

WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY

This is the sixteenth 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.

Those who thought this would be the week of decision for the 1955 General Assembly were wrong. The big issue for this session has been, and still is, what, and how much, in new taxes will be levied. This issue was not settled this week. As a result, it seems clear that there can be no adjournment by May 14th, the session-end date selected by many legislative observers. This week the House passed a resolution to ban local bill introductions after May 6th, but whether this will be more effective than the Senate rule, which has been honored more in the breach than in the observance, remains to be seen. Saturday sessions of the House and Senate have for years been token meetings only, held because one interpretation of the Constitution seemed to make them necessary. By joint resolution, the House and Senate voted to forego this Saturday session. The second lady member of the House, Mrs. Thelma Richardson Fisher, wife of Pennsylvania's representative who was forced to resign because of ill health, was sworn in this week.

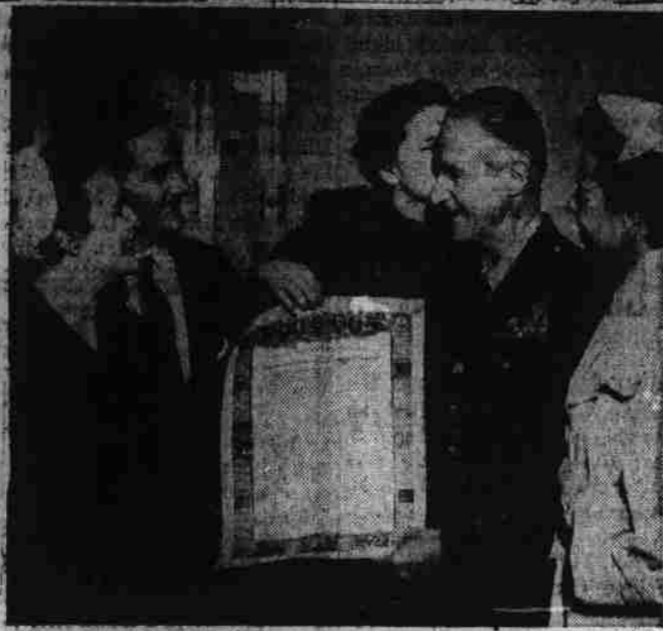
Taxes

The apparent break in the tax jam, foreseen last week, was apparent only; no revenue bill has yet materialized. Last week the House and Senate finance subcommittee agreed, by a close margin, on some \$16 million in new taxes, including the tobacco tax. This week, the full finance committee did not take a formal vote on the subcommittee agreement. On Thursday, it was announced that growing sentiment among committee members favored dropping the tobacco tax

and the 3% sales tax on building materials, and adopting a tax proposed in HB 402, introduced several weeks ago by Rep. Speight of Bertie. This proposal would levy an additional tax on motor vehicles, payable at the time the regular license plates are purchased, equivalent to 50% of the cost of the license plate, but not to exceed \$10. At the same time, it was announced that anticipated new tax needs have been reduced to \$14 million annually, in view of the economies which can reasonably be effected during the next biennium (new tax needs announced at the beginning of the session amounted to \$26 million a year). The joint finance committee has scheduled a public hearing this coming Tuesday on the question of levying the additional vehicle tax. Highway Commission officials have expressed the view that such a tax may result in a diversion of highway revenues within the meaning of the federal law granting highway aid to the states. Such a diversion could result in a loss of some \$7 million in federal aid during the next biennium.

Appropriations

Tuesday, the joint appropriations committee adopted, without change, the budget recommendations of its 25-member subcommittee. Reporting of the budget bill to the House and Senate is scheduled early this coming week. The committee's 1955-57 budget calls for general fund spending of \$424,210,272, which is \$1,115,391 less than the amount recommended by Governor Hodges and the Advisory Budget Commission. The joint appropriations committee voted increases amounting to \$1,170,519 and decreases of \$1,785,910, which, together with a transfer to the general fund of \$500,000 in unneeded bond funds for Eastern N. C. Sanatorium, amounted to a net decrease of \$1,115,391. Specific reductions included \$872,180 (achieved by raising student fees at state-supported colleges); \$253,086 for printing and binding; \$190,286 for travel



BIG DAY—Mr. and Mrs. Hans Frederick Behringer, left, and Brigadier General and Mrs. A. J. D. Biddle reflect the joy young Thilda Behringer expresses over the naturalization of her parents. The former German officer and his wife were sponsored for citizenship by the Biddles in Washington, D. C.

expense; and \$470,358 for salary increments to personnel not under the state personnel act (mainly those at colleges and institutions). Committee approved increases for the biennium included \$29,530 for the salary of an additional superior court judge; \$43,670 for the Budget Bureau; \$199,491 for aid to the blind; \$487,276 for the tubercular sanatoria; \$30,000 for boarding home funds; \$375,000 for old age assistance; and a net increase of \$40,420 to state schools other than U. N. C. Sen. Eagles, chairman

of the Senate Appropriations Committee, expressed the opinion that the committee recommendations would not result in decreased services to the people of the state; and Governor Hodges this week stated that economies instituted by the late Governor Umstead, and continued by him, have resulted in considerable savings to the state, and every effort will be made to stretch state dollars during the coming biennium.

Business Regulation

The bill which would have guar-

anteed a 55c hourly wage for an estimated 45,000 North Carolina employees is dead. Thursday, the House voted 46 to 40 to remove the bill from the unfavorable calendar, placed there by a report from the Committee on Manufacturers and Labor, but a two-thirds majority was needed. . . . Ren. Wilson of Union introduced another small loan bill, to impose additional regulations on small loan companies. It would limit fees and interest charged by small loan companies to those charged by industrial banks, and would prohibit the requirement of credit accident and health insurance on loans repayable within eight weeks. It is reported that Rep. Wilson fears his previous measures have little chance of favorable committee action, and that he hopes for a majority committee report for his new bill, so that it can be voted on by the House. . . . A bill has passed the House, applicable only to Wilkes and Forsyth Counties, which provides for the inspection of poultry products for those producers who voluntarily enter into an agreement with the Agriculture Department. Other leading poultry producing counties, fearing adverse market conditions for uninspected poultry, caused similar legislation, applying to all counties, to be introduced in the Senate.

Elections and Election Laws

Measures ratified this week change the filing deadline for candidates for state and county offices from 6 P. M., to 12 noon on the 6th Saturday before the primary, permit the use of county registration books by cities and towns, and unexpectedly ran into a snag on

make requirements on folding of ballots inapplicable to counties using approved ballot boxes into which only unfolded ballots can be deposited. Other bills have passed the House: (1) to permit permanent registration of voters in counties using modern loose-leaf registration systems, and having one or more municipalities with a population of 10,000 or more; (2) to require that polls close at 7:30 P. M. in precincts where voting machines are used; and (3) to permit county and city authorities to purchase voting machines for use in local elections. The bill reducing the precinct residence requirement from four months to 30 days was amended to permit a voter registered as an independent to vote in a party primary upon taking an oath to support the candidates of that party in the general election. A Senate bill requiring that a voter for group candidates vote for as many candidates as there are offices to be filled was reported unfavorably, but in the House an identical bill made applicable to 17 counties only, passed.

Miscellaneous

Annual sessions of the legislature Tuesday. 69 Representatives voted for yearly meetings, but 72 are required for approval of a constitutional amendment. However, a reconsideration has been asked, and a new vote will be taken next Tuesday. . . . After much debate the bill allowing counties to appoint a medical examiner to supplement the coroner, passed the House. . . . Week-end leaves for certain prisoners was given an unfavorable report.

County Agent Gives Information About Annual Wool Pool

According to R. M. Thompson, Perquimans County Farm Agent, the time is fast approaching for the annual wool pool to be held in Washington, N. C., and the lamb pool, to be held in Plymouth. "The date still has not been set," says Thompson, "but it is tentatively set for the last of May for the lamb pool." He further states that these lambs should have all the weight that is possible for them to get before the sale as the heavier lambs grade better and naturally will bring higher prices. Anyone desiring to enter lambs in this lamb pool should notify the County Agent's office as soon as possible so that arrangements can be made to have railroad cars to haul the lambs to the slaughter house.

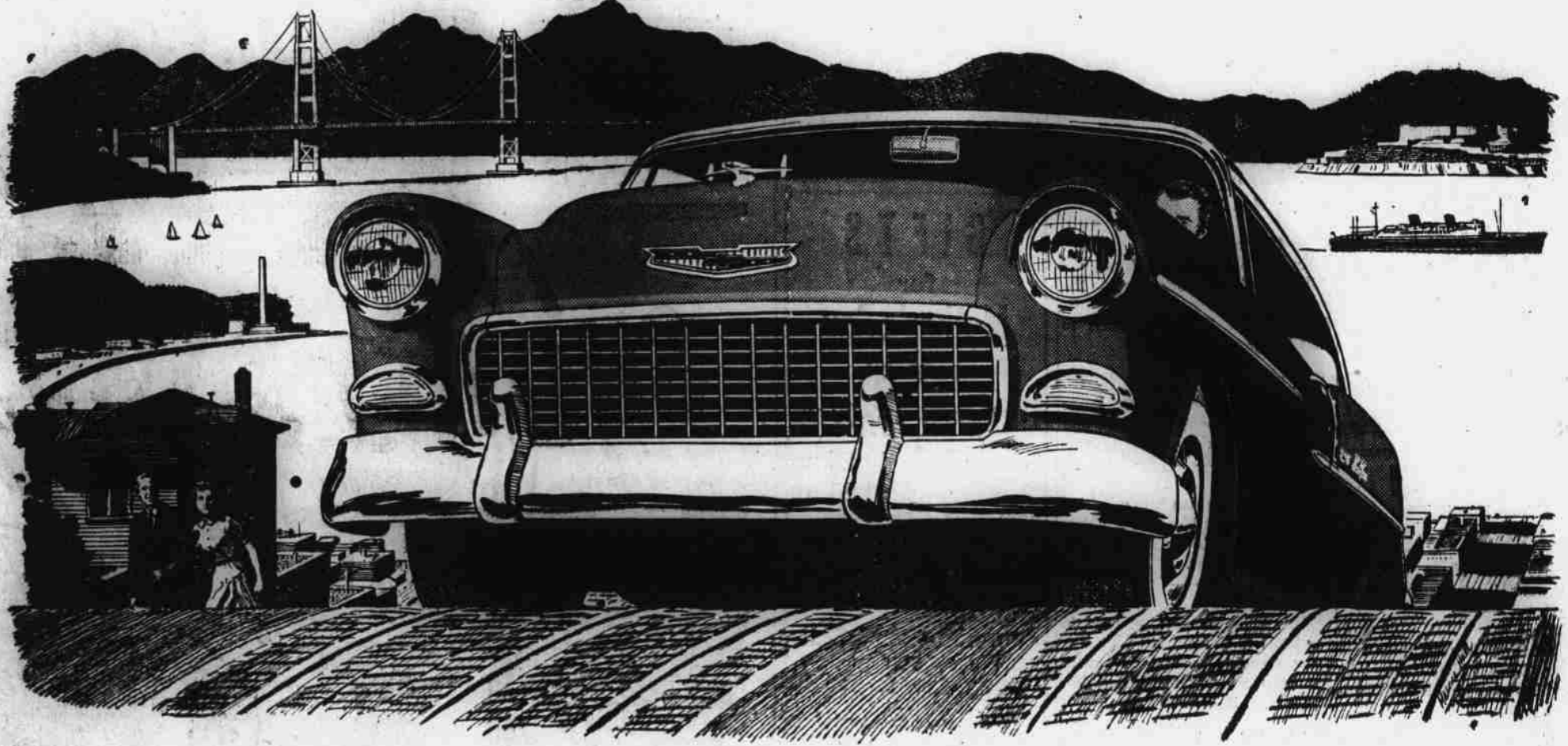
In reference to the wool pool which will be held the first week in June, Thompson suggests that attention be paid to the following: (1) Never shear when wool is wet. If wool gets damp, spread it out to dry before bagging it. Damp wool will rot. (2) Shear on clean floor or a canvas to avoid getting straw, manure or trash of any kind in the wool. (3) Avoid second cuts. Cut close and keep fleece unbroken. (4) Tie each fleece with paper twine flesh side out. There may be a discount of 2 cents per pound on all wool not tied with paper twine and if binder twine is

used 10 cents per pound may be deducted. Baling wire should never be used. (5) Tag all sheep before shearing. Pack tags and sweepings in a separate bag, otherwise much of this wool is lost in the process of grading. (6) Pick black, burry, dead wool or rejects of any kind in separate bags properly marked. (7) Keep lamb's wool separate from all other wool. (8) Pack wool in regular wool bags. (9) Store wool in dry place, never in wet basement, on ground, or cement floor.

"No matter where you sell your lambs or wool, be sure to get a receipt for the weight, the price and the number of head sold. This receipt should be turned in to the ASC office as the Federal Government is subsidizing wool at the rate of 110% and they will need a record of your sales in order to pay you for your wool and "picked" wool off of your lambs," says Thompson.

BURGESS CLUB MEETS

The Burgess Home Demonstration Club met Wednesday night with Mrs. Winston E. Lane. The meeting was opened by singing "Ho for Carolina," followed by devotional given by Mrs. J. B. Basnight. The minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved. Announcements were made by Miss Perry. Food Conservation Chairman Mrs. Winston Lane gave an interesting report on storing canned goods. Miss Perry demonstrated salads. She brought out the importance of taste appeal and eye appeal in salads. She also gave hints on salad etiquette. The meeting closed with the Collect.



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