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Four Oaks Bond Issue is Valid.
Validating a \$75,000 bond issue for the Four Oaks School District in Johnson county, the supreme court reaffirmed its ruling that the legislature can ratify and confirm the results of proceedings authorized by it under an act rendered ineffectual by reason of some defect in its passage.

The point was raised in the case of the Board of Education vs. Board of Commissioners, a controversy without action. On April 12, 1921, a majority of the qualified voters of the township in question authorized a \$75,000 bond issue under Article 89, Chapter 95, Consolidated Statutes Chapter 91, Public Laws Extra Session, 1920, it was conceded, was not passed in accordance with the constitutional requirements. It was conceded further that Section 5678, Consolidated Statutes, limits the amount of bonds for any township or school district to \$25,000. But the extra session of 1921 passed an act, valid in all respects, specifically ratifying and confirming the results of the election in question and validating the issuance of bonds up to \$75,000. The only question presented to the court was as to whether or not the bonds in excess of \$25,000 and up to \$75,000 could be validated by a curative act of the 1921 General Assembly.

On this point Justice W. T. Stacy writing the court's opinion, says: "Where the legislature has undertaken to pass a law clearly within its power to enact and by reason of some defect in its passage the statute is rendered ineffectual, we see no reason why the legislature in the absence of any opposite intervening rights could not by subsequent enactment ratify and confirm the results of such proceedings, as in good faith have been taken and had under the prior defective act."

Mortgage Debt on Owned Homes.

Washington, D. C. (Special).—According to a preliminary report that has just been issued by the Department of Commerce, through the Bureau of the Census, the total mortgage debt on owned homes and farms in the state of North Carolina in 1920 was \$57,449,841 and the total of these mortgage homes and farms was \$169,290,383, the mortgage debt thus representing 33.9 per cent of the total value. Rented homes, tenant farms, and farms that are partly owned and partly rented, it should be noted, are not included in this report.

The total number of homes in the state other than farm homes was 230,770, of which 90,738, or 39.3 per cent, were owned by the occupants; and of these owned homes 18,557, or 20.5 per cent, were mortgaged. Information regarding the value of the home and the amount of mortgage debt, was secured from 10,187, or 54.9 per cent, of these mortgaged homes. The average mortgage debt of the home for which mortgage reports were secured was \$1,373 and the average value was \$3,557; and on the basis of these averages the total mortgage debt on the mortgaged homes not on farms is estimated as \$25,481,356, and the total value of such homes at \$66,008,328. The ratio of mortgage debt to value is 38.6 per cent.

On owned farms the total mortgage debt, as reported in the census of agriculture, was \$31,968,285, while the total value of these mortgaged farms was \$103,282,055, the ratio of debt to value being 31.0 per cent.

Let Contract on State Mess Hall.

Contracts for new construction doubling the capacity of the dining hall at State college were awarded by the building committee of the board of trustees, the main building going to W. B. Barrow, of Raleigh, for \$58,460. Seven bids were submitted.

The new dining hall will be an exact duplicate of the present building, and the two together will form a huge letter H, with the kitchens forming the cross-piece of the letter. The kitchens will be enlarged. Together the two dining rooms will have a seating capacity of 1,500. The new section will face on the drive leading past the entrance to Riddick Field. The work will be completed September 15th.

Bids will be received for the construction of the new laundry building, and for gutting and paving the main drive on the campus on May 30, which will complete the expenditure of the half million dollars appropriated by the general assembly for improvements in 1921. G. Murray Nelson and Thomas W. Cooper were architects on the contract, and will prepare plans for the laundry.

Paroles Farmer to Make His Crop.

Governor Cameron Morrison paroled Thomas Hargis of Person county, serving a six months' term on the roads for violating the prohibition law. The judge who tried him, the solicitor who prosecuted him and virtually all the county officials recommend pardon.

"The prisoner is a farmer," said Governor Morrison in his statement of reasons, "and has a large family dependent on him. If not given an opportunity to make a crop this year the consequences will be very serious to his family."

CUT OF PERSONNEL

OPENLY DECLARES HIS POSITION TO A CUT BELOW \$6,000.

PRESIDENT WRITES LETTER

Says He Believes Country Will Be Greatly Disappointed at Proposed Reduction.

Washington. — President Harding, in his first public utterance on the 1923 naval bill, declared in a letter presented to the house that while the decision must lie with Congress, he would be greatly disappointed, as he believed the country would be, if the enlisted force was cut below \$6,000.

The opinion was not sent gratuitously. It was given in response to a request for the President's view by Representative Longworth, republican, Ohio, one of the leaders in the fight to defeat the proposal in the bill limiting the force to 67,000. There had been unofficial statements to the effect that he opposed a drastic reduction in personnel, and that he stood for the figures proposed in the McArthur amendment.

In presenting the letter toward the close of an all-day debate, Mr. Longworth said he was glad to accept the challenge from friends of the measure as framed to find out what the President wanted and to let the house know.

"My Dear Congressman Longworth: I have to acknowledge your letter of inquiry addressed to me on the tenth instant. If I were to address the Congress formally I could say only what I have already said informally, because I am well persuaded that it is not wise to make so drastic a cut in the naval appropriations as has been proposed in the measure now pending.

"I do not doubt the good faith of the committee majority in believing a suitable navy can be maintained under the limitations fixed in the pending bill, and I am heartily in accord with every consistent effort to deepen the cut in governmental expenditures. At the same time I must believe in the good faith of advisers who say very emphatically that it is impossible to maintain within the proposed appropriations, the standard set for our navy which was made the base of the International conference, and which stand and we have proclaimed to the world.

"Of course the decision must lie with the Congress, but I should not be frank in replying to your inquiry if I did not say that I shall be greatly disappointed, and I believe the country will be greatly disappointed, if the appropriation, to which the navy must and will add here, is reduced to the point where the limitation of enlisted men and apprentices is below 86,000. No presentation of the situation, which has come to my notice, has served to alter that opinion.

"Ultimately, perhaps, the lower figures proposed may be reached and I hope it will be possible through later international concert, but the trend toward peace and security ought to be more firmly established before going beyond the limitation to which we were gladly committed at the international conference.

"Very truly yours,
"WARREN G. HARDING."

Girl Millionaire Seeks Surgeon.

San Francisco.—Miss Delora Angell, 20, of Pasadena, who will come into possession of \$25,000,000 left by John W. ("Bet-a-Million") Gates when she is 22, disclosed definite plans here for using part of the fortune. She says she expects to marry a young American surgeon, who has an ambition to maintain a hospital for the poor.

Hospital Facilities Approved.

Washington.—The house bill, authorizing an additional appropriation of \$17,000,000 for hospital facilities for disabled former service men, was passed unanimously by the senate.

Fewer Spindles Now.

Washington.—Almost 2,000,000 fewer cotton spindles were operated during March than in February, although cotton consumption for March was about 46,000 bales more than in February, the monthly cotton report of the census bureau issued disclosed. Of the increase for the month, 84,000 bales were consumed in cotton growing states, where consumption was the largest of any month since the first quarter of 1917, and amounted to 65 per cent of the total cotton used during March.

FIRE SWEEPS AREA OVER MILE LONG

MORE THAN 100 HOUSES ARE BURNED AT BERKLEY, VA., A SUBURB OF NORFOLK.

LOSS IS NEARLY \$1,000,000

Hundreds of Families Estimated to Have Been Left Homeless in Seaport Town.

Norfolk, Va.—Berkley, a suburb of Norfolk, was swept by a fire which destroyed more than 100 houses, covering an area one mile in length and average from two to four blocks in width. Five hundred families are estimated to have been made homeless, and the damage will run to nearly a million dollars.

The blaze originated in the Tunis lumber mills, on the southern branch of the Elizabeth river. A woman whose husband is a watchman at the Tunis docks, discovered the fire from a houseboat in which they live.

Within forty yards of the dock where the fire started are the St. Helena Oil company docks. Three steamers in the river were burned, catching fire from sparks.

The fire quickly spread to the north, the sparks being carried a hundred yards or more. Most of the houses in the path of the fire were negro homes, and were of wooden construction. They were as dry as tinder and a few sparks only were required to set them ablaze. At one time there were nine fires blazing in different places simultaneously.

Although the fire departments, both civilian and navy, from all the cities and towns in the vicinity of Berkley, were called into service, they were helpless against the spreading flames, which soon reached Liberty street, one of the oldest business streets of the town. One block on Liberty street was completely wiped out. A negro church was also destroyed.

For a time it appeared that a large gas tank owned by the Municipal gas plant was doomed, but the gas was burned off by means of safety valves. After four hours the fire appeared to have reached its climax, although it was still blazing stubbornly in several parts of the town.

Samuel M. Brinson Dead.

New Bern.—Hon. Samuel M. Brinson, representative from the third North Carolina district, passed away at New Bern General Hospital, following a critical illness there since he came home from Battle Creek, Mich., where in vain he had sought to stem the tide of failing health that dated back to the close of the campaign in 1918.

This city is under a pall of deep grief at the passing of Sam Brinson. And with the feeling of distance loss there is felt here, messages have come from out in the state and nation expressing the universal sorrow felt by hundreds of close friends at the news of his death.

Mr. Brinson was serving his second term in congress and had indicated that he would be a candidate to succeed himself at the primary this fall. He was born in this city on March 20, 1870 and was educated at Wake Forest college and the University of North Carolina, being admitted to the bar in 1895. He practiced law until 1902, when he became superintendent of public instruction of Craven county, holding this position until 1918, when he was elected a member of the sixty-sixth congress.

Girl Students Win.

Corning, Ark.—Miss Pearl Pugsley was ready to resume her studies in the Knobel school following rendering of a verdict in her favor by Judge W. W. Bandy in the "lipstick" case here. Judge Bandy said he would issue a writ of mandamus to have the school board set aside its regulations barring students who use cosmetics. Miss Pugsley was suspended last September because she violated the rule.

In his decision, Judge Bandy held that face powder did not interfere with the health of the pupils and they could use it if they wished.

Covered by Flood Water.

New Orleans.—Reports from Helena, Ark., that approximately 235 square miles of land in the lower part of Phillips county were covered by flood waters from the White and Arkansas rivers, which are backed up by the high stage of the Mississippi river, gave a more serious aspect to the flood situation.

The village of Molwood, in the flooded area, was reported covered with from eight to ten feet of water, while Elaine is completely surrounded by the street.

BROOKS EXPLAINS BOOK SITUATION

SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION MAKES BRIEF STATEMENT.

REGARDING NEW CONTRACTS

Criticism of Recent Contracts Made on Misinformation on Part of the Public.

Raleigh. The fact that an erroneous impression still prevails in the minds of many people regarding the recent letting of contracts for text books from the schools of the state led Dr. E. C. Brooks, state superintendent of public instruction, to make this brief statement:

"The previous contracts having expired it was absolutely necessary for the text book commission to make selections and award new contracts. The best selections possible were made from among the books examined, many old books being retained and many new ones being selected to take the place of books that are now either out of date or discontinued by the publishers or that were inferior to other books that were offered by the same or other publishers.

"The contracts just expiring had been made in 1917 when prices were low and if it had been possible to renew all contracts in every detail except to pay prices that are being quoted today on the same books the total cost to the pupils of the state would have been approximately what it will be under the new contracts. For instance, one speller that cost 15 cents under the old contract would have cost 30 cents under the new contract. Therefore the only advantage that would have been derived from retaining all of the old text books would have been through the use of books now in the hands of the pupils, and this matter is taken care of by a provision that the new books shall not be required for two years where the old ones are already available.

"Such criticism as there has been of the text book commission has resulted, I think, from a lack of all information regarding the situation that confronted the commission and of the full intent of its action."

Association Elects Officers.

Mrs. Gordon Finger, of Charlotte was elected president, and Mrs. Chas. R. Whitaker, of Hendersonville, vice president, at the annual meeting of the board of directors of the North Carolina Tuberculosis association at Sanatorium. Dr. L. B. McBrayer was re-elected managing director. Dr. R. L. Carlton, of Winston-Salem, was named as the association's member on the board of directors of the National Tuberculosis association.

The meeting was taken up principally with the reading of reports on the last year's work, chiefly interesting among which was a compilation showing the sale of Red Cross Christmas seals in the state last Christmas of approximately \$42,600.

Unemployment Decreases.

The United States employment service, reporting industrial conditions in North Carolina for the month of March, announces an increase in textile employes of 747, workers in lumber plants, 78, and fertilizer workers of 150.

Rogers Nominated for Postmaster.

Washington (Special).—The highest three eligibles for postmaster at Oxford with their grades follow: Franklin W. Hancock, 78. James S. Rogers, 73. John M. Fagan, 70.

President Harding has sent to the senate the nomination of James S. Rogers.

Senator Glass Invited to Speak.

Senator Carter Glass has been invited to make the commencement address at the State university. He has the matter under consideration and will accept, if possible.

Station Fight is Postponed.

The battle of Winston-Salem, scheduled for fighting Wednesday, April 19, before the state corporation commission, was postponed by agreement until the following Monday, April 24. The point of disagreement is where the new passenger station in the tobacco city will be located.

Records for attendance and for vehemence of presentation of the case bid fair to be fractured, if not broken outright, in the opinion of Commissioner Pell, who has recently returned from Winston-Salem.

CONDENSED NEWS FROM THE OLD NORTH STATE

SHORT NOTES OF INTEREST TO CAROLINIANS.

Charlotte.—Roy Page, son of former Commissioner George A. Page, was fined \$300 by Judge Webb in the United States supreme court in the case charging him with having contraband whiskey.

Spencer.—Ground was broken for erection of a new house of worship for the congregation of Christ Lutheran church in East Spencer which is to be built at a cost of \$20,000 to \$25,000.

Salisbury.—Tiring of the office of solicitor of the Fifteenth district, after eight years of hard service, Hayden Clement, of this city, announced that he will not seek re-election.

Winston-Salem.—The directors of the Wachovia Bank and Trust Co., elected Richard G. Stockton, secretary and assistant trust officer to succeed Gilbert T. Stephenson, who is soon to be transferred to Raleigh to have charge of the new branch of the company to be opened there.

Charlotte.—W. S. Creighton, traffic manager of the Charlotte Shippers' and Manufacturers' association, has been named by the Southern Traffic League as North Carolina member of the finance committee charged with raising \$25,000 for the South's fight before the Interstate Commerce Commission regarding southern rates.

Reidsville.—The Reidsville Rotary club's worries over securing a suitable site for the proposed playground for local children ended when the Reidsville school committee informed the Rotarians that part of the site of the proposed new high school building would be gladly offered for use as a playground.

Wilmington.—The fishermen are getting busy. A few beautiful white shad and rockfish have been caught and a few more warm days will bring swarms of these fish to this market.

Winston-Salem.—Group 5 of the Bankers' association of North Carolina held business and social sessions here at the Robert E. Lee hotel. The business session opened at 4 o'clock with a large attendance. The address of welcome was delivered by Col. W. A. Blair, of the Peoples bank.

Troy.—At a recent meeting of the directors of the Montgomery county chamber of commerce the president and secretary were authorized to secure a whole-time secretary for the organization. This organization recently begun on a small scale, has grown to the extent that such an officer is needed.

Greenville.—Prof. June Rose, superintendent of the Greenville public schools, was elected vice-president of the North Carolina Parent-Teacher association, according to a message he received from Miss Catherine Albertson, corresponding secretary.

Reidsville.—There is considerable activity in the building line here now. Good progress is being made in completing the Presbyterian church, and the contractors on the Belvedere hotel are rushing work in an effort to complete the job early in June.

Maxton.—Former Secretary of the Navy Joseph Daniels will speak at Carolina college finals on Tuesday, May 30, at 11 o'clock in the morning. The community at large is interested in his coming, and the college feels particularly fortunate that Mr. Daniels honors it with his presence and speech.

Reidsville.—The city school board met and inspected the plans submitted by Architect W. C. Northrup for the new high school building. A resolution was passed accepting the plans and authorizing the architect to call for bids for constructing the same, the work to be started as early as possible.

Statesville.—Dr. Edward King, a prominent physician of Sharpsburg township, who suffered a stroke of paralysis while attending a local theater four weeks ago, died in one of the local hospitals, where he had been since he was stricken.

Durham.—John Martin and Gevey McMillan, negroes, charged with murder and accomplice, respectively, in connection with the death here of William Sloan, an aged white man of Jonesboro, were bound over to superior court without bail.

GRAIN PLANTING IS MUCH DELAYED

SEEDING OF SPRING GRAIN IS BEHIND THE AVERAGE SEASON.

SEEDING IN TEXAS BEHIND

Good Progress Made in Central South Carolina and South Eastern North Carolina.

Washington. — Seeding of spring grains is very much behind the average season as a result of frequent rainfall for more than a month in most of the interior valley states, according to the weather and crop review issued by the department of agriculture. Very little spring wheat or oats was seeded during the week, although seeding made good progress in the upper lake region, and the light rainfall in the Atlantic coast states was favorable to field work.

Warm weather and wet soil caused a rapid growth of winter wheat throughout the interior of the country, and satisfactory conditions and progress were reported in the southern and Atlantic coast states.

Germination and growth of corn was favored by high temperatures in the southern districts, but much replanting will be necessary on lowlands in Texas because of floods. Corn planting made satisfactory progress in most of the southeast, but was delayed by wet soil in the lower Mississippi valley.

The week was favorable for the preparation of soil and the planting of cotton in most eastern districts of the belt, the weather and crop review stated.

Seeding made good progress in northeastern sections, extending northward during the week over the central counties of North Carolina.

Conditions were somewhat more favorable for field work in Alabama and Mississippi, but the wet soil held planting mostly at a standstill in the western part of the belt, where dry weather and sunshine are much needed.

Seeding is being delayed in Texas, where little has been accomplished outside of the Rio Grande valley and the lower coast counties. The condition of the cotton planted, however, is fairly satisfactory except for some damage by high winds.

Arbuckle Freed of Manslaughter. San Francisco, Cal.—A verdict of acquittal was returned by a jury in the third trial of Roscoe C. (Fatty) Arbuckle on a manslaughter charge growing out of the death of Miss Virginia Rappé, motion picture actress. The jury was out six minutes.

The defendant was deeply affected. He received the verdict with a great sign of relief. There was no demonstration, the court having warned against it. Mrs. Minta Durfee Arbuckle, the defendant's wife, cried quietly. Both she and Arbuckle shook hands with the jury.

The quick return of the jury was a surprise.

Edward Brown, whose presence on the jury was objected to by the prosecution, was foreman. There was a slight delay when the jury returned, due to the absence of the district attorney.

The verdict was by acclamation, the deliberation taking less than a minute. The additional time was consumed by details.

Jurors and spectators crowded around Arbuckle and his counsel and finally bore him off to the jury room to congratulate him further.

"Arbuckle has no immediate plans," Gawin McNab, his chief counsel, said. "It was a splendid victory."

"The jury did its duty," was the comment of Milton T. Uren, assistant district attorney.

The third trial began March 8 and was marked by the appearance of approximately 70 witnesses and the calling of two of the defense witnesses before the county grand jury in connection with their testimony.

The trial was longer than either of the previous hearings.

United States Owes Much Money.

Chicago.—The United States owes 23 times as much money now as in 1917, when the public debt was about \$1,000,000,000. Elicot Wadsworth, assistant secretary of the treasury, declared in a speech here.

"This huge debt we must pass on to future citizens," he said. "For this reason it is the intention of the financial leaders of our government to pay all new debts from current funds. We are just standing still financially as our expenses the next few years prior court without bail."