

The Manning Times.

LOUIS APPELT, Editor.

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CAPITOL CORRESPONDENCE.

Columbia, S. C., February 21. As predicted in my last letter the general assembly could not adjourn Saturday night. The reason was that the Calendars could not be cleared, and the most important general measures are yet to be acted upon, it is therefore necessary to run into the coming week, but with hard work it is possible to reach an adjournment by Friday night.

The senate adjourned Friday night to reconvene Monday night, but to facilitate the work for next week the Finance Committee of which I am a member, remained over Saturday and worked all day on the appropriation bill, giving hearings to those interested, especially to the heads of the several of the departments, and of the educational institutions, which are very important in order for the committee to act intelligently on the many items in that important measure; as I have already said, we worked all day Saturday and will continue through Monday in the hope of being able to report at Monday's session; should we get the bill in shape by Monday evening, the senate will at once take it up for consideration, and each item will be discussed on its merits. The budget is the heaviest the State has had in years, carrying an appropriation of about two and a quarter million dollars. The Finance Committee realizing the necessity of holding down the tax levy has endeavored to cut wherever possible, and on Saturday up to the time I had to leave to catch my train for home we had succeeded in cutting out about \$70,000, but whether our recommendations will stand I am unable to say, because, even if the senate sustains the committee the house may refuse to concur, and it will have to go to conference; when a bill of this importance gets into conference there is no telling the result.

The levy called for by the bill sent to us from the house necessitates a levy that will be over seven mills, but if the senate succeeds in its reductions there will be no increase in the taxation for the year 1914. Those who do not follow up legislation do not realize the difficulty in the way of preventing a raise in the levy; the several educational institutions of higher learning are growing larger every year, more buildings are necessary, then too, the demands for the free schools are getting heavier, necessitating a greater outlay of money, besides this, there is the health department of the State requiring more money for the protection of the health of the people. This department has, and it is doing a great work in this State- it has made localities, where it was almost impossible to live in the past, healthy and inviting for development; all of us realize the State cannot afford to take a backward step in this matter for the sake of saving a few dollars, as the health of this people is more important than money.

This session has been surprisingly free from partisan bickerings up to the present, and I hope that when the work shall have been ended it can be truthfully said it was the most businesslike session in a decade. Owing to the volume of matter introduced it will be impossible to give consideration to all of the measures, it would take a session of six months to do it, unless the members went at it in a haphazard way, and if they did, instead of doing good to the State they would do harm, in the end it would fall heavily upon the taxpayers. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary to dis-appoint many of the members who have pet measures, by selecting what is deemed most important at this time.

I am sure it will be gratifying to many of my readers to learn of the fate of the gun license measure. This bill which sought to require a license of one dollar and ten cents from those who desired to hunt, after a determined and a long drawn out parliamentary fight, was killed Friday night by a vote of 23 to 17 but whether it will remain dead I do not know, because, the State Game Warden has been exceedingly active to secure this legislation, re-enforced by the members of the Audubon society and other

agencies, and when his measure was defeated he did not give up the fight as is shown by his attempt to have the vote reconsidered, by a motion made at his urgency from a Senator who voted in the affirmative. When the motion to reconsider was made the opposition raised the point of order that such a motion was out of order because the senate at that time in the "morning hour," under the rules, no motions other than adjournment, except by unanimous consent could be considered or entertained; the chair ruled in our favor and the matter went over to be renewed Monday night. If there is a full senate the fight to prevent a reconsideration of the vote by which the bill was killed will be vigorously waged by myself, and unless I mistake the temper of the majority we will win, notwithstanding the activity of the Game Warden and his army of workers, some of whom are working for the measure in the hope of making salaries out of the big revenue will put at the disposition of the head of the department. While to many, this measure may not appeal as being of great importance, to those who understand the conditions it is of more importance than many of the measures introduced at this session, especially those who live in sections where the privilege of hunting and fishing is regarded as an inalienable right bequeathed to them by their forefathers.

When the Senate adjourned Friday night the rate bill was under discussion with the Senator from Sumter entitled to the floor; when we return Monday night he will continue his speech with a probability of several more speeches by other senators on both sides of the controversy to follow. I doubt very much if a vote will be reached before Tuesday or Wednesday. This is a very important measure, it involves much more than the average man thinks—more to the general welfare than to the railroads in my opinion, because, if the two cent rate is put into effect the roads in self defence will be forced to carry the Act into the United States courts to determine whether or not the two cents rate is confiscatory, that is to say, whether or not the passenger earnings in this State are sufficient to give the railroads a fair return on the investment, and whether on this rate they can comply with the public demands for more trains, quicker schedules, better stations, steel bridges and cars as per the requirements of the Interstate Commerce Commission at Washington, all of these matters will be taken into consideration, and it will result in long litigation which must be paid for by the taxpayers. I recall one case in this State a few years ago when the representatives of Dillon County secured the passage of an Act to require through passenger trains to stop and receive passengers at Dillon station, the railroads pleaded against this legislation, and showed conclusively that the courts would not sustain such an Act, because it would interfere with interstate travel and the United States through mails, but they were not heeded, the result was the Atlantic Coast Line was forced to carry the matter into the courts after entailing great expense upon them and the State. The road won its contention, and an appropriation of several thousand dollars had to be made from the State treasury to pay the costs and the extra attorney fees, so it will be seen that whenever the legislature undertakes to place restrictions upon our public carriers it should be exceedingly cautious and sure of its ground before it undertakes it, litigation is expensive and the taxpayers are the burden bearers.

In the pending legislation it is conceded by all of the Senators that a two cent rate is impossible on the short lines of railroads, it is conceded that if the two cent rate is insisted upon it will seriously affect the progress of the present and the contemplated railroad development in this State, but in spite of this, there are many who insist upon forcing the railroads to reduce the passenger charge. I am convinced that if the masses would look into this question they will agree, it is not the passenger rates where the remedy for the complaint lies, but it is the freight rate and the slow transportation. Instead of undertaking to regulate the discriminations in the freight departments of the railroads where there may be just cause for complaint, they get the cart before

the horse and go after the impossible. There has not been the least effort on the part of those antagonistic to the railroads to devise legislation which will secure for the masses cheaper freight rates, but the whole fight is made to get a half cent knowledge to master it. A man who is qualified to make rates for railroads is sought after by these corporations at very enticing salaries, this being true, how can the ordinary laymen hope to be in a position to know anything about the subject, and when he is sent to the legislature and undertakes this kind of regulation he must necessarily resort to guess rather than to actual facts. I stand ready whenever I am shown where the railroads are not treating the people justly, either in their passenger or freight rates, to provide such legislation as is necessary to remedy the trouble, but I will not undertake blindly to impair the earnings of these public benefactors, merely to gratify political ambition.

I am in a position to hear the arguments pro and con on this subject, and I find the proponents of these railroad measures totally without any facts to sustain their contention, they simply say the railroads are making money and they should give up their profits, on the other hand the railroads show, not only from their books, but their reports sworn to before the United States Commerce Commission as required by congress, their earnings, operating expenses, cost of construction, interest on bonds, together with the cost of the contemplated improvements as required by law, and other data that gives the thoughtful man something to base a judgment upon. If the evidence on file with the railroad commissioners of the State and of the United States, is to be respected or to be regarded, then it is convincing to my mind there is not a railroad in South Carolina making six per cent on its investments, and besides, since congress has undertaken to require all of the trestles to be rebuilt of steel and concrete, and the wooden cars replaced with steel cars in the interest of safety, the bonds and stock of all of the railroads have been greatly impaired from the investment viewpoint, in other words, they are seriously hampered in disposing of the bonds on the markets, because the returns from these bonds are not as enticing as other investments, therefore, with this condition brought about by congressional legislation, it is easy to see how much more serious it is for the railroads when the law undertakes to affect their earnings.

The people of this State are being favored with more railroad development at this time in twenty five years, they do not want anything to happen which will tend to arrest this development. Take the Bonsal system of railroads recently begun in this State; the projectors of this enterprise are pleading with the legislature not to pass any legislation which will cause the cold shoulder to be given them when they go to the money centers seeking the means to carry on their work of development. Mr. Bonsal, the head of what is commonly called the Seaboard, who is considering the developing of this section, says, "the passage of such legislation at this time would retard the development for years to come, and would be little short of a calamity should the bill for a two cent rate be passed". Mr. Bonsal further says, "the proposed reduction of the passenger rate to two cents, now before the senate, would put a quietus on any further railroad building in this section." Well, some say, Mr. Bonsal "is a railroad man, he is talking for his own interests." Suppose he is, and he is unduly alarmed, are we in a position to put our judgment up against his? Do we know that he is unduly alarmed? He is building railroads, and of necessity must go to the money centers to secure the means; he per mile reduction in the passenger rate. I presume the reason for this is, to undertake to study out a revision of the freight rates is more than the average legislator can give his time to, and when he has done it, he will then have an up hill task to impress his colleagues with his correctness of his conclusions.

Railroad operation is a life time study, and it takes expert knowledge the difficulties he must encounter to get this money. We do not, I, therefore ask, is it not better for us to give heed

to the pleadings of those who are in a position to know, rather than to follow those who make these demands without being possessed of knowledge to the contrary.

I note that Senator Tillman, who has been clamoring for this two-cent rate, now admits it would be unjust to require the short line railroads to operate a two-cent rate; when he made this admission, he virtually broke down his contention for the rate altogether, because, if it is true, that it would be ruinous to the short roads, and I agree it will be, then how will he get around the fact that it will be equally ruinous to the other roads that are compelled to operate with vastly more expensive cars, engines, trackage, etc., and besides, if a hundred mile road in this State would be ruined on such a rate, would not the same ruin come to the trunk lines operating in this State for one hundred miles? It will not do to argue the trunk lines make up any loss they would entail in this State by the interstate traffic, because when a court is called upon to consider this question it will not consider what a system is making on the entire system, but what are the earnings within this State, nor will it consider the freight earnings, each department of railroad system will be considered separate and distinct. Therefore, if a railroad is making a large profit from its freight earnings, and not making a reasonable return on its passenger earnings, it would hold such an Act to be null and void, as has been decided in a number of cases already. I am not going to cast my vote to reduce the passenger earnings, but should the opportunity be given me, with the proper evidence, I shall vote to bring about a revision of the freight tariffs, and shall also vote to force the railroads to spend money in such improvements as will give to the traveling public better safety appliances and more comfortable coaches.

The Fortner bill has not yet been acted upon by the senate, I think it will be reached early part of next week. I think it will be passed, but not in its present form; some amendment will be offered which will not make it so drastic, at the same time, will have the effect its proponents desire. I was shown an amendment that has not yet been fully developed, which proposes to make it unlawful for any teachers to teach in the schools of the opposite races without first obtaining the permission of the County Board of Education. Such an amendment would leave the regulation of this matter entirely in the hands of the several county boards in the State, in so far as the public schools are concerned, but I doubt if it could affect the private schools. I also doubt if the Fortner Bill, even though passed as it is written, can have any effect in the regulation of the private schools. I am in receipt of a letter from a friend in Clarendon, whose post office is Lake City, urging me to vote for the passage of the Fortner Bill. This friend, evidently is anxious that I do not cast a vote which would be detrimental to my political future; as he cautions me that if I do not support this Fortner measure, I "will have to do a bunch of explaining should you ever offer yourself in a political way." I appreciate the solicitude of this gentleman, but I must insist upon respecting my own judgment and conscience in a matter of this kind, and I frankly and boldly say, that if I am the only man in the senate to do so, I shall oppose the Fortner measure as it is written, even though I shall have to do "a bunch of explaining should ever offer yourself in a political way." If I had to conform my votes political expediency I would not be fit to represent the people of Clarendon. I can foresee some of the political future; already signs have appeared to put me wise of what is going on, it is not of recent date either, but it is the result of scheming for a number of years, based upon personal hatred because of an inability to secure my co-operation, and to control my political and personal acts, but "should I offer myself, in a political way," I will make the offer to the people of Clarendon who have trusted and honored me in the past, and if they reach the conclusion they no longer desire my services, I shall bow in humble submission, but as long as my mind is normal, I will not be under the control of any man or set of men nor will I permit myself to vio-

late my conscience. If the time ever comes when I must go before the people of this county playing the role of a hypocrite before I can secure their support, I shall gladly retire and let the hypocrite have his way and the people the consequence. At the proper time I expect to give the people a full and complete account of my stewardship; they already have had an opportunity to know what I have been doing since they entrusted me with their commission; I have every week attempted to lay my record before them, therefore, they are prepared for the future. At this time I am not inclined nor will I permit myself to have my mind diverted from my duties I prefer to "let the heathen rage," and lay his schemes for my political destruction, but when the battle is ordered on, and bushwhackers can no longer remain unseen, then, and not until then, will I open my batteries of defense and offense.

The bill for the establishing a Magistrate at Alcolu has passed but not yet ratified, this will be done in a few days and Mr. E. C. Dickson will be the magistrate, that is the present expectation. The matter of the Supervisor's salary has been adjusted satisfactory. Before I was aware the county furnished an automobile thought this officer should get a salary of \$1500 and so fixed it, but the house delegation amended it by making it \$1,200. I proposed to give him the same salary as the Auditor and Treasurer which is \$1,350, this the house members would not accept, so rather than have a controversy I acceded to their wishes and agreed to the \$1,200.

About this automobile, I did not know the county purchased it; but thought it was the supervisor's personal property, when I learned this I went to see about it and found the county did buy it in the interest of the county's service, I think this was wise, and will be a money saver in the end. The machine was placed at the disposal and for the use of the supervisor, with the agreement that he keep it in repair; and pay for the gasoline out of his private funds, the expense of keeping up the machine and for running it does not come out of the county. I make this explanation lest some may be misled from statements and impressions that have been made.

I do not think there is much chance for anything to be done about the reformation of the primary system. A bill has passed the house, which I have not had an opportunity to read, but if the provisions of it are as told me, it is purely useless, absolutely ineffective and necessarily expensive.

With regard to the rural police a provision was placed in the supply bill for \$2,700 for their salaries should the Commissioners employ them, but this was done without increasing the levy. The proper thing to do would be to increase the levy for this purpose, but those who were so urgent for this system insisted that it would over pay for itself and I want to see whether or not they are correct, my personal opinion is it will not, and should I be correct there is bound to be a deficit even with the most economical management of the county affairs, however, I will take the chance for this year anyway. There shall not be any increase in the county levy this year.

When I return home next week it will be for good, so far as this session is concerned, then I hope to get back at my post where I can write some editorials on current topics, writing these kind of letters are alright in their way for the readers at home, but there are other matters which need attention and which I like to indulge in myself at times.

The asylum investigation has been another one of those long drawn out and useless, as well as expensive things brought about by petty jealousies, and in a measure, politics. I doubted the wisdom of the investigation from the first, and the farther it went the more convinced I became that it was a waste of money. I am a warm personal friend of Dr. Babcock, and should deplore his leaving that institution, but it is evident to my mind if he stays there he will have to have better discipline among his subordinates; had he, when these jealousies became apparent, exercised his authority and nipped the foolishness in the bud, there would not have been any trouble, but

in the goodness of his heart he was indulgent and tried to satisfy all parties, with the result that he failed to satisfy any of them. All of this stuff about anybody attacking the personal character of Dr. Saunders is rot, the only intimation of this sort came from Dr. Griffin, and he immediately disclaimed anything of the kind, and at once apologized when he saw that the lady took offense at his statement, and, he has ever since then disclaimed having any intention to reflect upon her personal or moral integrity, but The Columbia Record will not have it so, it insists upon trying to fan the trouble into flames by constantly referring to the incident and making political capital out of it for future use. I know the editor of The Record he has not so long come from editing a newspaper in Georgia, he will find when he undertakes to apply Georgia journalism to South Carolina, there is a difference. Dr. Griffin has time and again said that he respected Dr. Saunders for her moral character, and their differences were entirely professional, mainly because of her not treating him courteously and interfering with his duties, but granting that Dr. Griffin has not been able to sustain his contention, or that he has, I cannot see wherein it has anything to do with the moral character or the fitness of either.

I have not read all of the testimony taken before the commission, but from what I have read, it looks to me that it was prolonged to soften the miserable slander Senator Tillman uttered when he sent out his personal letter to some senator, and then complained when that senator made it public—a thing Senator Tillman has been guilty of I know from experience. However, since the investigation has taken the shape it has, it may result in bringing about some reformation at the institution in the way of better discipline. I believe if my friend Dr. Babcock will report the first member of his staff, who undertakes to make trouble, to the Governor, that Doctor, whether it be a man or woman, will lose a job, this is what he should have done at the beginning. The investigation has proven Dr. Saunders resourceful, a splendid doctor, an able woman, a fine lawyer and a shrewd politician.

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