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LOOKS GOOD FOR R. R. COMMISSION

MATHEWS OF MARION, ASSISTED BY REESE OF ESCAMBIA, GETS SECTION 1 STRICKEN OUT OF CARTER'S HOUSE BILL NO. 54—WATSON'S PRIMARY BILL MANY TIMES AMENDED.

Representative Carter's House Bill No. 54—an act to provide for an Assistant Attorney General and to fix the salaries of the Attorney General and such assistant—introduced Friday, April 5, occupied the limelight at yesterday's session of the House, and was dissected by discussion and depleted of its first section entirely.

This was accomplished by a vote of 39 yeas and 12 nays, this amendment to the bill being offered by Representative Mathews of Marion. Mr. Carter of Alachua, father of the bill, when he recovered from his surprise over Mr. Mathews' stand, said, to make such an amendment would take the meat out of the bill, and was replied to later on by Mr. Mathews, who said, that to let it stand, as introduced, would be to take the milk out of the coconut.

By the vote the House preferred the milk in the coconut to the meat in the bill.

Preceding the consideration of this bill, House Bill No. 46 was placed on its second reading, the committee on Finance and Taxation having sent in a favorable report thereon, the bill authorizing the Railroad Commissioners to employ special counsel.

The matter was allowed to go over for special order on account of the absence of parties interested. Mr. Carter, whose bill it is, objected to Mr. Wilson's Bill No. 206 being considered at the same time.

Mr. Mathews said Bill No. 46 was of the greatest importance and benefit to the people and not to let it go over, but to put it through at the session; that the Railroad Commissioners should have an attorney to pass on the legal matters which came to their attention and consideration in view of the fact that the Attorney General was unable to attend to this work.

As Mr. Mathews grew warm and eloquent and seemed to be in for a long talk, the attention of the President of the Senate was called to Mr. Mathews being out of order, and the President said that the question was to postpone action until Wednesday next. Mr. Mathews objected, as the bills are getting too thick on the Journal. By a standing vote of 16 to 30 the motion to postpone was defeated and the bill was ordered sent to the Engrossing Committee.

When the consideration of House Bill No. 54 came up, immediately after this action, Mr. C. S. Wilson of Hernando again asked the consideration of Bill No. 206 in connection with Bill No. 54, as it related to the same subject, but his motion was again lost.

Mr. Mathews came out boldly to strike out Section 1 from Bill No. 54, and said that he did this because the section kept the Internal Improvement Trustees or the Railroad Commissioners or any board from employing counsel other than the Attorney General. Mr. Reese of Escambia said that he had been informed that at a meeting of the Railroad Commissioners and Cabinet officers an agreement had been reached, at which the Attorney General had agreed to withdraw any opposition.

Mr. Watson said that he understood that the Attorney General claimed he could do all the work if he had an assistant. He did not know if the Attorney General had made any such proposition, but he wanted every department to have all the assistance necessary.

Mr. Wilson of Hernando said the House could not create the office of Assistant Attorney General, but it could give the Attorney General an appropriation.

At this point Mr. Mathews said that he would not withdraw his amendment to strike out the section.

Mr. Carter said he was opposed to boards going out to employ counsel on the ground that all boards should have their counsel through the office of the Attorney General, and that it was best to control all the legal business of the State through one channel. He said he had heard it rumored that some kind of meeting had been held and that agreement between parties interested had been reached to the satisfaction of all concerned.

Mr. Mathews said if the section remained it would nullify every act of the Railroad Commissioners.

Mr. DuPont of St. Johns made a brief speech, emphasizing the importance of the Railroad Commissioners, and said that as the Attorney General had many duties to perform and numerous matters on which to pass, a man was wanted who could give ALL his attention to that branch of the government. He felt sure if special counsel under the Commissioners did not prove satisfactory such counsel could be removed, and he said, in conclusion, that he believed the Commissioners were in need of special counsel; that such should be provided and if he did not serve right he could be turned out readily. Mr. DuPont was very intense in his speech and he was accorded applause at its finish.

Representative Smith of Lake was also heard. He

THE BEST BOOK BILL.

Senator Crane's Measure Providing for a Good Anti-Monopolistic Measure.

Senator Crane's bill to create a State School Book Commission and to procure for use in the public schools of the State of Florida a uniform Series of Text Books, and to define the duties and powers of said commission"



SENATOR CRANE.

is the really strong measure of this character before the Legislature, and if judged by its fitness alone, should have no difficulty in being the survivor of the trio of text book bills now being considered.

That is if its fitness is not offset by prejudice and unworthy influence in behalf of another measure.

Two sections of the bill, illustrating its honesty and strength, and its capability to perform the work required of giving a good, anti-monopolistic system of text books in this State are:

Section 3. It shall be the duty of the Governor to appoint a sub-commission of not less than five, nor more than nine, to be selected from among the teachers, of City or County Superintendents, actually engaged in the school business in this State provided, that not more than three of these shall be taken from one Congressional District, to whom shall be referred all books sent to the State Text Book Commission as specimen copies or samples, upon which bids are to be based, and it shall be the duty of said sub-commission, in executive session, to examine and report upon the merits of the books, irrespective of the price, taking into consideration the subject-matter of the books, their printing, their material, and their mechanical qualities, and their general suitability and desirability for the purposes for which they are desired and intended.

Sec. 4. That it shall further be the duty of said sub-commission to report to the commission at such times as said commission shall direct, arranging each book in its class, or division, and reporting them in the order of their merit, pointing out the merits and demerits of each book, and indicating what book they recommend for adoption first, what book is their second choice, and their third choice, and so on, pursuing this plan with the books submitted upon each branch of study, and if said sub-commission shall consider different books upon the same subject, or of the same class or division of approximately even merit, all things considered, they shall so report, and if they consider that any of the books offered are of such a class as to make them inferior and not worthy of adoption, they shall, in their report, so designate such books, and in said report they shall make such recommendations and suggestions to the commission as they shall deem advisable and proper to make. Said report shall be kept secret and sealed up, and delivered to the secretary of the commission, and said report shall not be opened by any member of the commission until the commission shall meet in executive session to open and consider the bids, or proposals, of publishers, or others, desiring to have books adopted by said commission.

spoke of the work of incalculable value done to the State by the Railroad Commissioners; that the Commission was one of the most important elements in our State government; he called attention to the fact that the railroads have at their command the best counsel obtainable, who make a special study of the subject under consideration and that no expense is spared by these companies to further their interests, while the Railroad Commissioners are dependent alone on the Attorney General, who has so much other work that he cannot possibly neglect, and that therefore he cannot give to the Railroad Commission matters the full attention which they require.

Mr. MacWilliams then asked for a few words, which lengthened themselves out into a long talk, during which he yielded to many questions being asked him from, seemingly, all parts of the House. He said he was not in favor of the bill if Section 1 was to be stricken from it.

Before he had finished, Mr. MacWilliams had taken more that considerable latitude.

He said it was not a question whether a board shall have special counsel, but that litigation must be conducted in the name of the Attorney General of Florida.

"Are you going to let the Railroad Commissioners enact the laws? I believe as a matter of principle that we are

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AMENDMENT TO CHILD LABOR BILL

SOME OFFERED THAT WOULD HAVE KILLED MEASURE, BUT FRIENDS OF BILL KEPT THEM OUT—CLOSE QUESTION OF SENATE WAS OVER ADJOURNMENT.

It was a toss-up in the Senate yesterday which was the most necessary—to tarry awhile and perform some Legislative work or adjourn over the week-end and hike out for home—but the desire to rest and pain of nostalgia got under the wire first, though it took two roll calls to get the recess.

This matter of adjournment would be hardly worth the mention were it not that the effort to secure it proved to be the most active feature of the morning.

A little coaxing and some insistence succeeded in getting the child labor bill, that was being considered at the time of the adjournment, to the Committee on Engrossed Bills, instead of letting it hang over as unfinished business for Monday.

This same bill, by the way, came nearly being overwhelmed by its friends, so many of whom were desirous of amending it, that the real champions of the bill were kept busy to see that it was not amended out of existence.

Senator Henderson started the amendment ball rolling by a pathetic plea for the agricultural interests, which would be down and out, if the sturdy young chaps above the age of ten were not permitted to till the soil and help garner the harvest.

Bleakness and desolation would mark the farm was the inference to be drawn from his remarks, as he asked that the bill be amended, reducing the age for the employment of child labor from fourteen years to ten.

This brought a protest from Senator Harris, introducer of the bill, and guardian of its career. He declared that fourteen years of age was early enough for a child to go to work.

By making that the age limit for employment a child was enabled to take up the burden of life. Then, too, this generation owed something to the future citizenship of the State, as well as to the manufacturers.

Senator Harris told of distressing conditions he had witnessed among child laborers in a cotton mill at Columbia, S. C., and said such conditions prevailed in a lesser degree in cigar factories of Key West and Tampa, and urged that the age limit of the bill be not reduced from fourteen years.

Senator Zim indorsed the expression, saying that if Senator Henderson's amendment was adopted the efficiency of the bill would be destroyed.

Senator Henderson explained that he had no desire to legislate against white children, but that if the age limit were not lowered it would interfere with the hiring of negroes under fourteen to work on farms.

Senator Beard offered an amendment providing that "nothing in this act shall apply to agricultural or household work," and this was afterward adopted as Section 10 of the bill.

This placated Senator Henderson and others who had tobacco and strawberries and other products of the soil in a state of cultivation, and he withdrew the amendment for a ten-year-age limit.

Senator McCreary, however, wanted to have apprentices to the printing trade excepted, whereupon Senator Harris declared that a print shop was as obnoxious as other factories, and the result of the roll call sustained his contention, 19 nays to 8 yeas.

Senator Adams offered an amendment to strike out section four, which stated the hours of labor—nine—and again Senator Harris protested, saying that nine hours for a child to labor was more than enough, and compared that period with the labor of the Senate—two and one-half hours. This brought explanation from Senator Adams that he had negroes in mind when he offered the amendment.

It growing near to lunch time, Senator Buckman became aroused as to the necessity of providing something to eat, and he became disturbed over the thought of how eatables were to be delivered in time for breakfast.

He crystallized this thought into the expression that the provisions of the bill should not apply to children delivering bread, fruit, meat, fish, groceries, etc.

Senator Buckman declared himself in favor of a child labor law, but wanted one applicable to conditions in this State. He declared the bill was inconsistent because it applied only to the hiring out of children. No particular morality was involved in the bill.

Senator Cone said he had urged the bill as a whole in committee, and that he thought it should pass without amendment. It was a good bill, and needed in this State.

Senator Buckman's "breakfast" amendment fell by the

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