

WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY

NOTE: This is the sixteenth and last of a series of weekly summaries prepared by the legislative staff of the Institute of Government on the work of the North Carolina General Assembly of 1953. It is confined to discussions of matters of general interest and major importance.

In remarkably orderly fashion, a weary group of legislators brought the business of the 1953 General Assembly to a close at 9:00 P. M., on Thursday, April 30. Of 1826 bills and resolutions introduced, 1340 bills and 45 resolutions were enacted into law. Though the margin is small the 1953 record shows more laws and fewer introductions than in each of the last two sessions.

While the lawmakers built up a deserved reputation for hard work in a longer-than-usual session and acted favorably upon a majority of Governor Umstead's legislative proposals, they also left some major issues for the 1955 legislature. Already forecast as principal problems to be faced in 1955 are revision of the tax structure and judicial and legislative redistricting.

Appropriations and Finance

With approval of about \$1.8 million for expenditure on varied projects not included in the biennial appropriations bill, the General Assembly left Raleigh having appropriated a record sum of over \$631 million for state services during the 1953-55 biennium. Final totals were about \$425 million from the General Fund, \$2 million

from the Agriculture Fund, and \$204 million from the Highway Fund. Although the Budget Bureau reported that the budget was substantially in balance at the session's end, some legislators departed fearing that the State may have embarked on a program of deficit financing. Only the availability of a credit balance of over \$45 million permits a balanced budget for the next two years.

On adjournment day the House completed concurrence in the Senate amendments to the Revenue Act which makes no substantial changes in the tax structure. Final action was also taken on the \$86.25 million bond program, but voter approval is still required before \$50 million for public schools and \$22 million for mental institutions can be spent.

State Government Organization and Reorganization

Unquestionably the most controversial new state agency created by this General Assembly was the milk commission, approved in the final hour after lengthy debate and numerous amendments. Others established were a parole board (to replace the office of parole commissioner) and an Historic Sites Commission to screen requests for state funds to restore and maintain historic sites.

Several 1953 measures change the composition of state agencies. An increase in the number of highway commissioners is expected when the committee appointed to study the highway division makes its reports. Despite nurse objections, doctors were included in the reorganized nurse board.

Membership was reduced on the Personnel Council from seven to five, and on the Ports Authority from nine to seven. Membership was increased on the Library Commission from five to eight on the Board of Boiler Rules by adding a licensed heating contractor, and on the five-member Turnpike Authority by adding five Highway Commission members.

State Government Study Commissions

More than the usual number of study commissions have been established to report back to the 1955 General Assembly. Most prominent are the 9-member commission directed to recommend changes in the organization of state government and the 7-member body established to study the purpose, function, organization and inter-relationship of state-supported institutions of higher learning. Other commissions will study laws relating to juvenile courts and supervision of delinquent children, the laws pertaining to public schools, the location and financing of possible marketing centers to provide better marketing facilities for farm products, and possible use of certain TV channels temporarily reserved for educational purposes. As a compromise on the bill to prohibit pari-mutuel gambling, a 5-member commission was formed to investigate dog track operation in Carteret and Currituck counties. Proposals to create groups to study the leaf tobacco warehouse business and the coroner system were defeated.

Roads and Highway Safety

Although largely ignored for most of the session, highway safety received careful attention during the last week. Generally recognized as one of this legislature's major accomplishments was enactment of the controversial financial responsibility law. Designed to increase the number of insured motorists in N. C. from about 35 per cent to 90 per cent, the new law requires each motor vehicle operator or owner involved in an accident to deposit security with the Motor Vehicle Commissioner in an amount sufficient to satisfy probable damages arising from the accident unless he is insured or released from liability. Failure to deposit the required security means suspension of driver licenses. Certain to attract attention is the new measure providing mandatory driver license suspensions for several speeding and reckless driving offenses. Other new legislation provides minimum penalties for drivers operating motor vehicles after expiration of their licenses, strengthens the accident reporting law, and provides a method by which a hot rod driver can be charged with speeding offenses if an officer is able to copy his license number but is unable to catch him.

Although truckers have been granted an additional 1,000 pound per axle tolerance under the new law, the Senate reported unfavorably the bill which would have set forth appeal procedures from assessment of truck overloading penalties. The House killed the much-discussed measure fixing minimum penalties for drunken driving.

Education

Born of a series of compromises, the new school consolidation policy has become law. It places more power and responsibility in local hands and authorizes continued operation of schools which fall below required attendance figures if local communities are willing to make up any operating deficit caused by under-strength operation. Other measures ratified in the closing days of the session (1) assure a \$50 monthly payment to all retired teachers; (2) permit routing of school buses to within less than one mile of pupil living more than 1 1/2 miles from school if necessary to prevent extreme hardship or danger; and (3) limit participation in girls' basketball tournaments to one per school year. Loans were authorized for medical and nursing students specializing in psychiatry at one of the three medical colleges in the state.

Miscellaneous

Judicial Redistricting. By the margin of one vote the House refused to endorse the Senate-approved redistricting plan, and in that dramatic moment any hope of additional regular superior court judges was lost. The Senate refused to reconsider the House plan for six new judges, so both houses agreed to disagree. To meet crowded dockets in the next two years, twelve, instead of eight, special judges were authorized. Of that number the Governor is required to appoint only four.

Civil and Criminal Laws. The General Statutes Commission and the Judicial Council, whose duties are to recommend changes in the civil and criminal laws, had a pretty good 1953 average. About two out of every three measures introduced were approved. Two new laws regulate illegal use of dynamite and Ku Klux Klan activities.

Local Government. Final approval has been given bills providing for public records of welfare recipients and authorizing towns under 6000 population to contract with the Highway Commission for street construction and maintenance. Thirty counties now have salary-fixing authority (eight are not given powers over elective officials) and a baker's dozen may fix officials' fees.

MOTHERS' DAY MASSES IN EDENTON CATHOLIC CHURCH

Sunday, May 10, Mothers' Day, will be celebrated in St. Ann's Catholic Church, Edenton, with a high mass (Missa Cantata de Angolis) sung at 8 A. M., EST, and a low mass offered at 11 A. M., each including eucharist.

on "Mother's Day", Holy Communion, followed by May Devotions consisting of Rosary, Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Honor of Our Lady of Fatima for all Mothers, Sunday School, with confessions for half hour before services, stated Father F. J. McCourt, rector, who invites everybody to all services. Week-days 7:15 A. M. mass devotions.

Thursday, May 14, Feast of the Ascension of Our Most Holy Redeemer into Heaven, a Holyday of Obligation, Holy masses at 7 and 11 A. M., including sermon on "The Ascension," Holy Communion, followed by May devotions with confessions for half hour before services. Rogations Days, May 11, 12, 13, after mass the Litany of the Saints will be recited to draw down the heavenly blessing on the fruits of the earth.

CARD OF THANKS

I want to thank all my friends for the many kindnesses shown me during my recent illness. I appreciate very much all the cards, gifts, flowers, visits and prayers during my stay in the hospital and since returning home.

MRS. CARSON D. SPIVEY.

NOTICE!

We are again calling attention to those who have not paid their privilege tax, to come to the Town Office and pay same.

Only a few who owe this tax paid any attention to our first request, and as our auditors will soon be here, we must ask that all persons owing this tax come forward and make immediate settlement.

TOWN OF HERTFORD

By: W. G. NEWBY, Clerk

Announcement

TO OUR MANY FRIGIDAIRE CUSTOMERS AND FRIENDS:

We have cancelled our sales contract with Frigidaire Sales Corporation, effective May 4, 1953.

We will honor our obligation to you on all equipment within the one year warranty. Frigidaire, or its agent, will maintain service contact with all other Frigidaire owners.

We appreciate all of our customers, and hope that you do not feel that we have let you down. We made it very clear when we relinquished our contract that you would be taken care of.

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1949 Dodge, 2-Door

1949 Mercury (4-DOOR SEDAN)

1947 Chevrolet, 4-door

1949 DeSoto, 4-Door

1951 Ford, 2-Door

1948 Plymouth, 4-Door

1947 Plymouth (CLUB COUPE)

1947 Pontiac, 2-Door

1951 Dodge

1950 Plymouth, 2-Door

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