

Governor Calls Special Assembly Session To Pave Way for \$100 Million Paper Mill

Legislation to Bypass Acreage Limit Is Aim

Governor George Bell Timmerman yesterday called a special session of the General Assembly for June 4 to consider legislation to legalize the building of a \$100 million industrial plant in York County.

The governor called the special session, which he announced in a hastily called press conference after receiving a "definite commitment" from the Bowaters Southern Paper Corporation yesterday afternoon.

Construction of an industrial plant on the Catawba River in York County will begin as soon as enabling legislation is passed, according to the letter, signed by K. O. Elderkin, vice-president and general manager of the Bowaters Southern Paper Corp.

The letter, which was authorized by Sir Eric Bowater, chairman of Bowaters Paper Corp., Ltd., London, of which the southern firm is a subsidiary, said that a total of \$100,000,000 would eventually be invested in the South Carolina plant, once the legislation is passed.

Legislation which would amend an old South Carolina law limiting alien ownership to 500 acres, passed in 1896, will be considered at the special meeting.

The special session, the sixth such extra-session to be called in South Carolina since 1914, should last the minimum time of five days, Gov. Timmerman said, "and

that's what we're shooting for."

The prepared bill could be introduced Monday, be given three readings in one body by Wednesday, then three readings in the other body by Friday, June 8, and be signed by the governor the same day.

Legislation has already been prepared in its proper and constitutional form by Attorney General T. C. Callison and representatives of the Bowaters firm, he said.

The legislation is agreeable to both the State and the firm, he continued.

When asked how the special session might affect those who are campaigning for the June 12, Democratic primaries, Gov. Timmerman said:

"I would be delighted, if I were running for the house. I then could return to the campaign, after the session, and truthfully say that I had accomplished something for my people."

The actual size of the proposed plant is still a secret, the governor said, but tentative plans for a lagoon off the Catawba River are in excess of 400 acres. This is for the lagoon alone, not including the plant itself, or the vast woodlands which would apparently be necessary for the operation of the plant.

The plant would originally cost between \$38,000,000 and \$60,000,000 and ultimately reach an investment of \$100,000,000 according to Development Board officials.

It would initially employ 400 to 600 people and eventually 1,200. The plant's payroll has been estimated at \$3,000,000 a year at the outset, and wood purchases would be about \$6,000,000 a year, eventually reaching \$12,000,000 annually, board officials said.

Clearance for the proposed site on the Catawba River has already been obtained through the Pollution Control Board of the State, according to the letter from Mr. Elderkin yesterday.

An amendment to the 1896 law, to provide for expanded ownership of land by alien firms in South

Carolina, would have state-wide applicability, according to the governor.

Maj. Gen. L. G. Merritt, director of the State Legislative Council, said he knew of no other state having a law limiting the area of land an alien firm could own in the state.

Costs of the special session have been estimated at between \$21,250, the total of five days pay for 170 legislators, to a possible \$30,000, which would include traveling costs, pay for attaches, printing and so on.

The last such session was called in 1946, when former Gov. Ransome J. Williams was chief executive. This meeting began on April 2, immediately after the sine die adjournment of the regular session.

The governor said the legislature had not completed its work; that the "deficiency bill" had not been ratified when the regular session ended; that the liquor situation had not been properly looked after and that school teacher pay had not been attended to.

Other sessions were called in 1944 and 1935, by former Gov. Olin D. Johnston, now United States Senator; in 1931 by the late Gov. Ibra C. Blackwood of Spartanburg; and in 1914, when Coleman Livingston Blease was governor.

The 1914 session lasted for 22 days, longest extra-session held in South Carolina, and the 1944 session, the shortest session ever held, lasted for six days. All other special sessions have lasted for nine days.

Assembly Meets Monday On Bowaters Pulp Mill

The General Assembly meets in Columbia at noon Monday to help add another giant industry to South Carolina's growing industrial might.

The extraordinary session called by Governor Timmerman will be asked to amend an 1896 law so the English-owned Bowaters Southern Paper Corporation can buy the land it needs for a 100 million dollar pulp mill.

The old law limits alien ownership to 500 acres. It was amended last year to allow a French owned wool plant to buy 625 acres at Jamestown in Berkeley County—but Bowaters needs more acreage than that.

The amendment last year attracted little attention, as the Assembly happened to be in regular session at the time the matter came up.

Bowaters advised Timmerman Monday that it will build a new plant on the Catawba River in York County if the law is amended. The initial investment will be 60 million dollars.

The firm, now owning paper mills in Tennessee and Canada, makes newsprint. Pulp from the South Carolina plant will be shipped to Tennessee.

Options have been obtained on land and the State Water Pollution Control Board has granted the firm permission for use of Catawba River waters for its pulp process.

The needed bill could be, and may be, passed in five days. Legislation left over from the regular session that ended in April, and other new legislation, is open for action, however.

If the general assembly should classify the legislation as uncontested—as was done in case of several state-wide bills in the last session—legislators could go home after the first day except for a few to carry out the machinery.

Please turn to Page 6-A, Col. 5

the coast are other top plants in cost along with several textile mills.

The last special session was in 1946, when Gov. Williams called the legislature back, charging it had not completed the work of its regular session.

In 1944 Gov. Johnston had a special session to repeal all primary laws in an unsuccessful effort to keep Negroes from voting in Democratic primaries. Other previous special sessions since 1914 were in 1935, 1931 and 1914.

This has been pointed out but whether it will be proposed is not known.

Many legislators are in the middle of renomination campaigns that culminate with the June 12 Democratic primary.

The legislators are entitled to \$25 a day for special sessions. This, plus printing and others costs, could mean an outlay of from \$25,000 to \$50,000 for the session—depending on its length.

However, Sen. Dennis of Berkeley has ready a proposed resolution by which the lawmakers would forego accepting the \$25 a day. This would make public details of the bill that will be offered. A request for public details from Rep. Smythe of Charleston drew only "no comment" from Timmerman.

The Governor told a news conference, when asked if he thought the special session would hamper re-election campaigns, that if he were running for the House, he would be glad to be able to tell his people that he had done something as constructive as getting a new 100 million dollar industry for the State.

The government's H-bomb plant at Aiken, representing an outlay estimated to be in excess of one billion dollars, is of course, the State's biggest single industry.

But after that, Bowaters will rank among the top, if not itself being the biggest. The Celanese plant at Rock Hill, the Du-Pont acrylic fiber plant at Camden, and the International Paper Co.'s and West Virginia Paper Co.'s plants on

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