds over longer periods, by which many cities, towns, counties, local tax districts or other units will be able to keep up bond and interest payments, which, in 40 or 50 instances in the State have been defaulted in recent months.

Moreover, the commission is authorized, under certain conditions and failures of units to meet bond, note and interest payments, to take over a county, city, town or other unit as a receiver and operate its affairs, this being one of the most drastic features of the bill and intended to forestall such receiverships by Federal authorities.

Another act prescribes the manner in which local units may issue bonds and notes and validate their indebtedness, all subject to the approval of the local government commission.

Still another related act requires a unit to get the approval of the director of local government before employing an accountant to audit its books, and another directs the director to set up uniform accounting methods and practices in all of the local government units. Such a law has applied to counties for the past two years, the new act embracing all local units.

State Highways.

The new State highway law abolishes the former nine district lines and nine district commissioners, making the State one highway unit, with a commission of seven members, including a chairman, takes over, in addition to more than 9,000 miles of State highways, 40,000 miles of country roads for maintenance, and increases the tax on gasoline to six cents a gallon. Only a few of the stationary gasoline engines are subject to refund of taxes, those used in agriculture and mining, and no counties or other units may use tax free gasoline.

Under the law not less than \$6,000,000 will be devoted to maintenance of the county highways, which is about three-fourths of such cost under county maintenance and which is expected to keep them in as good condition as the approximately \$8,000,000 under county maintenance. The state will be divided into a convenient number of districts for administration and maintenance purposes only, but conflicts between district commissioners heretofore experienced in locating and connecting roads will disappear.

One of the important features of the act, heretofore largely prevented, will be the use of state convicts on state and county highway construction and maintenance, except on highways on which Federal aid is used. This will go far toward solving one of the most pressing state problems. Work for the increasing number of convicts, both state and county. District camps will be established and county convicts sentenced to serve in one of them. This is expected to help to wipe out the recent deficits in operations of the state's prison, due to increasing numbers of convicts and restrictions placed on kinds of work they can do, due to opposition by trade and labor bodies.

In this connection, it may be added that the General Assembly reappropriated the \$400,000, appropriated in 1927 to buy additional prison farm land, so it can be used for erecting a new central prison on the Cary farm land near Raleigh, and permit abandoning the present fire-trap used.

Banking Department.

Creating of a new department of banking, with a commissioner in charge, is expected to do much toward restoring the confidence of the people in the banks of the state, lost largely through the failure of more than 100 banks in a few months. The new law is not offered as a cure-all, but it gives the commissioner more authority than under the old law, and permits the Governor to make investigations and prosecutions when justified by unlawful acts of

bank official, employee, or outside corporations or individuals.

Gurney P. Hood, Goldsboro, head of the Hood System of Industrial banks, has been named commissioner, with Word H. Wood, Charlotte, Col. J. F. Bruton, Wilson and Agnew H. Bahnson, Winston-Salem, as advisory commissioners.

Purchase and Contract.

Instead of each division of the State and its institutions and departments making purchases independently and individually, the new law creating the office of division of purchase and contract will require all purchases and contracts for services, equipment, buildings and supplies, to be secured by competitive bidding. This division, in the Governor's office will save the State 10 per cent, or \$400,000 a year on the approximately \$4,000,000 spent for these objects, Governor Gardner estimates.

Only small purchases may be made individually, the bulk of all materials and supplies coming from the lowest bidder and the institutions and agencies supplying their needs as they develop. This division takes over the printing contracting from the present department of labor and printing, as well as other of its functions, and will contract for telephone and telegraph services, in addition to the other usual requirements.

Department of Labor.

A new department of labor has been created and will take over duties performed by other divisions at present. These will include women and children in industry, statistical records on industry and labor, and other functions, as well as establishing a liaison with the industrial commission, which operates the workmen's compensation law.

Division of Personnel.

Extending still further the activities of the old salary and wage commission, the new division of personnel will take on more of the aspects of civil service in the employment of workers for the State's departments, institutions and agencies. It requires some qualifications and experience for new employees, who are to be added when needed by agreement of the directors of personnel and the head of the department.

The act, as passed, is not as drastic as the bill introduced, several of the objectionable features having been eliminated. For instance, the provision for State control over employees of counties, cities, towns, and other units was eliminated. Now there is a provision by which the director may advise with such units and make recommendations relative to economies in personnel service. While a director of personnel is provided, the law is such that the work may be handled by the director of purchase and contract.

Consolidation.

The University of North Carolina, at Chapel Hill, North Carolina State college of Agriculture and Engineering at Raleigh and North Carolina college for Women at Greensboro are to be consolidated but not until 1933, under an economy measure. The chief aim of the law is to provide for elimination of duplication in the instruction at the institutions in the future. Each of the three institutions will retain its traditions and name, as a college, but will be a part of the greater university. Trustees have been named to work out the details of consolidation.

Board of Health.

The law reorganizing the State board of health was occasioned largely by the conflicts that arose during the past year as to the operation of the State department of health, which is done by a board composed of doctors elected by the N. C. medical society and the Governor. A new board, it was thought, would be able to maintain the health standards and operate the department better than the one which contained militant factions.

Women in Industry.

Several laws have been proposed relative to work, but the only one so far enacted limits the hours of work for women in industrial activities to 55 hours a week. Others eliminating night work for women, still further restricting child labor and dealing with hours of men's work have either been killed or have not been enacted.

Congressional Districts.

The State has been redistricted under the 1930 census figures so as to give North Carolina the 11 Congressmen to which the State is due. The redistricting act was little more than dividing the fifth district into two districts, numbering them five and six and running up the number to one above for the remaining higher numbered districts. Only one or two counties are shifted. This leaves the old ninth, the new tenth district,

as the one containing the largest number of inhabitants.

Bills to redistrict the State as to Senatorial districts and to reappoint the members of the House of Representatives on the basis of the 1930 census have been introduced, but do not give the populous Piedmont just representation, due to the larger power exerted by the sparsely settled but politically strong eastern counties.

The State barber law, requiring barbers to pass an examination and providing for inspection of barber shops, formerly applying to the larger cities only, has been extended to take in the entire State, with exceptions, and applying to towns of 500 (or 1,000) population.

Among the other new laws enacted, the following are worthy of mention:

Preventing employes of bank and trust companies, except a licensed lawyer receiving the fees himself, from drawing wills or other legal documents.

Requiring clerks of Superior Court to file with commissioner of revenue names of all attorneys practicing in their respective counties.

Allowing a Judge to order additional jurors from another county, rather than move a case to another county for trial.

Permitting short-term prisoners to be worked on city and town streets, and allowing prisoners time off for Sunday work.

Permit cities and towns to make provision for establishing airports and landing fields.

Allowing State to make reciprocity agreement with other states as to automobile licenses for machines crossing State lines.

Requiring that eggs be classified and marked, as to whether fresh, cold storage, etc.

Preventing the sale of butter-colored oleomargarine.

NICE CHERRIES.

Mr. R. C. Chatman, of Forest City, Route 1, was a caller at The Courier office Saturday morning, with a large bunch of cherries. On one twig there were about a pound of large, sweet cherries. The tree from which the cherries were taken is about twenty years old.

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