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SCHOOL FOUNDATION PROGRAM STATUS FOR NEXT BIENNIUM MORE FULLY EXPLAINED

In recent days many questions have been asked regarding the status of the public school foundation program for the next biennium as a result of action by the 33rd Legislative Assembly.

The increase in foundation schedules, while not sufficient to meet rising costs and increasing enrollment, represents a considerable improvement over what was proposed in weakening amendments by Rep. O'Connor. Mrs. Reed's house education committee, in line with requests by school people, proposed an average increase of 19 per cent in the program. As finally approved by the assembly, an increase of approximately 9 per cent was put into the law. This increase applies only to the next biennium as a result of house approval of a time-limiting amendment by Rep. Omholt.

Herewith in greater detail is the background behind the introduction of HB 112, the fight to save its contents, and how it finally emerged from the legislative mill, as written up at our request by one thoroughly conversant with the needs of Montana elementary and secondary schools.—EDITOR.

After two years of study by a committee of the Montana School Board's Association, and leading educators in this State, it was deemed necessary to the continuance of a sound educational program in Montana, that the Foundation Program schedule, designed in 1947, would have to be increased in order to meet increased costs and enrollments in the public schools of the State, and to provide proper equalization.

A bill was prepared by the School Board Association, and endorsed by the Montana Education Association, the American Federation of Teachers and others, which provided for an average increase of 19 per cent, ranging from 10 per cent to 30 per cent in different sized schools, making a total over-all increase for the State of \$4,058,941.

This does not mean that the legislature was requested for an additional appropriation of \$4,058,941, but rather that the schedule for financial support of the school districts, which is borne approximately one-third by the districts, one-third by the county and one-third by the state, would be increased from the present total of \$21,338,853 to \$25,397,79.

During the 1952-53 school year, the local districts had to "cough up" a total of \$2,630,000 in special levies, beyond and above the Foundation Program as proposed in 1947, and enacted into law in 1949. This was also in addition to the 30 per cent permissive levy above the Foundation Program allowed by the 1951 session. This obviously indicates that the Foundation Program schedule was unrealistic, and in need of adjustment.

The original proposal of the house education committee in introducing House Bill 112 would have provided for meeting the needs of almost all of the school districts in the State without the necessity of voting special levies above the Foundation Program.

O'CONNOR AMENDMENT WOULD HAVE NULLIFIED INTENT OF HB 112

The "O'Connor Amendment" would have cut the proposed increase from \$4,058,000 (21 to 25 per cent increase) to \$1,147,000 (5 per cent increase), practically nullifying the purpose of the original House Bill 112, and continuing the necessity for special levies in many of the poorer school districts, and

completely disregarding the fact that the schools are faced with further increased costs and enrollments.

The timely action of Mrs. Reed, Missoula, Mr. Smith, Lewis & Clark, Mr. Reider, Jefferson, and others, of returning the HB 112 to the committee before the O'Connor amendments were stamped through, made it possible for the committee to compromise on the \$2,124,000 (9.9 per cent increase) plus the 30 per cent permissive levy provision of 1951 to be kept in effect. It seems to be the maximum that O'Connor and his cohorts would accept. It should be noted that the \$2,124,000 is still below the \$2,630,000 special levies voted in 1952.

Not content with the damage done by the House, Senator Moss, Chairman of the Senate Education Committee took another slash. His amendment would have provided that the permissive levy above the Foundation Program could be only ninety per cent of the thirty per cent allowed by the 1951 session. The first conference committee became deadlocked with Reed, McElmain and Cotton refusing to accept the Moss amendment, and Moss, Tobin of Silver Bow, and Anderson of Chouteau refusing to accept the House version. The second conference committee finally compromised, on the 6th day of the session, on 93 per cent of 30 per cent for permissive levy above the Foundation Program. This further reduced the spending power of the school districts by about \$600,000.

The net result will be that almost every school district that voted a special levy in 1952 will have to vote a special levy in 1953.

Many people seem to be confused by the so-called \$5,500,000 oil money. This is distributed on a per capita basis. The rural school districts with the smaller enrollments will not have much carry over for the next year's budget. Also, the \$5,500,000 was included in this year's budget, and had little or no pertinence to the deliberations of the legislature on House Bill 112.

If the schools had not had this \$5,500,000 to apply against this year's budget the deficit would have had to have been made up by greatly increased local tax levies, or greatly increased appropriation from the General Fund of the State to the School Equalization fund.

*The roll call published in VOICE, February 20, under article "You Can't Argue With the Stork," referred to the motion by education committee chairman Mrs. Reed to refer HB 112 back to committee in order to save the badly needed increase in the foundation program from the hatchwork of Rep. O'Connor of Carbon. This same roll call will appear in the composite legislative box score that will appear in next week's VOICE.

CROWDED SCHOOLS GET FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

Commissioner Earl McGrath of the U. S. Office of Education announced that school districts in areas affected by federal activities received \$315.7 million from the Federal government for the fiscal year which ended last June 30.

"Through these Congressionally-authorized funds," McGrath said, "the Federal government seeks to meet its share of responsibility for the education of thousands of children in communities affected by defense production and military activities." Congress recently voted \$24 mil-

Last minute details have been worked out for at least two of three regional Farmer-Labor Institutes scheduled for this next week in three Montana cities, Anaconda, Havre, and Great Falls.

Programs of the two institutes, Anaconda and Great Falls, which have reached this office, are for the most part very similar and will have the same panel leaders.

The Anaconda Institute, which gets underway in the AOH hall in the 300 block of Commercial Avenue tomorrow, Saturday, March 21, is under the joint sponsorship of Anaconda Smelters' Local, the Anaconda Central Labor Council, and the Anaconda Teachers' Union.

Clive Farlin of the Smelters, is institute chairman, Walter Riley of central labor is vice chairman, and Miss Kathleen McGuire of the teachers is institute secretary. Other members of the committee are Ed Kelly, John Mogus, Charles McLean, Walter Dooley, Ted Arensmeyer, Eileen Murphy and Bob Glynn.

SIMILAR JOINT AFFAIR IN GREAT FALLS

Great Falls will be having its second annual regional institute at the Montana Farmers Union state office building on March 28-29. Sponsors are Cascade County central labor organizations, AFL, Montana Farmers Union, and Great Falls Smelters.

A. J. Duley, of the trades and labor assembly, is again institute chairman, and Leonard Kenfield of MFU is secretary. Other committee members are Walter Davidson, Pete Fontana, Earl Tucker, Fred Smith, Leo Stewart, Esther Curtis, Mary Williams, and Chris Denning. Ex-officio members are John Dusak, president Cascade County Trades and Labor Assembly, and Richard Shipman, acting president of Montana Farmers Union.

At all three institutes, Hayes Beal of Co-operative Health Federation of America, Chicago, will lead a panel on "Health Problems with Emphasis on Industrial Health," and "Co-operative Health and Welfare Plans." Beal, a graduate of Yale University, is executive secretary of Co-op Health. He is an expert on union health and welfare plans.

At Anaconda, G. D. Carlyle Thompson, head of Montana Department of Health, will speak on health problems at the state level. Dr. W. L. Beal, Anaconda, and member of state

VIC REINEMER OF CIRCLE WINS BROWN AWARD FOR RECENT EDITORIAL

CIRCLE—Vic Reinemer, former resident of Circle and graduate of the school of journalism at Montana State University, has won special commendation of the Heywood Brown Memorial committee for an editorial Reinemer wrote for the Charlotte, N. C., News.

Reinemer's editorial commented on methods of congressional investigating bodies with particular reference to testimony given by ex-Communist Harvey Matusow.

Matusow stirred up considerable controversy in Montana when he made several speeches during the general election campaign last fall.—GREAT FALLS TRIBUNE.

VOICE readers will recall having read this excellent analysis of congressional investigations by Vic Reinemer, which was published in VOICE of January 9.

lion in supplemental appropriations for use during the year ending June 30 to help schools in federally-affected areas.

board of health, will discuss health problems in the smelter city.

LABOR'S ROLE IN WORLD AFFAIRS

Another panel common to all three institutes will be the one on "International Affairs," with emphasis on labor's role in world matters, will be led by Joe Mire of Madison, Wis. Mr. Mire, formerly education director for State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL, is now executive secretary of Inter-University Labor Education Committee. In this capacity he works with universities and labor unions in arranging institutes and other educational programs. He has lived in Great Britain and is well posted on European labor movements and the general area of international relations.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Two Montana attorneys will head up natural resources panels at the three institutes. Justice R. V. Bottomly of the State Supreme Court, will discuss resources from the state and national viewpoint. Charles V. Huppe, Helena attorney, will talk

about resources from the taxpayer's viewpoint.

OTHER PANELS

Starting half-day panel at Anaconda tomorrow will be an evaluation of the 33rd Legislative Assembly. Participants will be Sens. Chan Etien of Granite and Don Valiton, Powell, and Reprs. John Emmons, Deer Lodge, and Bob Marsenich, Silver Bow. Charles V. Huppe will be panel moderator.

Herbert Kroeker, Montana State University, Missoula will summarize discussions of the Anaconda institute.

PROBLEMS OF THE AGED

An important workshop at the Great Falls institute will concern itself with problems of the aged, and legislative problems. This panel will be conducted by James S. Umber, president Montana State Federation of Labor, and chairman of the statewide Montana Farmer-Labor Institute committee.

Other speakers at Great Falls will include: Dr. Carl Kraenzel, Montana State College, and John Harris, Montana State University.

All three institutes are being jointly sponsored by labor and farm organizations in co-operation with Montana State University and the Ford Foundation.

The Havre two-day regional institute will be held the middle of next week.

STATE BOARD OUTLINES 1952 INCOME TAX PAYING PROCEDURE

More than 32,000 State income tax returns have been filed with the State Board of Equalization at Helena since January 1, so states A. E. Simon, chairman, Sam D. Goza and C. A. Robinson, members. The tax paid was \$935,500. The total number of returns filed last year was 150,000. This would indicate that 20% of the total number of returns to be filed this year have already been received.

The early preparation of returns affords an opportunity to recheck each item to see that the returns balance with the records of income and expense. It also enables taxpayers to make inquiries about doubtful questions before the final closing date arrives for filing returns.

The Board states that the daily mail is filled with letters from taxpayers making inquiries about income tax questions. This is a healthy sign indicating that taxpayers are taking plenty of time to prepare their returns so that errors and omissions will be avoided.

The legislature just closed enacted a law which permits medical expense deductions, with certain limitations. This bill does not permit any medical expense deductions for 1952:

Husband and wife filing jointly may claim a personal exemption credit of \$2,000. If they file separately the credit is divided equally between them. The personal exemption for a single person is \$1,000. A credit of \$300 may be claimed as a deduction for each dependent. The income of all dependents claimed must be included in the return of the parent.

Fractional year returns are required for those who resided in the state for only a fractional part of the year. The \$1,000 and \$2,000 personal exemption credit must be reduced on a fractional basis.

The penalty for filing late returns is 5%, but not less than \$2.00, plus 1% per month. Many delinquent

taxpayers believe that the law permits the Board to omit the collection of penalties. This is a mistaken idea. The collection of penalties is mandatory on the Board.

The present income tax law was adopted in 1933. All taxpayers are presumed to know about the tax laws of the State. Anyone in doubt should write the Board or contact one of the representatives in the field offices. The Board is not required to sit on every man's doorstep and tell him when he is required to file a return, nor is it required to furnish every resident with a blank form, so that his attention may be called to the income tax laws. As a matter of courtesy forms have been mailed to each taxpayer who filed 1951 returns. The Board is prepared to furnish blanks to all taxpayers upon request.

The Board states that the offices at Butte, Billings, Great Falls and Missoula will be open continuously until after April 15.

Auditor Nutter will be at the Courthouse in Glendive March 16 and 17, at the Courthouse in Miles City March 18 through 21, at the Courthouse in Roundup March 23 through March 26 and at the City Hall in Laurel March 27 and 28.

Auditor Chivers will be at the City Hall in Whitefish March 18 through March 21 and at the City Hall in Kalispell March 23 through March 27.

Auditor Ashworth will be at the City Hall in Livingston March 16 through March 21, at the Courthouse in Bozeman March 23 and 24 and at the Courthouse in Lewistown March 25 through March 28.

Auditor Redpath will be at the Montana Hotel in Anaconda through March 16 and from April 1 through April 15. He will be at the Courthouse in Havre March 23 through March 28.

*This is supposed to be an inducement? ? ?