

INSURANCE COMMISSIONER LANIER RAISES ISSUES ABOUT HIMSELF AS WELL AS OTHERS

By Jack Rider

Last Tuesday, July 19, North Carolina Insurance Commissioner Edwin Lanier held a news conference in Raleigh in which he gave out some most specific figures about fraudulent hail insurance claims made over a 3-year period in Eastern North Carolina.

Lanier, however, mentioned no names, and generalized his report by sweeping in all of Eastern Carolina with the charges of fraud.

Among the allegations Lanier made was that a total of \$139,844.20 had been paid out in fraudulent claims in this period; that this figure included 11 claims paid to farms on which no tobacco is grown, amounting to \$101,463.12, claims amounting to \$34,347 on fictitious farms and three claims amounting to \$4,072 paid out but not to the actual farmer in whose name

the claims were filed.

Immediately all across Eastern North Carolina complaints began to pour into Lanier's office over the manner in which he had conducted the press conference, by mentioning specific figures, but by not mentioning any names.

This failure to mention names cast a cloud of suspicion over every farmer, every insurance agent and every insurance adjuster working in Eastern North Carolina.

Obviously, the innocent resented this unnecessary abuse and it surely didn't make the guilty any more comfortable since they know very well who they are, whether Lanier publishes their names or not.

Worse, perhaps than the immediate cloud of suspicion cast by Lanier's poor judgment was the flood of rumors he set into motion.

No doubt every county in which flue-cured tobacco is grown in Eastern North Carolina has had people in it who immediately assumed that the whole conspiracy took place in their county, and in Lenoir County this is surely the chaff that is floating about.

Lanier Silent

In the July 19th press conference Lanier said more news would be issued and that the release of that day was just a "preliminary report."

Now more than a week has passed. The rumors grow faster and wilder. Lanier will not answer his phone, nor return calls placed by anyone in Kinston.

Lanier was appointed Insurance Commissioner July 5, 1962 on the death of Charlie Gold, so if his statement of last week is correct he and his staff have known of these abuses for three years.

And the only action taken so

far has been to permit increases in hail insurance rates sufficient to offset the losses by actual hail or by fraud that have taken place in this 3-year period.

If rate is a yardstick in this matter Lenoir County appears to be a likely suspect since the hail insurance rate per \$100 in Lenoir County is \$6, while it is \$4.50 in neighboring Duplin County, \$5 in Greene and just \$3 in Onslow.

The companies who have been hit by the fraud apparently have been more interested in getting back the money they paid out than in prosecuting those doing the stealing.

The insurance commissioner, having admitted that this is a 3-year affair, also leaves himself open to charges for not having acted more forcefully.

Among the rumors that persist is that a meeting was held

in 1963 in which all agents writing hail insurance were warned to "straighten up." This, as with the case now at hand, was a gratuitous slap at those agents who had been operating honestly and it was less than a slap on the wrist to those who were stealing.

One thing is obvious, Lanier has permitted the honest farmers to repay the losses to the insuring companies, and to this injury Lanier is now permitting those honest farmers to also suffer the slanders that are now street corner gossip in every part of Eastern North Carolina.

If Lanier knew fraud was committed in 1963 and if he knew who was doing it he is guilty of failing to protect both the public and the honest insurance people, both of whom look to the office of insurance commissioner for protection.

THE JONES COUNTY JOURNAL

NUMBER 13

TRENTON, N. C., THURSDAY, JULY 28, 1966

VOLUME XVII

Three Get Medals, Cash for Saving Man's Life in Wreck

The Carnegie Foundation this week announced making its medals for heroism awards to three local men, who also get a cash donation of \$750 each.

The three are The Reverend J. C. Parker, former pastor of Lane's Methodist Chapel and the Dover Methodist Church, Henry Moore, a Kinston truck driver,

and Reid Joyner, a Dover route 1 farmer.

On July 1, 1964, Albert Waller of Kinston was knocked unconscious in a wreck near Dover and the truck he was driving burst into flames.

The trio receiving the awards managed to fasten a chain to the truck cab and pull it open to remove the unconscious Waller.

Parker received burns about the arms and Waller escaped with minor burns, bruises and a concussion.

Divorce Asked

Clerk of Court Walter P. Henderson filed one civil case in the past week. Henry L. Darden seeks a divorce from Frances Brock Darden alleging their marriage May, 1948 and their separation July 30, 1954.

ONE ARREST

Sheriff Brown Yates reports one arrest in the past week. Richard Dail of Trenton is charged with being publicly drunk.

Recorder's Court Clears 26 Cases In Past Week; Traffic Takes Most

Jones County Recorder's Court cleared 26 cases in the past week.

Ten people were tried for speeding: Samuel Griffin of Trenton Route 2 was found not guilty and the case was dismissed at the close of State's evidence. In the cases against Vincent Joseph Chilla Jr. of Homestead, Fla. Gaston Kelly of Brooklyn, New York, the state took a nol pros with leave. Julian Drewry Duncan Jr. of Portsmouth, Va., Robert Carl O'Bryan of Pollocksville, Arthur D. Carlisle of Camp Lejeune, Joe Willie Cancer of Camp Lejeune, Charlie Harris of Fort Eustis, Va., Richard Loveland of Midway Park, each paid a \$26 fine.

Mary Bailey Barnwell of New Bern had entered a prayer for judgment continued on payment of the costs.

The state dismissed the cases against Vinnie Coombs of Route 2, Trenton, and George Phillips charged with slander.

Hilton Mundine, no address listed, pled guilty to assault on a female, and was taxed with the costs. The plaintiff withdrew the warrant against Anthony Smith of Pollocksville for assaulting a female, and was taxed with the costs.

The plaintiff withdrew the warrant against Franklin Bryant of Trenton who was charged with being drunk, disorderly and assaulting a female.

The state nol prossed the case against G. C. Arnold of Louisville, charged with passing a worthless check.

James Earl Thigpen of Pink Hill Route 2 paid \$26 for careless and reckless driving. Mack Wickerson of Maysville pled guilty to driving without a license and was ordered to pay a \$10 fine and the court's costs. James Williams Jr. of Pollocksville Route 1 paid \$26 for allowing an unlicensed person to drive his car.

Patricia Ann Jarman of Pollocksville Route 1 paid \$26 for driving without license.

Essley Sutton Quinn of Trenton Route 2 was found not guilty of drunken driving. Johnny Marchal Cox of Route 2 Greenville paid \$13 for improper passing. Roosevelt Cuffee of Camp Lejeune paid \$13 for driving on the wrong side of the road. Marilyn L. Gardner of Wilson charged with driving without a license presented a valid one.

Billy Ray Woolard of Washington Route 4 pled guilty to improper registration and driving drunk, and was taxed with the court's costs.

Kinston Firm Gets \$749,715 Work In Tuesday Bidding

Barrus Construction Company of Kinston was low bidder Thursday on road work totalling \$749,715.95. The local firm was low bidder on six of 66 projects let for bidding by the highway commission Thursday.

The jobs and low bids of Barrus were for 54.30 miles of resurfacing in Beaufort, Craven, and Pitt counties totaling \$230,074.50.

For 31.60 miles of resurfacing in Carteret, Craven and Jones counties \$252,272.75.

For 40.8 miles of resurfacing in Lenoir and Greene counties \$93,089.

For 21.2 miles of resurfacing in Greene, Pitt and Craven counties \$74,288.60.

For 10.391 miles of resurfacing in Greene, Lenoir and Jones counties \$71,288.60.

For 4.025 miles of work in Pitt County \$27,578.60.

Captain Howard is Running Viet Nam Guerrilla School

Captain Malcolm Howard of Deep Run has been assigned to operate a highly specialized guerrilla and ambush school for the 25th Infantry Division in Viet Nam.

Viet Nam Commander General Williams Westmoreland, in announcing Howard's assignment, said the purpose of the school is "to teach our boys how to out-guerrilla the guerrillas and how to out-ambush the ambushers."

Horse Show

The Griffon Little League Association is sponsoring a horse show on Saturday and Sunday of this week. The Tobacco Festival show will be held at Riverfield Farm at Griffon and will include a full listing of all type horse show events. The show gets underway at 10 Saturday morning, continues at 1 Saturday afternoon, at 7 Saturday night and the final contests begin at 1 Sunday afternoon. All profits from the two day event will help sponsor Little League Baseball in Griffon.

Butcher Makes Widow Happy by Returning Lost Money



Lewis Newcomb, an employee in the meat cutting department at the Kinston A & P store last Thursday made Mrs. Vivian Faison of 309-B Richard Greene Apartments mighty happy, and 1966 has not been a happy year for her up until then. On January 20th Mrs. Faison's husband, Ira, died after a long illness and on March 31st a daughter, Mrs. Iris Braddock, died after a brief illness. Last week Mrs. Faison was making the rounds, buying groceries and paying bills with insurance money collected after the death of her daughter. She lost an envelope with no markings on it containing one \$100 bill, two \$20 bills and three \$5 bills. Finally her luck began to improve. She asked Newsman Jack Rider to announce her loss on one of his radio programs. He did without offering much hope of helping her. But Newcomb found the envelope, reported the discovery to Store Manager John Williams, who called Rider, who called Mrs. Faison, brought her to the store for this happy reunion with her money. Newcomb, who is a lay minister, accepted a \$20 reward from Mrs. Faison, who wanted to give him half of the money, since as she said, "Half of it is better than none." Newcomb assured her \$20 was enough and wished her well and she thanked and blessed him profusely.