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Why The Flannagan Tobacco Grading Bill Should Not Be Enacted

By J. C. Lanier, Formerly Tobacco Specialist, Agricultural Adjustment Administration

Mr. Editor:

Please allow me through the columns of your newspaper to express my opposition to the so-called Flannagan Tobacco Grading Bill, which is now pending in Washington before the House Committee on Agriculture.

If this Bill becomes a law it will compel all tobacco growers who sell their tobacco at auction to have it Government graded prior to its sale. It does not provide for compulsory grading where tobacco is sold otherwise, than at auction. The Bill further provides that the cost of this grading service shall be charged against the buyers. It also gives to the Secretary of Agriculture the power to designate those markets where tobacco must be graded. Any grower who refuses to have his tobacco graded by a Government official will be guilty of a misdemeanor, which is punishable by a fine or imprisonment. The effect of this Bill will be to deprive a grower of the right to sell his tobacco as he sees fit. It will compel him to submit his product to grading by a Government grader, whether he wishes to do so or not.

The contents of this Bill are not generally known, and many farmers have been influenced by their county agents to advocate the passage of this measure, without knowing what the measure proposes to do. This organized propaganda by Government officials to enlist support for this measure is having its effect; and it is time that those who are opposed to this Bill should give expression to their opposition to it.

An examination of this Bill discloses many features abhorrent to the average farmer. It is my purpose in this article to analyze the Bill and to point out these objectionable features so that growers may be advised just what the passage of the Bill will mean to them.

The most objectionable feature of this Bill is the compulsory grading, which will compel all growers selling on markets designated by the Secretary of Agriculture, to have their tobacco inspected and certified by an authorized Government grader. Many farmers do not desire their tobacco to be graded by Government officials, since they know from actual experience that it is worthless, and in many instances positively injurious, where tobacco is sold at auction to representatives of the tobacco companies. They know from actual experience that the opinion of a Government grader, and the Government grade written on the basket ticket, will not influence the buyer, who is paid to personally inspect every basket of tobacco and to buy such tobacco on his own judgment. The Bill does not provide that tobacco shall be sold by grades, nor does it provide that cognizance must be taken by the buyer of the grade indicated by the Government grader. There is no provision in this law or in any other law by which a buyer can be compelled to pay any price per grade for his tobacco purchases. The grading provided by this Bill, therefore, will at best merely indicate the opinion of a Government grader, which opinion may or may not be correct, and which opinion is not binding upon either the buyer or the seller.

There is a massed opposition among tobacco growers to the compulsory grading of this Bill. In spite of the intense activities of county agents and Extension men, who are diligently lobbying for the Bill, an investigation among farmers will show that a large majority of them are violently opposed to being COMPELLED to submit their tobacco to Government grading. Not so long ago more than five hundred growers left their homes and farms and went to Washington, at their own expense, to express their personal opposition to this Bill. These men were outstanding farmers, who knew conditions and who were familiar with Government grading. They represented the highest type of citizenship in our country, and represented a class that can not be bought by the tobacco companies, nor coerced by county agents, nor intimidated by Government officials. Also, more than twenty-five thousand farmers have signed petitions protesting against this grading Bill, and double the number could easily be secured if efforts were put forth along this line. The opposition of these men to this measure can not be discounted by a mere statement by the sponsor of the Bill that these men are "warehouse men." It is not at all surprising to the growers to tell them that these men are opposing

this Bill are their enemies, since it can be established in every community where the contents of this Bill are known that the farmers themselves generally oppose it.

If Government grading were desired by the farmers, or if it would benefit them, it should not be necessary to write into this Bill a mandatory provision, with a criminal penalty for the refusal of a farmer to accept this service. If Government grading were advantageous to the growers, they and the warehousemen would be clamoring for the service, instead of opposing it. It is well known that whatever grading has been offered to the growers on a voluntary basis, it has proved unsatisfactory and of no value, and has not been accepted by the growers.

Where grading of tobacco has been made compulsory under State laws, it has proved a failure. In the State of Maryland there has been a compulsory tobacco grading law in effect; but only a few days ago, because of its total failure to accomplish any good, it was abolished by the Maryland Legislature. In the dark-fired areas of Virginia, where a compulsory law exists, the service has been a dismal failure.

The tobacco production adjustment program, which has brought untold blessings to the tobacco growers, has been a voluntary program, whose success has been made possible by the voluntary cooperation of almost all the growers. These same growers who have so willingly cooperated with the A. A. A. will not be satisfied now to have this harsh and arbitrary compulsory measure forced down their unwilling throats, nor will they forgive those who force it upon them. Especially do the farmers of the Carolinas and Georgia and other tobacco-producing states resent the attempt by Mr. Flannagan, representing a district that grows less than three million pounds of tobacco, to force his ideas upon them, based neither upon a knowledge of the industry nor upon any practical experience.

Congressman Burch of Virginia has offered an amendment to the Bill, which follows closely the referendum clauses in the Bankhead Act and in the Kerr-Smith Act. Under this amendment, the farmers in the various tobacco-producing areas will be permitted to vote upon the adoption of compulsory grading. The amendment is entirely in line with the principles upon which the present agricultural adjustment programs have been based; yet, those who are clamoring for the enactment of the compulsory Bill are bitterly opposed to allowing the farmers themselves to express their sentiments on this legislation.

The enactment of this Bill without the referendum clause in it will certainly be a disaster to the growers.

Announce Plans For Poppy Day

Complete plans for the observance of Poppy Day here on Saturday, May 25, were announced by Mrs. M. V. Horton, poppy committee chairman of the Farmville Unit of the American Legion Auxiliary, following a special meeting of the committee. Organization of a corps of volunteer workers to carry out the distribution of the memorial poppies throughout the city was completed and leaders appointed to direct the work in the various areas.

"The American Legion Auxiliary poppies will be distributed entirely by volunteer workers," said Mrs. Horton. "The response to our call for volunteers has been very gratifying from both our senior and junior members, and we will be able to give everyone in the city an opportunity to wear a poppy on Poppy Day. As the workers will serve entirely without pay or commission, every penny contributed in exchange for the flowers will go for the welfare activities of the Legion and Auxiliary."

"The enthusiasm of our women for the Poppy Day project is due to the two great purposes which the little memorial flower achieves. First, it pays tribute to those gallant young men who sacrificed their lives in defense of American ideals on the poppy-studded battle fields of France and Belgium. Second, it raises funds for the relief and rehabilitation of the living victims of the war, the disabled veterans, their families and the families of the dead. We are hoping that the people of Farmville will understand the significance of the poppy and give us their support on Poppy Day."

A sale of 1,000 bushels of Irish potatoes was made by Haywood County farmers last week.

Roosevelt Gives Outline Of Giant Relief Campaign

Says Administration to Move Along Eight Broad Avenues In Its Program

Washington, April 24.—The administration will move along eight broad avenues in its supreme attempt to recapture prosperity by spending the \$4,800,000,000 work-relief fund, President Roosevelt said today.

He added that he would have personal control of the spending every step of the way.

For an hour today the President sat at his desk, with 150 newspaper reporters in a semi-circle in front of him, and, with the aid of a professor who is trying to tell a trigonometry class how to bisect a triangle, announced his economic strategy for the next year. The only time the members of the "class" had a chance to wedge in a question was when Mr. Roosevelt would pause to thrust another cigarette into a holder and send smoke streaming toward the ceiling.

Eight Points. This, said the President, is the eight-point program under which the largest peace-time appropriation in history will be spent:

1. Highway construction and the elimination of grade crossings.
2. Aid to persons in stricken agricultural regions and a general program of rehabilitation for rural America.
3. Electrification of farms.
4. Construction of low-cost houses in both country and city.
5. Assistance to "white collar" workers.
6. Continued expansion of the Civilian Conservation Corps.
7. Loans to counties, cities and states.
8. Soil erosion prevention and reforestation.

So vast and intricate is this program, Mr. Roosevelt indicated, that it could not be covered in one day. He sent his "pupils" away to let the country think about his plans for 24 hours, hinting at further developments tomorrow. They probably will concern the Federal Emergency Relief Administration and its chief, Harry L. Hopkins.

FOUNTAIN NEWS

(By MRS. M. D. YELVERTON)

MISSIONARY SOCIETY MEETS
The Ladies' Missionary Society of Fountain Baptist Church met Monday afternoon with Mrs. M. D. Yelverton.

The subject for the afternoon was "The Banner in Medieval or Modern Europe." Mrs. C. M. Smith had the program in charge. The meeting was opened with the hymn "I Love To Tell The Story" and the following program was rendered:

Devotional—Mrs. Bruce Eagles.
How The Banner of the Cross Went to Europe—Mrs. E. B. Beasley.
Southern Baptist Lifting The Banner in Europe—Mrs. L. P. Yelverton.
Easter Poems—Mrs. J. E. Owens and Mrs. Bruce Eagles.

GYPSY GARDEN PARTY
Misses Mary Reddick, Maud Emily Smith, and Nina Estelle Yelverton, Students of the Freshman class of Fountain High School, delightfully entertained the members of the Senior class and school faculty at a Gypsy Garden party on Thursday evening at the home of Mrs. W. C. Reddick.

The guests were met by the young hostesses wearing Gypsy costumes, and directed to a glowing camp fire in the grove back of the house. After the guests had arrived a Gypsy Supper was served consisting of wafers and accessories, sandwiches, deviled eggs, pickles, cold drinks and marshmallows. The wafers and marshmallows were cooked over the camp fire.

After supper Mr. H. B. Mayo related a mystery story while the guests were seated around the camp fire. Progressive dates were then enjoyed. Miss Katherine Gross as Gypsy fortune teller told the fortunes of each of the seniors.

Graduation gifts were then presented to the seniors, which were miscellaneous articles wrapped as the donor had no idea what he was presenting. The prize for the best presentation speech was won by Mrs. Hardy Johnson.

Charles Gaslin of Pfafftown, Forsyth County, has cleared 12 acres of his farm woods damaged by a storm last year and saved over 40 cords of good fire wood. All the brush was used to stop gullies.

Through State Capital Keyholes

By Bess Hinton Silver

STRATEGY—The boys around Raleigh who keep busy trying to figure out what is going to happen in the gubernatorial campaign have been analyzing the latest statement of Congressman E. L. Doughton that he will make another statement next Tuesday and tell the world if he is going to be a candidate. Some of the dopests figure his statement was a trial balloon aimed at measuring his strength in this State. They express the opinion that the reaction to his last statement will be a big factor in determining the nature of his announcement on April 30.

NO DOUBT—While Lieutenant Governor A. H. Graham has made no formal announcement of his candidacy he does not deny that he has already decided to enter the contest for Governor. A lot of folks are inviting Mr. Graham to make speeches these days and it looks like he is making an effort to accommodate all comers. Of course, a man holding a legislative office is handicapped in running a campaign but you can watch the Graham smoke after the General Assembly adjourns.

HOPEFUL—Friends of Clyde R. Hoey, Shelby Democratic leader, are hopeful that he will continue of a mind to enter the race for Governor. From the Cleveland metropolis comes word one week that Mr. Hoey certainly will run and then the next week comes a grapevine message that he is still undecided. Nevertheless, the Cleveland delegation in the Legislature, Representative Gardner and Senator Thompson, are of the very definite opinion that Mr. Hoey will run and equally certain that he will be elected. Other prognosticators are holding their bets on the probable victor in the event the trio just mentioned try to unhorse one another.

BIG STEAL—Senator Harris Newman, the chairman of the State Senate finance committee who hatched the idea of levying the sales tax on gasoline and taking the toll out of the highway fund in order to divert an additional \$630,000 each year from your gasoline tax to the general fund, admits his plan is nothing less than "grand larceny." If the Legislature accepts his suggestion, and the Senate has done that very thing, it means you country people will be in the mud just a little longer. But the General Assembly has been encouraged in leaning toward diversion by reason of the fact that the folks back home are not kicking about it much. Just following the line of least resistance in getting money. It now looks as if your gasoline money will be everybody's pie by the time the next session of the assembly convenes and the devil takes the roads.

EARFUL—North Carolina members of Congress are still hearing plenty about the Rayburn bill which would give the federal government vast powers on the utilities industry. Thousands of people in North Carolina who own a little piece of stock in some power company express the fear that their holding will shrink if the Rayburn bill becomes law. A lot of other people are conscious of the fact (right in their pocketbooks) that federal control of railroad rates has not helped North Carolina. These payers of high freight rates, that give Virginia business a great advantage over the Tar Heels, don't want another blow delivered when they step up to the counter to pay their electric bill each month.

SUPPORT—Governor Ehringhaus is not lacking for encouragement in the suggestion that he oppose Senator J. W. Bailey in the primaries next spring. But despite the urging from many quarters the Governor still insists that he wants to make a good record in his present post before he entertains any idea of seeking another public office. That's what he tells his friends and usually they just go right out and think up some other reason why he should run for the Senate.

STORM BREWING—Everybody, or at least the farmers, thought the cotton processing tax was all to the mustard when it was first levied to pay benefits to growers for reducing their crops. Now that the tax is said to be operating to depress the market for American cotton goods and opening the door to foreign competition, threatening to close many southern mills, the tax is not so popular. You have seen in the papers that manufacturers are attempting to get the federal government to remove the levy or pay it out of relief funds but what you haven't seen is a movement on foot to get the manufacturers in their June convention in Georgia to refuse to collect

Lindsay Warren Defends Cotton Processing Levy

Says Tax 'Simple Act of Justice' and Denounces Textile Mill Tactics

Washington, April 23.—In a speech which brought Democratic members of the House of Representatives to their feet cheering and clapping in an unusual floor demonstration, Representative Lindsay C. Warren today described the processing tax on cotton as "a simple act of justice" and denounced the efforts of textile interests to remove the tax as a move to secure starvation prices for cotton.

"It was a magnificent speech and an unanswerable argument for the processing tax and a speech that should have been made," declared Speaker Joseph W. Byrnes, who, in order to hear Mr. Warren speak, departed from his usual custom and remained on the floor after the House resolved itself into the committee of the whole instead of returning to his office.

"It was a knock-out," declared Representative Marvin Jones, of Texas, "and the speech should logically have been made by a North Carolinian, as there are large textile interests in that state."

The speech put Mr. Warren in the forefront as the first to give a detailed defense of an administration policy that has been subject to much attack. It became known in the afternoon that no less than six members of Congress from other states, most of them Western members, had suggested to the Democratic National Committee that half a million copies of the speech be printed for distribution over the country, and that the suggestion will probably be followed.

The speech was followed by replies from no less than four Massachusetts Republicans, but the repercussions to the speech were by no means confined to the floor of the House.

Pointing out that his state is not only a large agricultural state, but also leads the nation in the manufacture of cotton, Mr. Warren asserted that efforts to align the State in the ranks of those opposing the processing tax had been unsuccessful.

After declaring that during the past two years the argument at the time the act was passed that farmers would not cooperate had been completely refuted by experience, Mr. Warren recited the benefits the act had brought, citing the increase in return on agricultural products in his state from \$36,000,000 in 1932 to \$216,000,000 in 1934.

He then declared that the present drive to remove the tax is the work of the same high powered lobby which opposed the enactment of the original law. He asserted that success in removing the processing tax on cotton would also be removed on other commodities and that the entire program would break down.

the tax. That would stir up a sorry kettle of fish that is now stewing.

FREE-FOR-ALL—This coming race for Lieutenant Governor looks like it is going to be open to all comers. Former Senator George McNeill, of Fayetteville, is campaigning full speed these days. Senator W. G. Clark, of Edgemont, isn't losing any time and Senator Harris Newman of New Hanover and Speaker of the House Robert Grady Johnson, of Duplin, are busy getting their ducks in a row. You can find people around the State Capitol expressing a willingness to bet on any of these entries but there are few takers of the wagers. It's too early in the game to be predicting even who will actually file their candidacies in the race, much less to venture a prognostication on who will win.

HEARACHES—Since the State has taken over the eight months public school term the biennial worry of Legislators is the question of getting the money without taxing a lot of poor folks out of existence. Amendments to the constitution have been proposed with a view to remedying this situation. If passed these changes in the basic law would provide exemptions from taxation for small homes, increase the income tax maximum and classify property for the purpose of taxation. Those supposed to know their fiscal affairs say these changes would enable the Legislature to levy taxes on the rich without killing the poor as the case under the present uniformity clause of the constitution.

Nearly all Mecklenburg cotton growers are signing contracts to insure their cotton acreage 35 percent.

Unbalanced Tax Bill Goes To Conference; Liquor Move Spreads

Begin Work on Warehouse Here

Construction Begun This Week and Will Be Completed in Time for Opening this Season

Making a big start in plans of more aggressive efforts and extensive operations this season on the Farmville tobacco market, was the laying of foundations this week for the construction of one of the largest and most modern auction sales houses in the Bright Leaf Belt on the site of the old Greene County and Bell's warehouse, of which L. R. Bell and J. Branch Bobbitt, well known local warehousemen, former operators of the Planter's house, are to be the proprietors.

Bids were opened recently by the building company and the contract was awarded the Erwin-West Construction Co., of Statesville, which it is understood will complete the house in plenty of time for the cry of the auctioneer on opening sales day.

TRADE BODY SPONSORS \$750 ESSAY CONTEST

Kinston, April 24.—The sum of \$750.00 will be given in cash prizes to participants in an essay contest to be sponsored by the Eastern Carolina Chamber of Commerce, with headquarters in Kinston, according to an announcement made by Secretary N. G. Bartlett. The title of the essay Mr. Bartlett said is: "The Advantages of Living in Eastern North Carolina." The essay must not exceed 500 words and all entries must be in the office of the organization at Kinston, by May 15. All essays must be in the hands of the organization officials by June 1. The awards will be made on or before June 15. The \$750.00 will be divided up into three grand prizes of \$350.00 first; \$100.00 second; and \$50.00 each. The judges will be selected from the schools and colleges in Eastern North Carolina and their decisions will be final. No essay will be returned to the writers and all essays will become the property of the organization.

SNOW HILL GIRLS WIN IN BASEBALL COMBAT

Snow Hill, April 23.—The girls' baseball team of Snow Hill High School defeated Winterville High School girls, 25-2, in a game here.

Grace Mewborn pitched for Snow Hill. Marion Cox was Winterville's pitcher. The teams will meet next Monday at Winterville in a return game.

Greenville Has Menacing Blaze

Big Farm Supply Store Burns Down and Tobacco Warehouse Partly Burned

Greenville, April 23.—Fire broke out at 9:30 tonight in the building of J. E. Winslow and Co., located near the center of town and the frame structure rapidly burned to the ground despite efforts of firemen to control the flames. The Center Brick tobacco warehouse caught from the Winslow fire and at 10:30 o'clock it was feared that also would be destroyed.

In response to pleas for assistance, Kinston, Washington, Farmville and other near-by places sent fire apparatus.

The Winslow Company kept farm supplies and livestock. Some of the mules and possibly other livestock are believed to have been destroyed.

The damage from the destruction of the building and contents is estimated at \$25,000, partially covered by insurance.

Dwellings of colored people are adjacent to the warehouse.

BODY OF DROWNED YOUTH RECOVERED

Greenville, April 23.—The body of Stacy Highsmith, 13, drowned 18 days ago, was recovered early tonight from Tar river near here.

Two Negroes discovered the body floating 500 yards down stream from where Highsmith fell into the river on April 5.

Senate Passes Bill Raising \$5,000,000 Less Than Appropriations Passed by House

Raleigh, April 24.—The Legislature's biennial revenue bill yesterday went to conference—over \$5,000,000 "in the red."

An hour before, the House had received from its Finance Committee a favorable report on a substitute for the Day liquor bill, proposed as a source of the greater part of the revenue needed.

During the day it was reported from reliable sources that 54 Representatives had signed the liquor bill "Round Robin"—an agreement to support a measure for the State sale of whiskey. Sixty-one is a majority of the House when all members vote.

Bets that the House would pass a liquor bill were offered on all sides. There were few takers. For the House to defeat a liquor bill now, if the signers do not disagree among themselves, would require the vote of almost all the non-signers and the absentees.

The wets were more optimistic than they have been at any time this season. The Senate's vacillating actions over the revenue bill and the impending deficit, they believed, had greatly improved their chances.

Before finally passing the biennial tax measure, the Senate performed two more of its habitual flip-flops and voted to put back all the sales tax exemptions on food which now exist, and to take out the House adopted sales tax on hotel room rentals.

That meant knocking a million dollars a year out of the bill. According to Revenue Commissioner A. J. Maxwell it left the estimated revenue \$2,502,249 below the House passed appropriations for the first year of the biennium, and \$3,351,249 for the second. But Senator Harris Newman, chairman of the Finance Committee, whose estimates are more optimistic than those of Mr. Maxwell and who is counting on some back tax collection and a \$200,000 surplus at the end of this year, put the deficit for the first year at less than \$2,000,000.

When the Senate finally passed the bill—exactly four weeks after it received it from the House—the House refused to concur in the Senate amendments.

That sent the bill to conference and Lieutenant Governor A. H. Graham, president of the Senate, and Speaker Robert Grady Johnson appointed the following conference committees, to iron out the differences between the two branches:

Senators Newman, Carl Bailey of Washington and Fred Folger of Surry for the Senate.

Representatives Gregg Cherry of Gaston, R. L. Harris of Person, W. L. Lumpkin of Franklin, T. C. Bowie of Ashe, and Hugh Horton of Martin for the House.

The personnel of the conference committees indicated the doom of sales tax exemptions and final victory for the administration's three per cent, exemptionless sales tax.

Following the precedent of years, President Graham appointed as conferees the chairman of the Senate Finance Committee and one member of each side on the major revenue fight over exemptions. Senator Bailey voted for exemptions, Senator Folger against them. But as Senator Newman, chairman of the committee, had voted against exemptions, the result was that the majority of the Senate's conference committee held views about exemptions contrary to the position the Senate itself had voted.

Speaker Johnson's selection also had the committee majority against exemptions, which was in line with the House position. His appointment was also in line with the major fight in the House, which was over a proposal to reduce the rate, not to retain the exemptions.

Chairman Cherry had been against both rate reduction and exemptions. Representatives Harris and Horton were against rate reduction, Representatives Lumpkin and Bowie for it. Speaker Johnson, considered an administration man, won considerable commendation for his appointment of both Lumpkin and Bowie, two leaders in the fight against the administration plan.

The House Finance Committee's action on the liquor bill came as a distinct surprise to the majority of Legislators yesterday. Although a meeting of the committee yesterday had been announced last Friday, most people had forgotten it and there were only 10 of the 36 (Continued on page four)