

VIOLATIONS OF FISH LAW STILL OF COMMON OCCURRENCE

FORMER COMMISSIONER MEEKINS INTIMATES THAT THE LAW HAS NOT BEEN SO WISELY OR SO WELL ENFORCED BY LANN AS IT WAS LAST YEAR—CLAIMS THAT GOV. KITCHIN GAVE HIM BUT HALF HEARTED SUPPORT.

Manteo, N. C., April, 22, 1912.

Mr. Editor:

Much has been recently published in your columns and in various other papers circulating in this state relative to fishing conditions in the state and having special reference to that part of the territory within the jurisdiction of the State Fish Commissioner embraced in what is known as "the lower sounds." I have read these various publications with interest, particularly the various references to myself as "former Fish Commissioner" and the charges against myself as such, and in common with our entire citizenship, I have wondered at whose instance and upon whose information the many misstatements, both as to fishing conditions and as to myself, have been made.

It is not now a particular duty of mine to see to the enforcement of the fishing laws of the state, and of course delicacy and a sense of propriety would certainly prevent my attempting in any way to criticize the manner in which my successor performs his duty, now devolving upon him, and I take it that a like sense of delicacy and propriety would prevent his passing criticisms on his predecessor unless he were in a position to show just grounds for criticism. We will all agree that it is the duty of every officer charged with enforcement of law, to perform that duty to the letter, regardless of what his predecessor has done or left undone and regardless of what his predecessor may do or omit to do. By reason of the many references to the manner in which I performed my duty as Fish Commissioner, I feel it due to myself and friends to ask space in which to present some facts relating to the great fishing industry and my connection with it.

Prior to 1905 there were many local statutes restricting fishing but no general restrictive law of importance had been passed. The general Assembly of that year enacted what is known as the "Vann Bill" the passage of which was hotly contested by the people of this section, they believing the law unfair and in some respects unnecessary. Later the constitutionality of the law was tested in the courts and was upheld in the supreme court by a divided court, the judges being three in favor of and two against its constitutionality. Various other laws have been enacted for the regulation of the fishing industry, though some people do not seem to realize that there is any fishing law now effective except the "Vann Bill." No effort was made to enforce the provisions of this law until 1907, when the State Fish Commission was established by act of the Legislature. I was appointed Fish Commissioner and entered into the discharge of my duties as such June 1st, 1907.

The law provided for raising revenue by taxing nets of fishermen, but no funds could be realized from this source until the opening of the season many months later. There was not a dollar of available funds, nor any boats or appliances or means for carrying out the provisions of the law. The law provided that all territory in which fishing was prohibited should be marked in a permanent manner, and it was necessary that this should be done before the opening of the ensuing fishing season. Realizing this, I proceeded, at my own expense, to mark the prohibited territory from Wolliday's Island, which is twenty miles up Chowan river, to Hatteras Inlet, the southern boundary of the

territory in the jurisdiction of the Fish Commission. This was done over the protests of my relatives and friends in Dare county and in doing it I had no assistance of any nature from any of those who now seem so intensely interested in protecting this great industry and who almost daily contribute to the already convincing proof that they know absolutely nothing about the industry, its needs or the things best calculated to promote it.

The fishing season arrived. The law had been ignored for two years, from the date of its passage. The people in Dare county, including my friends and relatives, wished to continue ignoring it, but the legislature had established the Fish Commission and the boundaries of the prohibited territory had been plainly marked and the law was enforced, perhaps not to the letter in every instance but for all practical purposes, including the collection of taxes which the law makes incumbent upon the Fish Commissioner. At the close of this season in 1908, the following pound nets had been removed by the Fish Commissioner or under his direction: Fourteen in Chowan river, twenty-six near Roanoke Marshes, eleven in Pamlico and Croatan Sounds and nine near Caroon's Point. In addition, a large number of fishermen who had for many years used the waters in what is known as the "ten mile limit" in Pamlico Sound, were influenced to remove from this territory and place their nets in less advantageous locations. During the last week in March, 1908, Dr. Joseph Hyde Pratt, State Geologist, visited Chowan river, Albemarle, Croatan and Pamlico Sounds, and with the slight exception of a misunderstanding at Roanoke Marshes, on the part of the fishermen, found the law enforced, as shown by a letter he addressed me on April 4th, 1908, in which the following statements occur: "I have just been over the restricted territory of Albemarle, Croatan and Pamlico Sounds, and find that the fishermen have their nets placed in compliance with the law. The upper and lower sounds are in a splendid condition and show that the Commissioner and his assistants have done their duty."

In the spring of 1909, he again visited the same territory with the same result. During this spring, the Fish Commission caused to be removed from prohibited territory one hundred and eighty-five pound nets and several hundred gill nets. The season of 1910 found the commissioner powerless to remove nets set in violation of law, as the legislature of 1909 had repealed the "confiscation clause" of the Vann Bill. Notwithstanding this, the Commission caused the removal of one hundred and twenty-five pound nets and several hundred gill nets that were set in violation of the law. The taxes were collected and the law enforced for all practical purposes. There may have been a few minor violations. In March 1910, during the active season, Hon. A. W. Graham, speaker of the House of Representatives, Ex-Lieutenant Governor R. A. Doughton, and Dr. H. F. Moore of the United Fish Commission's office from Washington, D. C., and Dr. Joseph Hyde Pratt, visited all the fisheries from Washington, N. C., to the head of Chowan river. They were shown the buoys and lines and saw the nets and stakes. They will bear out the statement that the law was then strictly enforced.

I resigned in the early part of the season of 1911. I had used my best efforts to enforce the law. During my term of office, I was hampered for want of means, with which to pay salaries of my assistants and deputies as well as my own salary, the latter being in arrears \$1200.00 at the time of my resignation. I also felt that I did not have the hearty support of the citizens of the territory. (Continued on Page eight.)

WATER COMPANY PRESENTS CASE

SAYS CITY WATER IS SUITABLE FOR DRINKING PURPOSES AND COMPARES MOST FAVORABLY WITH THAT OF OTHER CITIES.

The Board of Aldermen met in special session on Tuesday night of this week to hear Mr. Jno. O. Hill of Baltimore, representing the Elizabeth City Water Company.

Mr. Hill is a man of pleasant address and gentlemanly bearing, and he made a most plausible presentation of the water company's case to the board. Indeed so well did Mr. Hill talk, that the Aldermen were practically overwhelmed by his argument, flattery, and promises. Indications are that no further action will be taken toward improving the city's water supply.

Mr. Hill urged, in the first place, as Mr. Lewis has always done, that Elizabeth City's water is pure and wholesome,—altogether fit for drinking purposes. He went on to compare it with the water of other cities, and intimated that Elizabeth City had much better water than Baltimore or many other Northern towns. Mr. Hill stated, however, that it was the desire of the water company to satisfy if possible every demand of the people of Elizabeth City, so as to make the water more generally used. He intimated that at some time in the near future the company will work out some plan of dam that will prevent contamination of the water from below the intake. He stated that men are at work on the project already.

Mr. Hill did not state when or how soon the work on this dam may be expected to begin.

MRS. MARY FORBES DEAD

On Monday night of last week Mrs. Mary Forbes, one of the oldest residents of this county died at the home of Mrs. McWe Fearing on Road street.

The funeral services were conducted Monday morning from Christ Episcopal church, of which she had been a member for nearly sixty-three years, by the rector, Rev. Claudius F. Smith. Interment followed in the Episcopal cemetery.

The pall bearers were: J. B. Leigh, J. B. Flora, J. T. McCabe and T. T. Turner. Mrs. Forbes had been an invalid for many months and was in her eighty-fourth year. She had been married three times; first to Mr. Thomas Harvey, a relative of one of the first governors of the State; second, to Capt. Benjamin Shannonhouse, a Confederate soldier; and last to Mr. Jno. Forbes of this county. She was one of the best known women of this section of the State.

TOPSY TURVY A SUCCESS

"Topsy Turvy", presented last night in the Auditorium of the High School building, was one of the most enjoyable entertainments ever given here. The selection of the play, the cast, and the presentation reflected credit on those who had it in charge. A large audience was present and thoroughly enjoyed the presentation of the play. Every part was well played. "Topsy Turvy, Miss Spriggs" and the Deacon having apparently the largest share of the audience's favor. "Lord Clarence" was a less popular role, but no less well played. As for "Ned", he was a whole show by himself, overwhelming the audience with laughter every time he appeared on the stage.

The play was given for the benefit of the organ fund of Christ Episcopal church. Quite a good sum was realized as a result of the entertainment.

Lace Curtain Week. Many odd curtains to be sold. Prices named without regard to their real worth. **FOWLER & CO.**

CIVIC LEAGUE ELECTS OFFICERS

INTERESTING MEETING IN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE ROOMS — WANT CLEAN-UP WEEK FOR ELIZABETH CITY.

The Civic League of this city held an important and interesting meeting in the Chamber of Commerce rooms on Tuesday afternoon of this week.

A motion was made and carried that the city authorities be asked to set aside a certain week as "Clean-up Week" in Elizabeth City. The matter will be brought before the board of aldermen at their next meeting, and it's the purpose of the league to call to the attention of the board action that other progressive cities have taken along this line.

It was also decided that the league should join the State Federation of Women's Clubs, and Mrs. Charles Robinson was elected a delegate to the state convention which meets at Winston in May.

The league some time ago had a "tree doctor" give a demonstration of his work in this city, and the aldermen were asked to make an appropriation toward saving some of the trees of Elizabeth City. The aldermen have deferred action in the matter indefinitely; but the league is hopeful that through the board or in some other way funds may be obtained toward having this work done.

Before the meeting adjourned the following officers were elected: President, Mrs. Charles Robinson; First Vice-President Mrs. Herbert Walker; Second Vice-President, Miss Lilly Grandy; Secretary, Mrs. H. E. Etheridge; Treasurer, Mrs. F. D. Gregory.

GAS COMPANY BUYS LAND

The North Carolina Gas Company, which has a franchise from the authorities to supply the city with gas has purchased an acre of land near Thompson's brick yards, and work is expected to begin on the plant as soon as the material for its construction arrives. The company hopes to have the plant in operation early fall.

Mr. A. M. Worstell, vice-president of the corporation, with his superintendent of construction, has spent much of the week in the city with the attorney of the company, Judge J. Bush Leigh.

There has been a big demand in this city for gas and although there have been numberless franchises granted, nothing has ever before become of it and the citizens will welcome the activity of this corporation.

This is one of the industries that has been brought here by the Chamber of Commerce, negotiations having been in progress for many months.

SECOND ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATED WEDNESDAY

On Wednesday night of this week the Albemarle Lodge of Perfection of the Ancient Accepted Rite of Free Masonry celebrated the second anniversary of their lodge. The occasion was greatly enjoyed by those present.

REVIVAL SERVICES AT M. E. CHURCH

Interesting revival services are in progress this week at the First Methodist church. Rev. L. B. Bledgers is preaching and large crowds are attending the services. Morning services are at 9:30; evening services at eight.

LOST BELT

Lost Somewhere down town, white belt with large silver buckle attached. Reward if returned to Mrs. A. B. Houts, 112 N. Road street, Elizabeth City, N. C.

REPUBLICAN CONVENTION ELECTS STATE DELEGATES

I. M. MEEKINS AND WHEELER MARTIN TO REPRESENT 1ST DISTRICT AT CHICAGO ATTEMPT TO INSTRUST FOR ROOSEVELT UNSUCCESSFUL — BELIEVE THAT DELEGATES FAVOR TAFT

The Republican convention for the First Congressional District met here on Wednesday afternoon of this week, holding their session at the courthouse.

The occasion opened with I. M. Meekins in the chair, and apparently in possession of the floor also. When the Advance reporter entered the courtroom, Mr. Meekins was speaking from the judge's desk in denunciation of Moorehead and Butler, who, it appeared, had flooded this part of the state with letters reflecting upon Mr. Meekins' party integrity and claiming that really favorable to Taft he was sailing under Roosevelt colors. Mr. Meekins denied the charge, without stating which of the candidates he preferred. He wanted to know, he said, why, if he was friendly to Taft, this charge was being made against him by men who are friends of the administration.

Having put himself right before the convention Mr. Meekins intimated that he was ready for the convention to proceed to business and nominated T. J. Cheek of this city as permanent chairman. There being no other nominations Mr. Cheek took the chair.

The first business of the session was to nominate delegates to the National Convention at Chicago. I. M. Meekins of this city, A. S. Mitchell of Hertford county, R. A. Conner of Belhaven, Hon. Harry Skinner of Greenville and Wheeler Martin, Collector of internal revenues at Raleigh were also nominated. Messrs. Meekins and Martin were elected on the first ballot.

It seems that the sentiment of the delegates of the convention was for Roosevelt, and a motion was introduced to instruct the delegates elected to vote for Roosevelt. Later this motion was modified so as to make the instruction binding only so long as Roosevelt was in the running. The motion was lost.

Mr. M. D. Leggett of Beaufort was elected by acclamation as Republican candidate for congress from this district. He was called on for a speech and started to respond; but when he began to preface with words to the effect that he had no speech prepared Meekins roared out to him to sit down, and he subsided.

Motion for adjournment followed and was carried.

The sentiment prevails here among Republicans that the delegates elected are favorable to Taft rather than Roosevelt.

DELEGATES APPOINTED

The First M. E. Church, South of this city has appointed the following delegates to the district conference to be held at Manteo, July 4th, 1912: Zeas Fearing, Sr., N. W. Dally, T. J. Markham, and J. P. Kramer. The following are the alternates: W. J. Woodley, L. E. Old, D. M. Jones, C. C. Pappendick.

INTERESTING BALL GAME

The high school and Christ church club played a very interesting game of ball on the local athletic park grounds Tuesday afternoon, which resulted in a tie. The final score was three to three.

DWELLING FOR RENT

Thirteen rooms; bath room, hot and cold water; kitchen range; electric lights and sewerage. Corner Poindexter and Fearing Sts. Good location for Boarding House. **C. H. ROBINSON.**

SLY CUPID BUSY AMONG SHOPPERS

MAN OF THIRTY-FIVE AND MAID OF SEVENTEEN IN SHOPPING PARTY FROM CURRITUCK ARE MADE MAN AND WIFE WHILE IN THE CITY.

A party of shoppers from the county of Currituck reached Elizabeth City Tuesday morning. There were about twenty in the party, among whom were Messrs. G. J. Scarboro and G. C. Beals, both well known citizens and residents of Duck, on Currituck Beach.

Mr. Scarboro came in to pay his subscription to the Advance early Tuesday morning, it appearing that most Currituck shoppers in Elizabeth City are subscribers to the Advance.

When some time later Mr. Scarboro returned to the Advance office and began to ask questions about where to buy furniture, the editor scented a romance.

Inquiry developed the fact that two of the party had gone to the office of the Register of Deeds Menden, since coming to the city, and had been made man and wife.

The happy couple were Mr. Mathias Hayman and Miss Mary Alice Rogers. They returned with the rest of the party to Currituck late Monday evening, the marriage being but one of the incidents of the day.

TEACHERS MEET TO-MORROW

The Pasquotank County Teachers' Association will hold its last regular meeting of the school year in Elizabeth City tomorrow at 10:30 o'clock A. M. in the office of County Superintendent of Schools W. M. Hinton. This will be one of the most interesting and important meetings of the year and a large attendance of teachers is expected.

J. A. Shaw is president of the Association and Mrs. Mae Commander is secretary.

The program is as follows: Brief remarks by the President. Reading the minutes of last meeting, roll call, etc.

The Daily Programme—Miss Norwood Perry.

Nature of the Teaching Process—Miss M. E. Lamb.

Some Laws of Teaching—Miss S. E. White.

Objects and Requisites of the Recitation—Miss Virginia Sprull.

The Teachers' Preparation of the Lesson—Miss Kate Bryson.

Proper Assignment to Lesson—Miss Thornton.

Method in Teaching the Lesson—Miss Essie Morse.

Discussion follows each paper.

ODD FELLOWS IN RALEIGH

The Odd Fellows of this city and section are looking forward with the greatest interest to the Grand Lodge of North Carolina which convenes May 7th in Raleigh. This will be one of the most important sessions of the Grand Lodge for years, and the attendance promises to eclipse by far any former convention.

Elizabeth Lodge has elected Mr. Clarence Crowson to represent it at the Grand Lodge, while Achoree Lodge has named Mr. Geo. G. Markham as its representative.

Past Grand Master P. H. Williams and other prominent Odd Fellows will also attend the Grand Lodge.

MR. CURTIS HERE

Mr. F. O. S. Curtis of the Curtis Publishing Company is in our city today. He reached here yesterday on his yacht, the Lydonia. Mr. Curtis called at the Advance office this morning looking for an Elizabeth City daily paper.