

### WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY

This is the fifth 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 1955. It is confined to discussions of matters of general interest and major importance.

Pre-session fears that the 1955 General Assembly would be a long one, somewhat allayed in the quiet weeks of January and early February, have reasserted themselves. Tax proposals of the Governor and Advisory Budget Commission, embodied in the Revenue Bill, continue to be the subject of hearings before the Joint Finance Committee. Opponents of these proposals take turns in describing the undesirable results they foresee should the new taxes be adopted. Only three proposals for taxes in addition to (or possibly in substitution of) those in the Revenue Bill have been introduced: one would impose a 3% levy on hotel and tourist room rental receipts; one would impose a 1% on the transfer of real property; and one would raise the court process tax from \$2 to \$3 and extend its application to cases in all courts. Additional revenue to be anticipated from these three taxes combined would not exceed \$5 million. The most frequently mentioned major alternative to the tax proposals in the Revenue Bill is a sales tax with few or no exemptions. No bill embodying this idea has been introduced. Should it be presented, hearings before the Joint Finance Committee would have to be extended, for each group losing its exemption would want to be heard. This would be true for every new tax proposal, all of which could extend hearings (and the 1955 session) quite a long time.

**Reorganization of the State Government**  
The 1953 General Assembly authorized appointment of a study commission on the state government, with a report to be made to the 1955 General Assembly. The commission was appointed in the fall of 1953, with Rep. Wm. B. Rodman, Jr., of Beaufort, as chairman. By last December the commission had submitted its recommendations in seven separate reports: (1) on finance and fiscal control; (2) personnel management; (3) cultural and historical development; (4) agriculture, industrial safety activities, and building regulation and inspection; (5) the prison system; (6) welfare and mental health; and (7) the office of the Governor. This week twelve commission bills were introduced. One would transfer, in large part, prison administrative authority from the Highway Commission to the Director of Prisons. Coupled with this was a resolution directing that cost studies be made to furnish data on which conclusions as to the feasibility of complete separation of the prisons from the Highway Commission might be based. Other reorganization bills would transfer pre-audit functions from the State Auditor to the Director of the Budget (Governor) and exclude the

Auditor and Treasurer from budget control by the Director; transfer authority for administration of industrial safety activities from the Industrial Commission to the Department of Labor; combine the State Library and Library Commission under one board of trustees; make the State Board of Health responsible for development and supervision of community mental health clinics; and abolish a number of inactive agricultural agencies. Other measures embodying recommendations of this commission can be anticipated soon.

**Public Education and Educational Institutions**  
Bills prepared by two other study commissions created by the 1953 General Assembly also reached the legislature this week. North Carolina's public school law, a set of statutes that has grown in haphazard fashion through the years, is subjected to complete revision in the bill proposed by the commission headed by Mr. Fred Folger of Mt. Airy. While primarily concerned with trimming out obsolete and conflicting provisions, the revision also contains some substantive proposals. While retaining in the State Board of Education general control and administration of the school system, this bill would strengthen local control over local administrative units. (It

will be recalled that bills introduced early in the session would make it plain that responsibility for allocation of pupils among schools rests in local boards of education.)  
A bill embodying the recommendations of the commission on higher education (headed by Mr. Victor Bryant of Durham) reached the General Assembly just as the presidents of the state's educational institutions were concluding their statements of needs to the Joint Appropriations Committee. As noted by Governor Hodges in his biennial message, the commission found growing evidence of overlapping functions among state-supported colleges and the university as student bodies mushroom.

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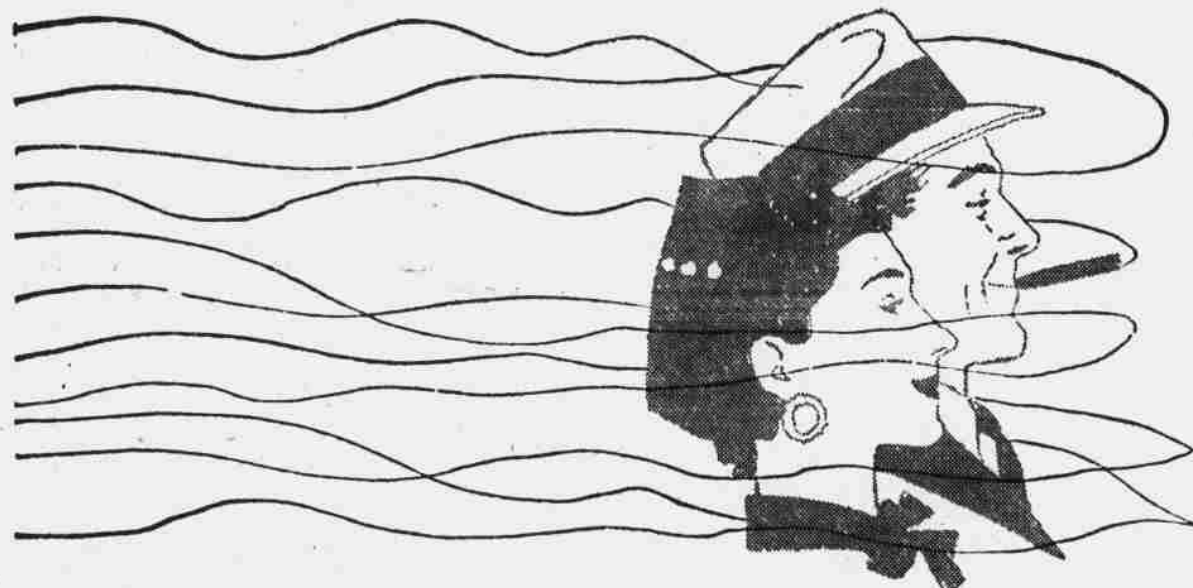
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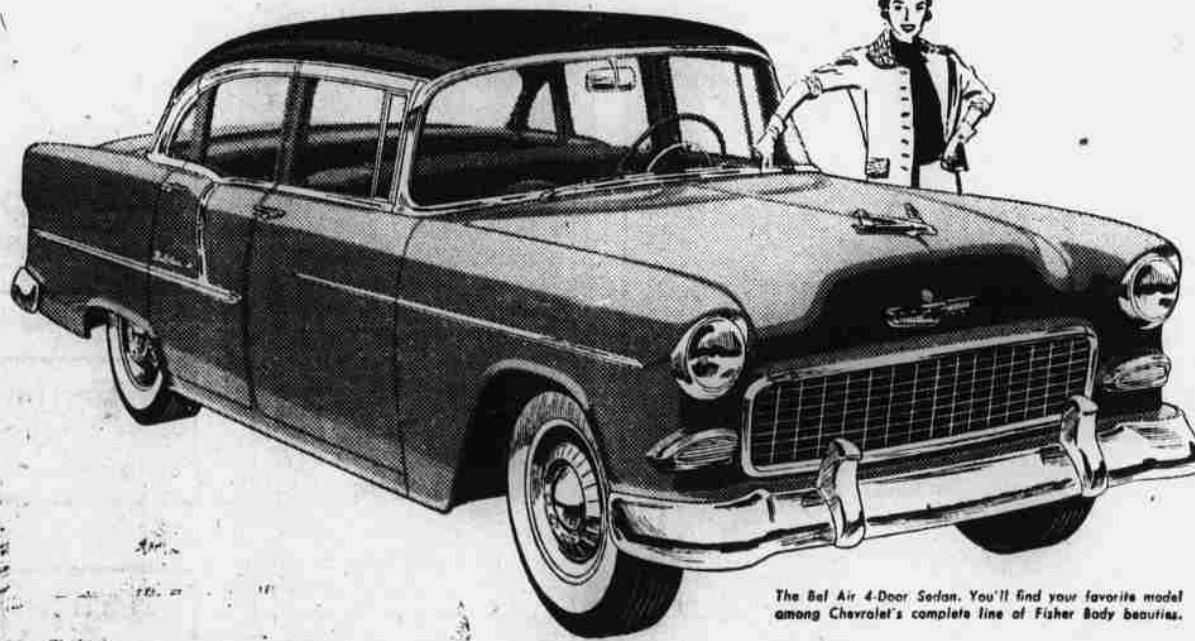
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