

March 16, 1977

A meeting of the Local Government Committee was called to order by Chairman Robbins at 10:10 AM in Room 437. The secretary called roll; Representative Palmer was excused and Representatives Colburn, Roth and South were absent. All other members were present.

SENATE BILL 142: Senator Aber, chief sponsor, said this bill is what they tried to do something with two years ago and no funds were available at that time. The Highway Patrol would like to see this done in all of our counties. This has to do with the communication centers in our sheriff's offices. We are not talking about the equipment. It takes five people to keep manned for 24 hours. The Highway Patrol uses the communication centers more than the county. 80% of the calls are to the patrol. Most counties are complaining about manning and standing the expense. This bill rights a wrong that should have been done before, and the right part is leaving 20% of the fines and forfeitures in that county for law enforcement communications. Lewis & Clark County will not participate in this. The cities are for this also. The money will go to the governing bodies of the communication centers. The \$5.00 fine is not included in this.

Proponents to speak were:

Captain D. B. Tooley, representing the Montana Highway Patrol, said as Senator Aber said this does right a wrong. They have never been in a position to pay for this service until the advent of better radios. Since the costs of communication centers has gone up, we have received many requests from counties for help; and we never had the funds. We support the bill and urge a report out of do pass.

Dan Mizner, representing the Montana League of Cities and Towns, said they support this bill.

Gerald T. Dunbar, representing the Montana Chief of Police Association, said this has always been a problem with designation between small and large departments, and they support the bill.

James Burnes, representing the Montana Sheriff's Association, supports this bill.

Gregg McCurdy, representing the Montana Association of Counties, said they support this bill, and submitted a breakdown of the amount money to go to each county - exhibit 1.

Representative Robbins spoke on behalf of this bill.

There were no opponents.

Senator Aber closed on Senate Bill 142.

During questions by the committee, it was asked about the cost to the county. Senator Aber said, what is budgeted is not near enough to man the communication center for 24 hours. His county needs \$30,000 to man the center and the \$6,000 will help. The

March 16, 1977

Page 2

SENATE BILL 142: continued

highway patrol put a top of \$25,000 as the fines may go up in time and, if it would get up where the patrol thought they would be paying more than their share, therefore, this top. If a county stops participating, they will not get any money. Waldron - as I read this bill you are diverting money from the driver's education fund. Senator Aber - No, I don't believe so. Captain Tooley said the amount to the driver's education programs will continue.

The committee went into executive session.

SENATE BILL 142: Representative Gerke moved TO CONCUR IN SENATE BILL 142. Question, motion carried unanimously. Chairman Robbins will carry Senate Bill 142 in the House.

There were no reports by the sub-committees.

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 AM.

Respectfully submitted,


HERSHEL M. ROBBINS, Chairman

yb