

January 15, 1979

INSTITUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE PROCEEDINGS:

A Human Services Subcommittee on Institutions held a meeting on January 12, 1979 at 2:00 in the Capitol Annex room #20. That meeting was called to order by Chairman James Azzara and all members were present.

Rep. Azzara explained that the meeting was held to discuss the irregularities in the use of funds In Montana State Prison with Mr. Steve Naprstek, a suspended Director of Vocational Education testifying. Mr. Naprstek is certified by the Montana Superintendent of Schools with 12 years classroom experience in special education and as a school psychologist. He holds an M.A. plus a B.A. in special education.

Naprstek stated that they need professional monitoring of funds and funding programs, and all of the problems he encountered had been experienced by his predecessors. Naprstek stated that purchases by the administration for vocational education is directly used for the purpose of production and maintenance of the prison, and that any educational aspects are secondary offshoots.

Naprstek was not allowed to purchase any equipment and has no knowledge of who in fact does it. He claimed that \$38,000 worth of funding was raised for a Culinary Arts Program which had no students in attendance until recently when he was instructed to get one.

Naprstek claimed that one of the worst problems at the institution is that the inmates see their keepers doing the same things which put them there. He said quoting an inmate: "So many of the men truly want to get an education so they can support their families and themselves when they are released, but then see the equipment which would give access to that education being carted off by employees".

Another problem he encountered was that there is a large turnover in employment, especially in the food service and the maintenance departments. He attributed this fact to poor working conditions, supervisors not being as qualified as they should be or often as those who work under them, and the frustrating environment. He claimed that with all the hiring and firing going on, that it is difficult to have a competent staff since it takes so long to train these people.

Naprstek claimed that he was on suspension as a direct result of asking questions like where does the money come from and how much is involved in funding these programs.

An audit was held which he said was "kept in their own back yard" and that Norman Dye found no discrepancies in funding and programs. On the other hand, though, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction refuses to fund programs at Montana State Prison because the existing programs are invalid.

Mr. Naprstek was thanked for his testimony and excused. It was the concensus of the committee to probe further into this problem and to also hear the administration's side.

Amie Aggett - Ruth