

# THE MACON BEACON.

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## LETTER FROM BIG BUD

Editor of the Beacon:

Well Mr. Editor the curtain has been rung down—taps has been sounded—the legislature has adjourned, and its acts and doings has passed into history. We have passed some good laws and killed a lot of bad bills, and on the whole it has been a very good body, only extreme when it came to a political question or about the colleges. They seemed to have it in for the A. & M. especially, and was determined that the preparatory department of this and the I. I. & C. should be abolished at once and the house passed an act to this effect but it was "balled up" in the senate and was not out and the colleges were left as were. After Hardy's resignation handed in there was not near so feeling against the A. & M., as Hightower was said to be slated for the presidency of this institution, and that softened the legislature down a little. They took away the control of the Chemical department from the college and placed it under Mr. Blakeslee. We passed the act exempting 6 per cent money from taxation and reducing the contract rate of interest to 8 per cent and exempting Building and Loan Associations from the provisions of this act. I have long wanted this to become a law, and am glad that the B. and L. are exempt for this one thing that Nat Harrison says can be figured out to show that the lender and borrower both make money. It certainly helps a poor man to get a home.

We passed a bill authorizing the retention of not more than one third of the fines collected in the prosecution of blind tigers to be used in employing detectives to ferret out and convict other violators of the liquor law. Mr. Brame took the floor and claimed that this act was clearly unconstitutional and would void if passed. I then spoke and urged the members to pass it, and let us try it, stating that had passed a bill last night by a large majority, that a number of good lawyers claimed was unconstitutional, but the authors asked them to try it, and they did, and I am glad to say that we passed this last-mentioned bill by a good majority. We also passed an act making the owner or lessee of a building liable for a fine of \$500 if liquor is permitted to be sold there. The chancery court has been given jurisdiction equal to that held by circuit courts on nuisances and may act upon them in vacation, using power of injunction, to abate same. So upon the whole, when we have in addition to the above an act making it a felony after the second conviction, I believe we can almost put the blind tiger out of business.

A state bureau of vital statistics has been established and I believe will rebound in great good to the state. We gave the sheriff 20 days longer to make final settlement. This was needed as they could hardly make final settlement in the five days allowed under the old law.

Our ways and means committee brought in a bill raising the tax levy from six mills to six and one half mills. Our chairman of the appropriation committee said it would take a levy of 7½ mills for 1912 and 6 mills for 1913 to make us easy. But the boys could not see the raise and said it would not do for this legislature to raise the tax levy. So we compromised by keeping the levy at 6 mills and authorizing the governor to borrow \$500,000 in October, 1912 and the same amount in 1913. This legislature had to provide for the \$336,000 canceled bonds of the issue of 1910 and for \$100,000 expenses of the extraordinary session of 1911, and about \$100,000 expense incurred in maintaining the national guard at McComb and Water Valley. The legislature found just as Senator Price, Mr. O'Byrne and myself told them in our canvass last summer, that the needs of the state had grown so much that no legislature could reduce the appropriations very much and though the colleges were cut all they could stand and no more buildings were provided for, still we appropriated about \$135,000 more than we did in 1910. But while we built no new buildings, we had to provide for the charity hospital at Jackson and the normal school at Hattiesburg. The appropriations were about \$7,855,000.

Our pension committee recommended that no more buildings be erected at Beauvoir as we could take care of about 200 there now and each inmate costs about \$240 a year and constitutes a large class as they are almost all recruited from the fourth class only get about \$35 each. This was adopted by the appropriation committee and by the house but was laid down in the senate and two new ones at a cost of \$4,000 were proposed and of course an additional appropriation for the proposed increase of \$1,000, amounting to some \$14,000. A pension committee composed of three

members from the senate and three members from the house and when we met I found all of the members but myself, were in favor of standing by the senate bill. I refused to concur believing the house was not in favor of the increased appropriation and when the report was called up in the house, I moved to not concur in the report and made a speech on this motion. After considerable discussion pro and con the vote was taken and we found the bill had received a majority of the members but had failed to get a constitutional majority. All appropriations have to receive a majority of all members elected, 69, and therefore failed to pass. The next morning I got the old Vets together and told them as the majority of the legislature had voted in favor of the bill that as democrats we ought to abide by the will of the majority, re-consider the vote and give the constitutional majority and pass the bill and this was agreed to and the senate bill was passed and two cottages will be built and the sum of \$98,000 for two years has been appropriated for the maintenance of the Beauvoir home. This makes the total appropriation for the veterans about one million dollars, for the two years and these inmates get one-tenth of the entire appropriation. This certainly constitutes these a privileged class.

The bill known as the "tick eradication bill" passed last night. It gives us \$25,000 for the year 1912 and 1913, for tick eradication and \$10,000 for the manufacture of hog cholera serum and a provision that the governor may borrow \$10,000 more if there should be an epidemic of hog cholera to manufacture this serum. This is \$5,000 less than we had last term and Blakeslee says he can give Noxubee county only one inspector after this. I would have taken the floor against this bill for I did not think it was enough and the bill to provide penalties for not dipping cattle had not passed, but was told that the committee had recommended that it should pass.

Henry Minor made a decided hit this morning. He had gotten the floor to take issue with Speaker Quinn on his ruling that the Percy letter could be placed on the journal and had prepared himself with all kinds of proof from the record of congress expunging the vote of censure on President Jackson down to the present, but Quinn said at the time he was out of order and this morning two days after Quinn had made this ruling he and Quinn had gotten together and Henry made a fine speech, saying that in the interest of harmony and peace he would not bring up the question but let it stand, as it was, and Quinn thanked him and on motion of Carothers of Lee, the house did the same by rising vote. I append a copy of Henry's remarks which I endorse fully as Quinn had been uniformly kind to the entire Noxubee delegation and I was desirous of putting down all political questions that tended to stir up strife and do no good. I voted against all of these resolutions and said that I was glad I hailed from a county where the "war" had been over since that fateful day August 1st, when the "White Chief" was triumphantly elected. Here is the speech:

Immediately after roll call, Mr. Minor of Noxubee, rose to a privileged question and said:

Mr. Speaker:

Several days ago I made a motion, which is now pending, to correct the House Journal of March 7th so as to make it correspond with the facts and show the actual proceedings of that day.

I now desire to withdraw that motion. Not that I do not still believe that the Journal should be so corrected, for I have the highest authorities in my favor on this very point, but because I believe no good will be accomplished by pressing the motion, and it would only tend to increase friction in the legislature in these, the closing days of the session. Nor would action of this sort promote harmony in the Democratic party in Mississippi.

I do this, though I think my course in this matter entirely out of line with the course pursued by the majority here. I think this legislature has been cruelly unjust to Senator Percy, who is a man after my own heart, clean, honorable and brave. A gentleman who, by his stainless character and great abilities, is an honor to Mississippi and the South. My own slight personal contact with him, however, bred in my heart not partisan rancor and hate, but a desire to be a better Mississippian. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, with the permission of the house I withdraw my motion in the interest of party harmony and good feeling among the members of this body.

I have not the space to tell of all the acts passed but will try to do so later on. Bilbo got a bill, putting a tax of 20cts., an acre on all timbered lands over 1000 acres held by any individual or corporation through, but I hear that this is unconstitutional. Gov. Brewer said they expected to put him in a hole by having him veto it, but he said he surprised them by approving it with an explanation of this. Bilbo also had a bill introduced taxing each turpentine box. He certainly had it in for the corporation.

The worst thing that the legislature

did was to pass an act increasing the trustees of the penitentiary by adding Ross Collins and Blakeslee to the board then giving Smith virtually absolute control of this institution and putting Taylor and Montgomery out of business.

Gov. Brewer did not approve of this pernicious measure and it went dead. Brewer said he knew that the Vardaman men would be mad about this, but he could see no good reason to make a change in the management of the penitentiary that had been so recently endorsed by the people by the election of Col. Montgomery and Taylor.

Dunbar Rowland was out in the cold. The bill providing for the maintenance of his department, after being cut about one half, was held up in the senate on a motion to re-consider and was overlooked. I heard of this late Saturday evening, and went at once to see about it. Called up Rowland, and the bill finally found and a motion made to table the motion to re-consider the vote by which the bill was passed, but one of Bilbo's friends raised the question of "no quorum" and the bill was dead. I called to see the governor this morning and suggested that he write each member of the legislature and get consent to borrow the money to sustain this department for the two years, and I think this will be done. Some had it in for Rowland because the trustees allowed him \$600 for some extra work, and they said this ought not to have been done. I am glad to say that Burkitt had nothing to do with this. Some had accused him of fighting Dr. Rowland on account of the difficulty they had two years ago.

I was very sorry indeed that senate bill providing for an appropriation of \$600 to restore the rolls of the confederate regiment was killed by our appropriation committee. We will have to get our U. D. C.'s hold of this.

Well, I will have to close this weekly letter; this winds up my weekly messages for awhile at least. I have fulfilled my promise to my constituents by writing each week and giving the doings of the legislature as I saw it. I was very busy throughout the session attending to my business strictly (as did my colleagues) only going to the city two or three times. I wrote the letters amid the turmoil of the house and can only claim they were the fact as I saw them. Perfect harmony prevailed in the Noxubee delegation although we seldom voted together. Each one voted his own convictions, and I think the Beacon could have included the entire delegation (and this includes our worthy senator) when it said the voters of Noxubee made no mistake in electing Hon. Henry Minor. Although Bilbo put Walter on no important committee, Walter said he made a fair and impartial speaker and recognized him at all times when he wanted the floor.

Walter told Joe Cook that if he wanted his bill to go through the house he had better have Bilbo go over and make a speech for it. So sure enough a motion was made to invite the Lieut. Governor over to address us on this subject. I wanted the Normal College to get a decent appropriation, as I regard Hattiesburg as a daughter of Macon, I found myself voting aye as loud as the most rabid Bilbo man, and when I told Walter this he said "I had him sent over to speak to you, and all I said was "had I known this, sir, I would have voted no," but Bilbo spoke and got the appropriation.

It was Bilbo who killed the Banking bill. The senate conference committee had agreed to give up all they had contended for except the election of examiner and would have done this had Bilbo agreed to it. After consulting him they refused to concur in this and our member of the conference committee held out for this and the bill was killed. Isham Evans said he would rather have the bill killed than not to elect the examiners and he had great influence with our committee. I was in favor of the election of the examiners myself, as I favor electing all officers from president down by a direct vote of the people. Of course proper restrictions were thrown around the examiners as to their qualifications, etc.

We had with us to dinner Sunday Spivey Douglass and Boyce Hunter. Spivey will soon finish his business course and we have high hopes of his success. Boyce is attending the blind institute and is making fine progress. He is one contented student—say he fares well, that he gets oysters every week here. He is learning to write real well on the type-writer and writes so often to his folks at home that they have written him that stamps cost money. I told him to go ahead and I would get after the old folks when I went out to Mashulaville. A certain young lady over there ought to answer his letter. He was afraid to give her name for fear it might get in the BEACON. He can make his way all over town and will get an education yet. He walked over here this evening to get the BEACON, and says he must see it every week; so send it to him Mr. Editor.

My good wife, who has stood by me so loyally all the session, has made me promise, as the roads are so bad, to go by Birmingham with her and see our children there before coming home, so so we will go there Wednesday and the next week stop at Columbus and see my children there and be at home by the first. I have such a good manager in Mrs. Morries that I have no need to hurry home.

So I will bid you and your readers an affectionate adieu for this time.

BIG BUD.

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