

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

January 28, 1977

The meeting was called to order at 3:15 p.m., with all members present.

Rep. Barret reported that the subcommittee on House Bill 69 has received letters from Georgia Rice and Harriett Meloy about their intent to cooperate (attached). The first set of amendments was prepared by the subcommittee. The second set is by Rep. Gunderson. He said they were only to change "executive" to "administrative" officer. Rep. Gunderson said that the amendments represent a reasonable compromise. If either side does not live up to them, the Legislature will be in session when the contract expires and will be able to do something about the situation. Rep. Barrett revised his motion to include both sets of amendments (attached). The motion passed unanimously. Rep. Gilligan moved that House Bill 69 DO PASS AS AMENDED. Rep. Lory made a substitute motion to recess executive session at the call of the chair. The substitute motion passed unanimously.

House Joint Resolution 18 was discussed. Rep. Bradley, chief sponsor, explained that the resolution would create a select committee to study the collection, preservation and dissemination of Montana's historical and cultural record. There would be 8 members appointed by the leadership of both Houses. She said records and artifacts are being lost and ghost towns ruined. There are a number of books in the Historical Society that are not insured. Rep. Lory asked about the nature of the interim committee. He suggested amending page 3, lines 16 through 19 to make the committee bipartisan. Harriett Meloy was present to answer questions.

House Bill 404 was discussed next. Rep. Shelden, chief sponsor, said the bill deletes the requirement to register warrants of a school district when money is available in any district fund. Bob Stockton said this bill will allow treasurers to use any school district fund. Money withdrawn from one fund is returned by a journal voucher. It is simply a bookkeeping procedure. This bill was introduced at the request of the School Business Administrators Association. Registering warrants costs money because the district must pay interest on them.

House Bill 409 was discussed next. Rep. Meloy, chief sponsor, said this bill provides that when one school district takes an abandoned district into its boundaries, the territory in the ~~new larger~~ ^{newly merged} district becomes subject to the indebtedness of the ~~abandoned~~ ^{newly merged} district. It would prevent a small district from waiting 3 years and avoiding payment of their bonded indebtedness. The new district would not be able to recover the money from taxpayers in the abandoned district. There are 7 or 8 abandonments every year. He said there should be an immediate effective date on the bill and will support such an amendment.

Proponents were Bob Bradley, John Campbell, Leonard Sargent. Their testimony is attached.

House Bill 391 was discussed next. Rep. Kessler, chief sponsor, said the bill applies to class 1 schools in counties of 30,000 population and over, and would subdivide school districts into subdistricts. Most elections are based on 1 man 1 vote and there would be much better representation on school boards if there were single-member districts.

Maurice Hickey supported the bill, as did Pat Williams. Opponents were John Bell, Penny Bullock, John Fine. Their testimony is attached.

In closing, Rep. Kessler said he believes this bill would be a stimulus to better voter turnout, better accountability and better representation on school boards.

House Bill 305 was discussed next. Rep. Kessler, chief sponsor, said the bill is enabling legislation for an adult basic education program. ABE is a program set up and funded to educate people who have not learned to read, write and have math and language skills. It is not adult education, which is an enrichment type of program. There will be a budget request in the amount of \$1 million to fund this program. He suggested an amendment, which is attached.

Proponents were: Maurice Hickey, Pat Lee, John Giese, Georgia Rice, Bill Cunneen, John Fine, Polly Holmes, Mike Joyce, John Pambrum, Jim Carbell, Linda Haines, Florence Monteau, Maureen Dolan, Pat O'Leary, Elsie Newton. Their testimony is attached.

Rep. Kessler closed by saying this program is a no frills educational program. The number of people not graduated from high school living in Montana is 171,000 and they are potential students of adult basic education. A long discussion on the funding of the program ensued. Rep. Eudaily suggested amending page 2, line 10 by inserting "basic" before "subject". There was a discussion about federal programs - CETA, WIN, CEP.

The committee went back into executive session. Rep. Gilligan moved that House Bill 69 DO PASS AS AMENDED. The motion passed 11-4. Those voting NO were Reps. Courtney, Hand, Uhde and Kvaalen.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6 p.m.

ANN MARY DUSSAULT, Chairperson