

At the CAPITAL

By M. R. Dunnagan, The Pilot's Raleigh Correspondent

Governor Gardner's highway measure, to eliminate the nine districts, reduce the number of commissioners and take over the county road systems, which has been raging for two weeks, came up in the House last Thursday with an overwhelming favorable committee report, only to be set for special consideration Monday night. It is expected that a week will elapse before the bill is finally disposed of.

The vote by which the consideration was postponed was not taken as an indication of the strength of opponents. In fact, an unofficial poll of the General Assembly was made last week by a proponent of the measure, who said 88 out of the 120 House members and 38 of the 50 Senators were favorable to the bill, as it came from the committee, without changes. If this is any indication, the measure will pass.

The main opposition is from some of the larger counties which stand to lose more in equipment, convict camps and other such items. Three-fourths of the Mecklenburg delegation oppose the measure; half of the Durham, and some from other large counties. Forsyth legislators appear for it, as do all of the Buncombe representatives, and probably the Guilford delegates.

Governor Gardner has changed from four to six commissioners and a chairman, and has agreed to other minor changes in the bill, behind which he has thrown the entire force of his administration.

The six months State operated school term, quiet for two weeks, came up again Friday with the introduction of bills seeking to make effective the State operation. They recede from the original stand of complete State costs, setting a minimum to which the State goes and leaving improvement in the hands of the county authorities. They provide \$19,500,000 for the cost and seek to raise this fund from sales production and income taxes.

More and more the view is being accepted that the State will not be able to find sufficient sources for the additional \$12,000,000 to \$14,000,000 needed to take over the entire term and that the final result will be that the equalizing fund of \$6,500,000 will be increased, probably as high as \$10,000,000 and the present method continued. However, the education committees are continuing their efforts to find the money needed and are going through the nearly a dozen sales, production and other tax measures offered.

Vitally important is the "Local Government Commission" bill which brought on a night session Friday. This commission takes over functions of the County Government Advisory Commission and local functions of the State Sinking Fund Commission, the bill placing all counties, cities, districts and units under its control as to bond and note issues and elections. All such acts must be approved by the commission and all bonds and notes sold through it. The commission is to be composed of the State Treasurer, Auditor and Commissioner of Revenue and six other members named by the Governor, including a director, two county and two city officials and one other.

The commission restricts the investments of sinking funds and specifies requirements of depositories of public funds. The bill will allow funding and refunding bonds without a vote of the people. Such funding and refunding is designed to help some of the counties, cities and other units over rough places at present. The measure is drastic, but is expected to be enacted so public funds and public expenditures will be fully safeguarded.

Governor Gardner's bill to establish a Commission on Personnel, with a director, in charge of employing all State employees and a step toward civil service, went through the Senate with only two opposing votes. The feature requiring like supervision over county and municipal employees was eliminated so the commission will serve only in an advisory capacity to such units.

The administration measure, establishing a division of purchase and contract in the Governor's office, with a purchasing and contracting agent to handle all purchase for all State departments, institutions and agencies has reached the legislative hopper. It will meet with some opposition, but likely to be enacted.

The constitutional requirements

for redistricting the State, in three ways, Congressional districts, State Senatorial districts and State Representatives has given way to the more important legislation, but is expected to come up again for final action soon. The "short ballot" bill is also yet to reach the hopper, but it is promised. In fact, it is expected to get added impetus along with the Governor's reorganization plans, by the visit of former Governor Harry Flood Byrd, of Virginia, who got the short ballot and reorganized that State's government.

While seven weeks have passed and committees are laboring day and night to get the legislation in shape for floor action, apparently little has been finally disposed of. Much is in shape and will come up for action within the next two weeks, but the General Assembly will probably be in session for two or three weeks in March.

The bills introduced in the House have passed the 600 mark, while in the Senate they have exceeded 260.

a total of more than 880, including some few duplicates. Only 119 bills originating in the House, and only 36 bills originating in the Senate, a total of 155, had been ratified up to Saturday. Only 14 of the House bills and only 12 of the Senate bills were of Statewide interest or importance, and half of those were resolutions. Little of importance has been finally disposed of yet.

Among the bills of interest, grouped under heads, introduced during the past week, are the following:

Taxes: Tax of 5 per cent on consumers of gas, electricity, water, telephone and telegraph services; allowing owners to redeem land sold for taxes and held by county or city to redeem it by four annual payments; uniform handling of tax foreclosure certificates; tax on kilowatt hour of electric energy produced and limit on charges for electric current; permit quarterly payments of income taxes when amount exceeds \$100.

Legal: Regulating foreclosure sales under mortgages and deeds of trust and sales of real estate by executors and administrators; allow trust companies to be appointed public guardians; permit fraternal benefit society and order members to designate charitable organizations as beneficiaries; to define the rights of creditors and beneficiaries under policies of life insurance; regulate entries of judgments by clerks of court; provide

fine or imprisonment, or both, in discretion of court, for involuntary manslaughter; prohibit unauthorized practice of law in North Carolina.

Automobiles: Reduce allowance from eight to six cents a mile to private cars used for public purposes; provide two rates for licenses for cars, \$10 for private passenger and small trucks, and \$15 for large trucks and for "for hire" cars; allow orphanages to operate cars on \$1 annual license fee; require coroners to report automobile accidents to Motor Vehicle Bureau; provide a North Carolina commission to confer with a South Carolina group on cars operated across the State line in both states.

Banks: Prohibit banks making service charge and charging for handling checks which prove worthless; prevent any person, firm, corporation or trustee from acquiring more than 25 per cent of the shares of stock of more than one bank.

County government: Abolish the office of register of deeds and transfer functions to clerk of court; to authorize the six northeastern counties of the State to establish and maintain jointly a prison farm.

Labor: State Federation of Labor bill establishing 55-hour week, 11-hour day and five-day week, eliminating railroad employees, farm workers and those engaged in gathering or canning perishable fruits and vegeta-

bles; other bills to prevent work of women and children at night.

Printing: To make it unlawful for any State official to place contract for printing outside the State.

Prison: Re-allocate \$400,000 authorized in 1927, to erect new central prison on Cary farm near Raleigh.

Compensation: To repeal Workmen's Compensation Law.

Health: To provide for a dentist on each county Board of Health.

Swimming pools and bathing beaches, to be licensed and supervised by State Board of Health.

Plumbing and heating contractors, establishing a board of examiners and licensing all operators.

State institutions, prevent use of

their property for mercantile uses, aimed largely at State University book shop and student agents.

Pensions: Increase from \$100 to \$365 a year pensions of widows of Confederate veterans who married before January 1, 1880 and who were the first wives of such veterans.

Embalming: Setting out qualifications of applicant for embalming license and removing three members of State Board of Health from State Board of Embalmers.

Forest fires: To make a county not participating with State in forest fire control liable for cost of fighting when fire sweeps from a non-cooperating county to one which does cooperate.

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Conditions Governing Contest:

- 1 Answers limited to 200 words.
- 2 Write on one side of the paper only.
- 3 No entries accepted that bear a postmark later than midnight, March 4, 1931.
- 4 Contest open to everybody except employees and executives of R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company and their families.
- 5 In case of ties, the full amount of award will be paid to each of the tying parties.
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All communications must be addressed to Contest Editor—R. J. REYNOLDS TOBACCO COMPANY, Winston-Salem, N. C.

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11.15 to 12.15 . . . Eastern Time
10.15 to 11.15 . . . Central Time
9.15 to 10.15 . . . Mountain Time
8.15 to 9.15 . . . Pacific Time

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WHAS, WSM, WSB, WMC, WAPL, WJDX, WSMR, KTHS, WTML, KSTP, WERC, WKY, WBP, KPRC, WOAI, KOA, KSL, KTR, KGO, KECA, KFSD, KGW, KOMO, KHQ, KFAB.

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(Winners will be announced as soon as possible after contest closes)