

# THE CHARLOTTE LABOR JOURNAL

AND DIXIE FARM NEWS

Published at Charlotte, North Carolina

OLDEST LABOR PUBLICATION IN THE TWO CAROLINAS

H. A. Stalls, Editor and Publisher W. M. Witter, Associate Editor

Entered as second-class mail matter September 11, 1931, at the Post Office at Charlotte, N. C., under the Act of Congress of March 3, 1879.

Endorsed by Charlotte Typographical Union, Number 338, An Affiliate of Charlotte Central Labor Union and the North Carolina Federation of Labor.

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# CAPITAL REPORTER

Scott Summers

WE WOULDN'T BE SURPRISED!



RALEIGH, N. C., Dec. 13. — The Hackney Brothers' firm of Wilson is unhappy. The outfit was clipped \$8,500 for failing to live up to a contract with the State, and has powerful friends trying to get its money refunded. The story—first reported in this column—goes like this:

On April 7 Hackney Brothers got a contract to build bodies for 450 badly needed school buses. Under the contract, the Wilson firm was to deliver the buses at the rate of seven per cent (82 buses) a week, starting one month after the chassis were delivered to them. The 450 chassis went to the Wilson firm on May 10, so the first 32 buses were to have been delivered by June 9 and the contract completed by September 1st.

By July 27 not one single bus had been delivered. Hackney pleaded wartime difficulty in getting steel—but the contract was given him April 7, two and one-half months before the Korean war started and while he still could have ordered the steel.

On July 27, Contract and Purchase Division Director Charlie Williams sent a registered letter to Hackney Brothers calling for delivery or else. The "or else" was covered by a clause in the contract which says: "In case of default of the contractor, the State may procure the articles or services from other sources and hold the contractor responsible for any excess cost occasioned thereby."

Williams pulled 100 buses from Hackney, sent them to a Georgia firm to have bus bodies put on them. The cost \$45 per bus above the Hackney bid of \$1,110 per bus, plus some \$40 per bus in transportation and inspection charges. In other words, each of those 100 buses cost the State approximately \$85 more than the Hackney bid.

It wasn't until August 12 that Hackney delivered the first bus. By October 16—a month and a half late—the last of the original 450 buses contracted for had been delivered, with Hackney actually building only 350 of them.

When Hackney submitted his invoice, calling for full payment for the 350 buses, Williams deducted the approximately \$8,500 extra it had cost for the 100 buses built by the Georgia firm. Hackney was unhappy, he felt he should have the full amount, despite the fact he had not lived up to his contract.

Williams refused. It wasn't long until Larry Moore of Wilson, chairman of the finance committee in the House in the 1949 session and thereby a member of the Advisory Budget Commission, was "suggesting" that Hackney couldn't help his inability to get steel and "shouldn't be made to suffer" because of an unforeseen war.

Moore enlisted the aid of fellow-Advisory Budget Commission member Frank Taylor of Wayne. Taylor was chairman of the 1949 House appropriations committee—a post he is reportedly slated ready to hand Moore if Taylor is named speaker of the 1951 House.

Recently Hackney was allowed to argue his case before a secret—as always—session of the Advisory Budget Commission, which also is the board which awards contracts.

What happened at that session has not been reported, but reli-

able sources say no action was taken on the Hackney matter despite efforts of Moore and Taylor.

However, it wouldn't be surprising if there is an effort in the 1951 Legislature to try to get the \$8,500 handed back to the Hackney firm.

P.S.—This isn't the first time the Hackney outfit has been a little slow delivering school buses it had contracted to build. The firm was given a similar contract on April 9, 1946. By June 13, 1947—more than a year later—the firm still had not delivered. A letter from then-Contract and Purchase Director W. Z. Betts said in part: "Your lack of cooperation in fulfilling any part of your contract has given us serious concern." Former Director Betts also gave a "deliver or else" ultimatum.

The new buses are used to replace old school buses. Failure to deliver them on time could mean a serious accident, killing or maiming school children who had to ride in rickety school buses that were scheduled for replacement.

The North Carolina Education Association — which includes teachers, principals, and school superintendents—has a new item on its 1951 legislative campaign.

It's going to ask the General Assembly to grant 10 days sick leave a year—cumulative—with full pay for teachers. This is in addition to the sick leave setup they have now, whereby the teacher is allowed to stay out while sick as long as necessary, making up the difference between state pay and local pay to a substitute.

NCEA claims it is a professional organization and not a union. However, the organization has recently taken in a "Department of Transportation," made up of the people who maintain school buses and can by no stretch of the imagination be

classified as "professional" people. NCEA's main function seems to be to holler "gimme" to the legislature.

Few people realize the enormous job that John Gold undertook when he took over as prisons director. He says he's learning as he goes along.

His ideas are sound. He believes the prison department has a great responsibility. Rehabilitation of the prisoner should be the primary aim of the prison, Gold says. Every effort should be made to turn him out as a good citizen, able to live and work with his fellow man. Being in prison is, of course, punishment for law violation. But Gold believes the prisoner should be taught discipline, through obeying prison rules and regulations; a trade, so that he will be able to care for himself when he gets out; and the will to become and remain a good citizen.

That in itself is a big job. It would be an easier job if the State could afford to spend plenty of money on its prison system.

But when you realize the sprawling nature of our prison system, then you realize what a tremendous administrative job John Gold has.

There are 85 prison camps, sprinkled from one end of North Carolina to the other. There is the youth center at Camp Butler, Caledonia farm, Camp Polk dairy farm, Woman's Prison and Central Prison. As of December 1 there were 9,122 prisoners.

Here's just one of the minor problems—6,000 hogs are used a year in feeding prisoners. These must be raised, processed and transported to the various units. The bare necessity of feeding, clothing, housing and guarding prisoners is a big undertaking. And when you add a program of prison reform, rehabilitation, and an attempt to add to prison industries, brother, you have a real headache.

Gold is taking it in stride. He's investigating every report of mistreatment of prisoners, misfeasance in office. He's keeping the

(Continued On Page 5)

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