

# CAPITAL REPORTER

*Scott Summers*

Drafting of doctors in North Carolina apparently is hitting hardest where doctors are most needed. From reports across the State, the first call seemed to hit the rural sections or small towns where they had only one or two doctors.

Any doctor who got his training at government expense should be ready and willing to repay his country by entering the service. But there has been a dearth of "country doctors" for a long time. It seems ironical that the young men who entered general practice

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field. Recently the Utilities Commission has granted a number of boosts. Last week, for example, the Western Carolina Telephone Company of Franklin was allowed an \$8,000-a-year boost in gross income. The Norfolk and Carolina Telephone and Telegraph Company of Elizabeth City got a raise of \$52,000 gross income, which will add \$25,000 a year to its net take—and raise rates in Elizabeth City, Hertford, Edenton and Manteo.

Southern Bell and Carolina Telephone company both have been allowed boosts. Southern Bell asked \$3,000,000 but did not get that much. Carolina wanted another million and a quarter, but that was lowered to \$750,000. Individual rates will be increased from .50 to \$1.75.

The boosts are being granted on the basis of added investments in the companies. They are justified on the basis of the company getting a certain percentage return on its total investment.

Not being a wizard in high finance, it doesn't make sense to me.

For example, and this is a hypothetical case: It seems to me that if you're getting a return of one dollar each per telephone that you'll get the same rate of return no matter whether you add to your investment by adding 1,000 telephones or not.

In other words, if the company is valued at 1,000,000 and has 10,000 phones, the rate is set so that these bring in a return of around six and one-half percent. If you spent another \$100,000 and add another 1,000 phones, it would seem that the same rate on these additional telephones would bring in the same percentage.

But, of course, dumb me didn't add in all the "depreciation", the "lower value of the dollar", and all the other gimmicks that a big corporation can dream up to clip the customers.

In the past, the Utilities Commission granted a raise and forgot about it until the company asked for another boost. With the expanded personnel, it now hopes to check at the end of each year and see whether or not the companies are making the "small profit" they claim or not.

The road-building contractors are claiming they've been insulted—that they don't try to dictate to the Highway Commission in its policy and operation.

Then why is it that they're using every pressure trick they can think of to get the commission to lower the specifications for a 24.4 mile strip of U. S. Highway 301, for which the contract for resurfacing and widening will be let December 19?

It seems that the boys think the standards are too high. They'd like to see them lowered, because then they could make a bigger profit. And they're doing everything short of bribery to have their way.

Incidentally, the strip in question is from Whitaker to Weldon, via Enfield and Halifax. And 301 has become the most widely used north-south route in the State, particularly for the New York-Florida traffic. If there ever was a highway that needed to be top grade, that's it.

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 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

## Insect Damage Costs Millions

According to a preliminary, unofficial estimate by the National Cotton Council, cotton insect damage in North Carolina in 1950 amounted to \$46,150,000.

Over the Cotton Belt in two years the boll weevil and other marauders have stolen more than a billion dollars from cotton farmers. They exacted a toll of \$598,563,000 in 1950. This loss has been equalled only once and that was in 1949 when damage was nearly \$618 million.

Losses to the boll weevil and other pests in North Carolina during the last two years totaled more than \$785 per cotton farm. Think

Big corporations are expecting the excess profits tax and are doing something about it. There's a flood of applications for new corporations going through Secretary of State Thad Eure's office these days. Many of them have identical names on them. In other words, one big corporation would have to pay a big excess tax. But if it divides into three small ones, splitting profits, it will pay smaller excess taxes—if any. The individual taxpayer still is hooked, though.

Gold is taking it in stride. He's investigating every report of mistreatment of prisoners, misfeasance in office. He's keeping the boys on their toes, and believes he is cutting out graft—petty or otherwise. He pays for his own meals at prisons. He has notified all hands that anyone caught "borrowing" a ham or otherwise helping themselves to prison goods or equipment will be prosecuted. And he constantly makes surprise personal checks on camps to see how they are operated.

Apparently, the former Winston-Salem police chief is the man for the job.

One contractor got caught trying to put down a road that didn't meet specifications recently. He was resurfacing a strip on one of the more widely-traveled east-west highways. He didn't see fit to put as thick a coating on it as he was supposed to, but a sharp-eyed Highway Department inspector caught him. He had to go back and put down another layer. Estimated cost—out of his own pocket—because he didn't do it right the first time varies from 60,000 to \$100,000.

And then, this same contractor was reported as saying that he had "been getting by with it" for the past 10 years.

Maybe the Highway Department needs a few more sharp-eyed inspectors.

what this much more money would have meant to each farm family in the state and to those with whom these families trade. Cold figures may not impress us but cold children do. All too frequently that's what these losses may mean - that some North Carolina boys and girls will be without new shoes and warm clothes this winter and that some Christmas stockings will hang a lot lighter. The fourth annual Cotton Insect Control Conference is being sponsored by the Cotton Council in Memphis, December 7-8, to consider the problem of reducing pest losses. This fight deserves the support of all of us in cotton growing areas.

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The increase in mail subscription price has been made necessary to cover the increased costs of all factors that go into the publishing and printing of "The Enterprise." These include the increased cost of newsprint, taxes, labor, printing supplies and editorial feature services. A little present time there will be no increase in the single newstand price of 5c per copy, nor newsboy carrier delivery. Below is a complete schedule of new mail subscription rates, effective January 1.

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