

Legislative Summary

In the teeth of a lovely spring blizzard the 1971 Assembly today completed its 53rd weekday session, in unwonted snowy splendor. During four out of the last five legislatures this would have marked at least the half-way point in the biennial deliberative doings. The 1969 session, however, required 121 weekday meetings to grind to a weary conclusion, and a like fate may await the current Assembly, though it is really too early to tell.

As of today this legislature has amassed the following vital statistics:

A total of 870 bills and resolutions has been introduced, 528 in the House and 342 in the Senate. Of these introductions, 710 have been public bills and 160 local bills.

120 laws have been ratified and 36 resolutions approved. Of the ratified list, 51 have been public acts and 66 local acts.

The perspective of recent legislatures lends some meaning to these numbers. Local bill volume

continues to run for below normal, as it has all year. About 18% of the 1971 introductions have been local bills; at the corresponding stage of the last five sessions this figure averaged almost 49%. Appropriately, the number of ratified local acts is running quite low, 66 this year, or well under half the average number at this date in other recent sessions.

By contrast, a bumper crop of public bills is ripening this year. 710 public bills have been introduced so far. This is well ahead of the average rate for the five sessions of the '60's as of the 33rd day (503 bills) — and, for that matter, far ahead of the nearest competitor (562 bills in 1967). Enactment of public legislation is moving along at about the usual pace, the 54 public acts ratified to date being very much of a middling figure.

As some bills succeed, others must inevitably fail. Thus, another indication of the progress of a legislative session lies in the

tally of bills that have been killed by unfavorable committee or floor action. At this reading, more than 20 bills have been finally laid to rest this session after suffering mortal wounds.

Looking beyond the numbers, a rough notion of the progress of the '71 Assembly can be gleaned by examining several areas that have been the center of attention during the first two months of the session.

TAXATION — Prominent among the new laws that have been placed on the statutes already this year is the local option sales tax package (involving three related bills) that was prompted by the recent and unanticipated Supreme Court decision invalidating the 1969 optional sales tax law. First to pass was a law directing the Commissioner or Revenue to distribute the net proceeds on hand of the local sales tax back to the counties and municipalities, as of the Supreme Court decision had not been handed down (S 129-Ch. 23). Next came the most newsworthy of these enactments, the new optional sales tax law designed to replace the one that was invalidated (S 81-Ch. 77). Last came a stopgap act to allow the counties and municipalities that had imposed a tax under the 1969 law to take emergency steps to cope with the deficits and other fiscal problems caused by the Court decision (H 73-Ch. 108).

One other tax law has received final approval so far, H 103-Ch. 109, which entitles metropolitan sewerage districts to the same refunds of State sales and use taxes as other local governments now receive. Almost 50 other bills affecting the tax laws are now under consideration in the Finance Committees. These include comprehensive, largely technical measures (such as a proposed general revision of the State's property tax laws); some highly charged political issues (such as proposed repeals of the soft drink tax and the 1969 tobacco and gas tax increases); and a host of small-to-medium revisions in tax exemptions, deductions and procedures. A number of these bills may simply wither away in committee; others will require considerable seasoning. In any event their collective fate will probably remain unsettled for some time to come.

THE ENVIRONMENT — The first two of an anticipated flood

of laws providing for environmental protection and resource management have now been enacted. H 33 - Ch. 103 moves up from November 1, 1973 to January 1, 1973 the final reporting date for the study now in progress concerning comprehensive planning for the State's estuaries — essentially correcting an error made in a 1969 statute. S 113 - Ch. 111 is a more substantial piece of legislation that strengthens the legal status of downstream water users who wish to use a stream channel as a conduit to transport water stored behind an upstream dam. This new law is the first of a series of proposals relating to local and regional water supply, sponsored by the Legislative Research Commission. Two more bills in this package will be on the Senate calendar next week — one, establishing a revolving fund to aid localities in planning regional water systems, and the other strengthening the authority of the State Board of Health to review proposed public water supply systems.

A Senate bill to stiffen penalties for highway littering has passed both houses in varying forms and is now back in the Senate for consideration of House amendments (S 51). Two bills to make permanent the lateral seaward boundaries of the State have passed the Senate and are in House committee (S 234 and S 235), and a bill to permit residents with fishing licenses from neighboring states to fish in multi-state lakes has passed both houses (H 297). Other early session conservation and management bills are now being reviewed in committee. But the big push on the environmental front lies shortly ahead. The Governor's long-awaited environmental message and package bill is now anticipated within the next two weeks. Study commission bills on surface mining and pesticide controls are also expected to be introduced very shortly. When these major bills (and the companion appropriations requests) are in hand, the committee work on environmental protection and resource management will move into high gear.

TRAFFIC LAW AND HIGHWAY SAFETY — The '71 Assembly has begun to make some inroads on the usual spate of traffic law and highway safety proposals before it. Of more than 65 bills introduced on the subject, eleven have now been en-

Small Farmer Can Receive Income Help

Small farmers in every corner of North Carolina have at least one opportunity to expand their income.

The Agricultural Extension Service has identified over a dozen crops which can be grown with little expense on a small acreage. Most of the crops do require a fair amount of hand labor, however.

Among the crops being suggested for farmers with limited resources are pickling cucumbers, trellised or staked tomatoes, peppers, pole beans, okra, strawberries, and Christmas trees. Other possibilities include feeder pigs and manufactured milk.

Extension workers also say that a well planned home garden can be worth \$500 to the average farm family. Furthermore, home gardeners can sometimes earn

money by selling fruits and vegetables to nearby markets.

Extension specialists and agents have put together a set of recommendations for small farmers, which they are calling "North Carolina's Limited Resource Program." Farmers who are searching for more income are urged to visit their county extension agent to get more details on the program.

Extension workers say it is possible to earn \$1,000 a year in profit from staked tomatoes. Strawberries can bring a farm family as much as \$1,100, pole beans \$500, pickling cucumbers and peppers \$400, and okra \$250.

In addition, a good farmer can expect to get \$500 worth of vegetables from a one-acre home garden, and earn \$600 per year from a six-sow brood herd.

"Civilized" Is Look For Season

RALEIGH — Spring fashions for women have the "civilized" look. This is the term designers coined for the classic, soft and feminine styles that are the look of

Some of the best small farm opportunities in the mountains are said to be tomatoes, strawberries, and Christmas trees. Piedmont farmers have opportunities in pickling cucumbers, pole beans, okra and manufactured milk. Coastal Plain farmers have income opportunities in strawberries, okra, pole beans, pickling cucumbers and tomatoes.

this season. What do civilized clothes look like? Harriet Tutterow, extension clothing specialist, North Carolina State University, says "the term would include shirtdresses, blazers, longer jacket lengths, and skirts that are made in soft fabrics and that feature soft details and lines."

Dresses have slightly fitted bodices; skirts have some fullness. Length for day wear is at or just below the knee; it's longer for evening.

Fabrics are predominantly knits; prints and geometric designs are stylish.

Accessories for the civilized look emphasize the natural. In fact, you may wish to make your own accessories, using suede, beads, rope, wood or other hand-craft items.

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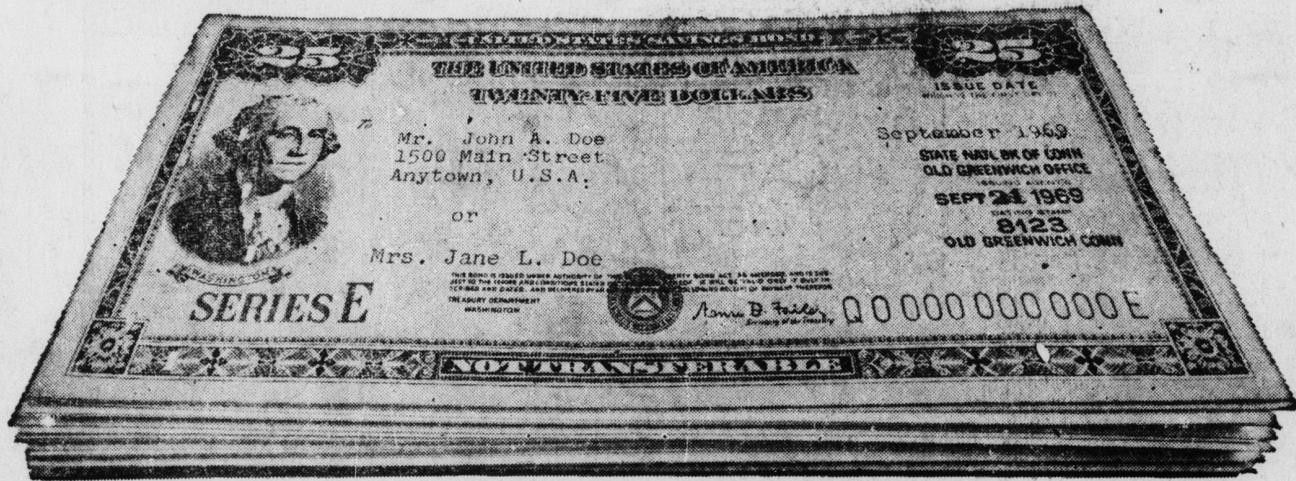
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