

State Library

THOSE FUSIONISTS.

How They Squandered and Stole The Public Funds.

Facts Coming to Light. What Ramsey and Harris Got. Western Union to Avoid Litigation. Jim Crow Decision. The Institutes

RALEIGH, July 26.—The examination of J. L. Ramsey, by the legislative committee was long and interesting. The committee had discovered from the books that between June 15th last and June 15th of this year, the inspection of fertilizers cost \$15,794, while during the previous twelve months it had cost only \$5,344. An effort was made to get Ramsey to explain why there was such a prodigious increase—over \$10,000. He said he thought it was necessary in order to collect taxes and police State property and that, as a result, there was a large increase in taxes. But when he was shown that the collections were only \$2,000 more than during the previous twelve months, he admitted that some of the extra expenditure was unnecessary.

The examination of the fusionist books show that October 16th last, the board of fertilizer appropriated \$4,000 for fertilizer inspection; December 10th, \$1,000; January 1st, \$10,000; April 24th, \$1,000; and that it spent as stated \$15,794. The majority of this great sum was spent after December 11th, that is, after the fusionists knew the result of the political election and their complete overthrow.

The committee will go back further in its investigation. It will ask the Democratic committee if there was any necessity for spending this great amount of money. The committee has a found array of vouchers, which show how the expense account was run up. They find that members of the board, residents of Raleigh, actually drew \$2 per day for board, while the board of agriculture was in session, and that another of these was a salaried officer.

They find that J. C. L. Harris, chairman of the board, was paid \$150 for preparing his report to the Legislature, and a like sum as chairman of the legislative committee. The committee also finds that Harris got \$2,000 for one speech before the United States Supreme Court in the fertilizer tax case, and that he got \$250 annually as a counsel fee. Then he got \$1 per day, \$2 per diem expenses, for each day of the meeting. Besides these he got \$150 for three trips to Washington regarding the sending of the bulletin free through the mails.

C. M. Busbee and E. B. Busbee who were the attorneys of the Democratic board, were on the witness stand. They got \$300 annually as fees. They prepared all the briefs in the fertilizer tax case Harris had only to make the speech.

An interesting lot of vouchers is that of J. C. Ray, member of the board of agriculture from Watauga. He filed vouchers for \$750 for transportation to and from the railroad and to have him here cost the State \$70. W. A. Graham got mileage for 602 miles. It cost \$30.00 to have him here two days.

There were three cases before Corporation Committee the first day of its hearing. One was against the Mercantile Trust and Deposit Company, of Baltimore, for taxes on rolling stock, which is operated on the Seaboard Air Line and on which it holds a mortgage. This rolling stock is claimed by John W. Hindsale, who appeared as Governor Russell's counsel, so that it had been returned for taxation at only \$25,000.

Another case was for rolling stock which the Seaboard & Roanoke Railroad operated and on the Roanoke & Tar River Railroad, and on which no return had ever been made.

The third case was against the Southern Railway for the back taxes on toll log stock owned and operated on its Piedmont and North Carolina divisions for 1891 to 1899, both inclusive. Colonel Hindsale claimed that the rolling stock operated on the Piedmont ought to be valued at \$100,000, and that on the North Carolina road at \$50,000.

Robert Strong, attorney for the Western Union Telegraph Company, asked the corporation committee to reduce its assessment of that company's property from a million to half a million. He said it would be willing to pay more taxes than it thought it should pay in order to have no litigation.

One of the Treasury officials evidently does not think much of Capt. Bill Day's management of the penitentiary, for he says no books are kept now. He also says the penitentiary has turned no earnings into the State Treasury so far this year.

The school law passed by the Legislature made an annual appropriation of \$30 for each county for holding county institutes for public school teachers. Superintendent Mabane hopes to have institutes held in at least one-third of the counties this summer. In many only institutes for white teachers will be held this year, and next year the institutes

IMMENSE ACTIVITY.

Continued Increase in New Industries in North Carolina.

Carpet Factory at Greensboro, New Knitting Mills at Winston. Several New Cotton Mills, New Electric Plant. The Drought Ended.

RALEIGH, July 27.—Work has commenced on the carpet factory, which is to be located in Greensboro. The equipment will be very large. About 100 looms will be installed, along with steam power electric lighting and dyeing plants. The town commissioners of Wadesboro have ordered an election to be held Thursday, August 1st, for the purpose of submitting the question as to whether the town shall issue \$25,000 in bonds to establish a system of water works and electric lights. A copious supply of water has been found about two miles south of town. It only remains for the people to say whether they shall have these necessities or not. The probability now is that the bonds will be issued. The Winston Knitting Mills are incorporated for the manufacture of cotton, woolen and silk goods, shirts, underwear and hosiery.

The proposed new cotton mill at China Grove will provide an addition to the town through the mill will be erected two and a half miles this side of China Grove, near a place on the railroad called High Point. The land, 75 acres, was recently bought. It is a valuable site and near the intersection of the Mooresville road with the road to Salisbury. The capital stock will be \$80,000 and already \$30,000 have subscribed, and provided a like amount is subscribed, one individual will subscribe the remaining \$50,000. The capacity of the mill will be about 5,000 spindles.

The first steps are being taken to have a co-operative cotton mill at Newton. Gen. Robert F. Hoke and his associates have bought the narrow gauge railway from Chester to Lenoir, and they will make it a standard gauge and a part of the Seaboard Air Line system. The same persons have secured a logging railway from Lenoir to Wilson's Creek, the latter place being not many miles distant from Pinola, from which there is a road to the Cranberry Iron mine and thence to Johnston City, Tenn. It is said this will make a 400 mile saving in the coal haul of the Seaboard Air Line. It will also develop the Cranberry Iron mine, which is really a mountain of ore of wonderfully high grade and purity. The new gas and electric lighting company at Raleigh will expend \$75,000 on its plant. It will lay new mains.

The plans for the new hospital building for females to be erected at Morganton have been completed. It will be a handsome structure, with a capacity of 200 beds.

State auditor Ayer has received a letter from a Confederate veteran saying that in a certain county in this State six widows are fraudulently obtaining pensions; that the husbands of five were deserters and that the husband of the sixth was not wounded while in service; that each of these gave to a member of the County Pension Board \$5 in order to secure their being put on the pension list. The Auditor has called on the County Board for a statement as to the matter.

State Auditor Worth says that the debt of North Carolina over its investments is only \$1,200,000.

The First Presbyterian church in Greensboro has awarded a contract for the purchase of a new organ to cost \$3,500.

The drought which was generally over this section has been succeeded by a rain as general. From all directions came news of an abundance of rain. The country has been blessed in every direction also. The rain of yesterday was the first that has fallen in Lincoln, Col. Tipton says, since the middle of April.

Governor Russell's attorney, John W. Hindsale, in his argument before the Corporation Commission in which he sought to force the Mercantile Trust and Deposit Company to pay taxes on \$1,400,000 of rolling stock on the Seaboard Air Line, which he claims it owns, says it returns this rolling stock at only \$50,000. The matter goes over until Friday. President George T. Winston, of the Agricultural and Mechanical College, arrived and expressed unbounded delight at again being in North Carolina. Very soon after arriving here he went out to the college.

Twenty four recruits have gone to the Twenty seventh Regiment from this recruiting station. Three Second Regiment men went yesterday. It is asserted that the white Republicans in next year's campaign will not make speeches to the negroes, but will try to control the white vote. State Chairman Simmons arrived from the east. He said: "The amendment is all right in the east." W. U. Monroe, ex-member of the Legislature from Wayne, is preparing to reprint a complete set of the Supreme Court reports. The State has heretofore always done this and will no doubt continue the practice. Superintendent Day, of the penitentiary, called on State Treasurer Worth

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for more money, saying the penitentiary needed it, needed all the appropriation for this year and more too. Capt. Day is not willing to pay any 1899 debts, up to March 7, out of the \$50,000 appropriation for the current year. Father Worth is trying to force such payment. Capt. Day told the Treasurer that the money would be secured, even if it had to be borrowed.

LIVED FAST AND HIGH.

How the Fusion Board of Agriculture Grabbed the Public Money. Ramsey Tells a Tale.
RALEIGH, July 27.—Ex-Secretary J. L. Ramsey, of the Board of Agriculture, was again a witness before the legislative investigating committee. He is what is known as a "star" witness, and two such shrewd business men and close questioners as Senator Brown and Representative Gatta gathered some valuable information from him.

The fusion board of agriculture would vote for any sort of an appropriation for one of the "faithful." J. C. L. Harris grew some \$3,000 for his services as "general utility man," but it appears that there was always an order of the board that he should have the particular amount. The board simply "blew in" the funds. It had five fertilizer inspectors, who, it is admitted, were not needed, but who were merely given "pie."

The further examination of ex-Secretary Ramsey by the investigating committee developed some very interesting facts. He testified that J. C. L. Harris was paid in two years \$2,927 as attorney of the Board of Agriculture, and \$448 for attending the board meetings. Last December Harris was paid in advance \$100 extra on Hill E. King's motion to "look after the legislature." Ramsey said he did not know whether Harris ever even appeared before the agricultural committee of the legislature. It was further shown that Harris was actually paid for his license to practice in the Supreme Court of the United States. The voucher for this was for \$110. One of Harris' vouchers gave him four days' pay as a member of the board—\$20—but paid his board for five days—\$30. On this voucher was also one day's pay and one day's board—\$6—for attending a meeting of the executive committee. Ramsey couldn't explain that pay for five days when there was only four days' service. He got pay for all trips and expenses. He charged this extra. None of the attorneys did so.

It was shown that on some days the board merely met and adjourned. On one occasion it devoted its session to a conference with the Governor, who had summoned it. The committee was unable to find any verified expense account for the holding of farmers' institutes. Ramsey admitted that he had audited J. M. Allen's bill for \$18 for buying carpets and cuspidors and inspecting carpets after the latter had been laid. He admitted that all this time Allen was a clerk receiving \$1,200 salary.

Jas. H. Young, colored, was in June, 1897, on Harris' motion, elected inspecting clerk. Ramsey testified that Young was never sent out to inspect fertilizers but that he put in most of his time in the office wrapping fertilizer tax tags and bulletins. For this he was paid \$1,000 salary. Young was first elected for two years or at the pleasure of the board but at the next meeting a resolution was adopted, on motion of Hill E. King, striking out the words "or at the pleasure of the board." This was done to give Young a check on the office.

The examination of the minutes of the board meetings developed the fact, that A. Q. Holliday, then president of the Agricultural and Mechanical College, was allowed as chairman of the committee for such services since he began to discharge these duties. It was found that while the old and new Board of Agriculture, which met in April, adjourned to meet May 26, yet the old board met, May 24th, at the call of J. C. L. Harris, chairman of the executive committee, and these members drew two days pay on the 25th.

There were fourteen fertilizer inspectors on duty this year from January 1st to May 15th. Hill E. King and J. M. Allen got not only regular salaries but pay for attendance and board at \$6 a day at each meeting. A. Q. Holliday, who had \$2,500 salary as college president, also got pay and board at \$6 a day. J. C. Ray, of Watauga, at first charged \$5 for expenses from home to the railroad, but later increased this to \$15. Ramsey said it seemed that Ray must have stopped to see some of his kin folk along the route.

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