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SCHOOL REORGANIZATION

The 1949 legislature voted to establish a committee to investigate Oregon's school system and report back to this the 46th assembly. The report is known as the Holy report because it was made by a man named T. C. Holy who came from Ohio to accept the job. Bills to change our system of school organization in conformity to that report are now coming in to the legislature. The first are senate bills.

Little can be said of the present system of school district organization in Oregon other than it is obsolete and expensive. We still have many small districts established in days of primitive transportation method and retained by rural prejudice. Scientifically no reason can be found for their continued existence. The Holy report would get rid of most of them. Therefore the question to be decided by the individual legislators in this session is whether to change to a more scientific school system or to bow to the wishes of people. Our national and state trend is toward science and against support of the individual. Yet individuals are also electors.

We now have a Board of Vocational Rehabilitation, State Board of Textbook Commissioners, State Board of Education, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Commissioner of Americanization and staffs and officials of all of these. They are for elementary and secondary education and do not include the Board of Higher Education. It is proposed that all these be consolidated into a Board of Education. Excluded are higher education, deaf and blind schools and the corrective institutions of Woodburn and Hillcrest where, we may assume, there is more of correction than of education. Of that decision sociologists may comment later.

This Board of Education shall consist of nine members and in making those appointments the bills fall into an old error in Oregon. Members are to be appointed for nine years. Worse still one is to come from agriculture, one from labor, one from employers, one from the female sex and five are to be "lay" persons. We trust a governor for a great many things in Oregon but the legislature reserves to itself the right to tell him how to appoint a committee. They are to get \$10 per day while working and expenses which means that all will take a direct financial loss except perhaps the housewife. In this proposed charter for a brave new educational system the reference to horse and buggy compensation emphasizes the persistence of odity.

This board is empowered to adopt text books, to authorize a state course of study, to prescribe and publish rules for schools and school boards, to establish standards for public schools, to pass upon qualifications of bus drivers, to authorize regional centers for school materials.

Having been so precise about who should be a member of this body the bills grant them general powers as broad as the expanse of the Pacific. "To establish standards or public schools." There

is no let nor hindrance to that term. For years some of us in Oregon have been trying to have some one define an education and many of us would be satisfied if any competent official would merely say what school people are trying to do with the millions of dollars they persist in taking from the taxpayer in the guise of educational emergency. What is an education? If we are going to hire an engineer or build a radio station we know what we want and expect; if we start out to educate a child we do so by an undefinable process.

Last summer Dr. Holy said that his report would first concern itself with "quantitative" things. By which he meant that first his committee would concern itself with the kind of buildings, the kind of plumbing, the kind of lighting, the kind of transportation needed for this undefined process called education. Later, if there was time, the committee would investigate the education itself, which was harder to do. In other words, "after we had buildings and grounds and busses and money, we would appraise the reasons for which we had obtained them. References to that horse and buggy simile of the cart will be appropriate.

There are bills about consolidation of districts and it is right here that those who want to retain small districts may begin to shudder. When the petitions are in, the election called and the votes counted, it is done by the entire area, not by districts. The total vote prevails which means that the little district can be swallowed by a larger one like a shark can swallow a minnow. There is scientific justification we are sure—but people vote.

Neither are the bills specific as to the kind of district shall be formed, except to say that they shall be adequate in size and assessed valuation. A commissioner of school reorganization shall be hired and a board appointed to see about district reorganization. Oregon has first, second and third class districts, non-high school districts, rural school districts, union high school districts county high school districts and maybe a few others. Ours is truly an awkward state school system. Surely we should be able to get along with one or two kinds of districts.

Yet, while we are reforming, it does seem that there should be some legislatively determined qualifications for school districts. We think that a school district should contain property valued at half a million dollars, must contain at least 250 children of school age, must provide for both elementary and secondary education in as many schools as may be needed. This vagueness gives no confidence.

The Holy report bills would set aside \$650,000 a year for handicapped children and would appropriate out of the general fund six million for buildings. We think this money should come from school funds and that ample means of repayment should be found, but new buildings must be constructed in many districts. We must have our quantitative things. There are bills about central accounting and professional engineers and about how much ground must be used for a school plant. There are bills about retirement of employees and of teachers. Some place, we hope, before all the bills are in, there will be a bill to specify what little Johnny is going to get out of all this mass of legislation or at least what the men who make the laws think he should do with his precious juvenile years.

**FREE FOR ALL**  
James Byrnes, ex-senator, ex-supreme court justice, ex-secretary of state and ex-Trumanite, was sworn in as governor of South Carolina this week and human like he used the occasion as an excuse to make a speech. In it he said that if he were doing the big job in Washington he would defend Europe thus cleans himself from taint of isolationism, which is a sort of political leprosy in these days of free gifts for foreigners.

There is great debate among the big names about national policy. Acheson, Hoover, Taft, Joe Kennedy, Bridges, Douglas and many lesser lights have publicly expressed opinions about whether we should try to save Europe in the same valiant flourish with which we are trying to save Korea.

There is no doubt that Europe needs saving. There is reason to feel that it needs saving from its own lack of economic self-reliance which we have engendered. By which we mean that Europe is weak because we have spoon fed it. A bunch of cows will sometimes hang around a hay stack in anticipation of more feed when there is grass to be had on the hills. Maybe what Europe needs is less help instead of more. The kindly hand of Uncle Sam has the unfortunate faculty of softening the moral fibre of all that it touches, whether at home or abroad.

There is one thing wrong with that great debate idea, that is that while it is going on the administration keeps on with its announced policy of remaining in Korea, aiding Europe and combatting communism wherever found. On paper that policy doesn't sound so bad, but on analysis it is strictly a defensive policy. We did go above the 38th parallel but stopped at the Manchurian border and now we are fighting a retreat back to Pusan; we refuse to help Chiang Kaiseck except to defend him, we offer nothing but monetary aid to the French in Indo-China.

In Europe we loan money to Yugo-Slavia and Spain and continue western European nations on some sort of a Marshall plan dole. Our talk is about the defense of Europe. It is hard to win any sort of game or battle without an attack.

The essential difference between those who are charged with isolationism and those charged with interventionism is in the portion of the earth's surface we are to defend. Shall we take a small bit and chew it well or a large and voracious bite and risk choking?

Governor Byrnes lines up with the large group which our reading and observation indicates is the less popular side. The tremendous response of the public to Mr. Hoover's speech is still felt in congressional mail and the reactions of the ordinary citizen is unquestionably in favor of minding our own business. Of course, if we go over into our neighbor's yard and get into a brawl we'll stay and fight. We are proving that in Korea although we are getting pushed back to our own fence. Shall we tackle a neighbor on the other side at the same time or is it time to review our position?

From where we sit it appears that it is time to change because it is very apparent that the foreign policy we have been following has been wrong for ten years. As of today it appears that isolationism may be forced upon us by the ineptitude of the interventionists. Maybe stranger things have happened in history—and maybe not.

**REAPPORTIONMENT**  
The first bill for reapportionment of the legislature has been introduced in the house and it will probably be like a drum major, the leader of the whole band.

Nearly everyone has a method of reapportioning the legislature and there may be dozens of bills on the subject. There are however, only two general theories. One is the population plan which was written into Oregon's constitution by the delegates from the big counties back in 1859 and the plan found in the constitution of the United States which recognizes areas as well as population. There are advocates of both methods.

Oregon has never been apportioned on any plan at all even though the constitution does provide for apportionment on a population basis. There is no state in the union that gives full representation to its large city in both houses. Rural people have been too wise, and in most cases have been supported by a solid proportion of city residents, to allow urban dwellers to get in control of state legislative functions.

This first bill on reapportionment is in theory an off-spring of the population method but actually it varies from that for political reasons, which is similar to the kind of apportionment Oregon has always had. Probably there is no end to that until we change the constitution after devising a method that will be fair to all sections of the state.

There are many advantages to having the house and senate chosen on a different basis. The development of the western part of United States has largely come from the fact that each state has two senators which gives power

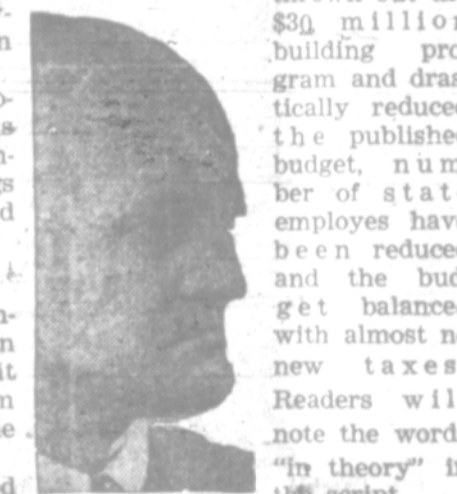


"SELF PORTRAIT" . . . This picture by Joseph Wasilaukas, Waterbury, Conn., won first prize and grand prize in the 1950 annual newspaper national snapshot awards competition. Wasilaukas blew smoke rings for his baby daughter and at the same time operated his camera by remote control in making his winning picture of himself and baby. He is a veteran, now employed in a Waterbury watch factory.

LEGISLATIVE COLUMN

By Giles L. French

Economy is getting a big play especially in the house and in theory, some members of the ways and means have already thrown out the \$30 million building program and drastically reduced the published budget, number of state employees have been reduced and the budget balanced with almost no new taxes.



Readers will note the words "in theory" in the script. This is a normal manifestation of voter effect on early days of a legislative session. On the other side it may be said that already there are bills in the hopper to spend money some \$7 million above the present budget. It the spenders can get together economy will go out the window.

Yet it does seem that talk of economy is a little bolder than usual.

Sprague Carter has a bill that would change the basis for computing school census from 4 to 20 years to 6-18. This would reduce the total cost of the basic school bill some \$7 million per year. He may be trying to take in too much territory but may get a change to 5 to 19 which could be realistic inasmuch as almost no children go to school until they are five and few go after they are 18. Anyway it is a realistic way for a legislator to deflate the apparent egotism of the school lobby.

A bill has been written to repeal the 1949 addition to the basic school fund. And there is a bill to practically repeal the county school fund of \$10 per census child. This would save \$4,100,000

to the growing west. In the house the west has little power and we would still be an economic colony if it were not for our strength in the senate.

Anyway it will be a great battle and we hope it is not decided on the basis of vote trading and log rolling.

There is little chance that there will be enough income tax next year to pay the county school fund in which case it would go back onto the taxpayers. If Carters' bill and county school fund repealer both should pass, cost of schools would be almost back to the pre-basic school fund increase bill of November, 1950. Chances good.

The bills to implement the Holy report are not good. They were apparently written by mice. True they do change the method of voting for consolidation so that the total vote will prevail and not the vote in each district. But the bills do not expressly state how large a school district must be in assessed valuation nor how many children there must be in it. They give to the department of education the power to run the schools and arrange for education but educa-

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tors do not yet know what an education is or if they do they have kept it a secret. There are bills and bills about reapportionment and most of them are written with an idea in mind of getting or keeping representation in the districts of the writers. This is normal in Oregon where, because of the poorly written constitutional provisions, politics has always governed apportionment of the legislature. It does seem that some rule could be passed by the people to establish some fair method and the rule of the federal government seems to this writer the best for Oregon.

New men are generally good. Yet it does seem odd that so many in the state are unacquainted with the undertone the gambling interests give to Oregon politics. Well, it's probably worse in Illinois and Missouri. There was an argument the other day as to whether the introduction of many bills was the mark of a good legislator. It seemed to miss the point because being a good legislator probably depends more on passing bills than introducing them and more so on passing good bills than any other characteristic. And sometimes it requires years to determine whether legislation is good or not. By their votes ye shall know them, not by their bills.

Wheat commission, Marion Weatherford, Bill Enschede, Ed Bell, Jens Tergesen here to advocate bill to make it possible to collect on loan wheat. Bill has been introduced by house committee on agriculture and will probably pass because efforts of wheat men to settle own problems are fairly well known.

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**NOTICE OF FINAL ACCOUNT**  
NOTICE is hereby given that the undersigned has filed in the County Court of the State of Oregon for Sherman County his Final Account and Report as administrator of the Estate of John C. McDermid, deceased, and that, Wednesday, the 28th day of February, 1951, at 10:00 A. M. of said day, at the courtroom, in Moro, Sherman County, Oregon, have been fixed by the Court as the time and place for hearing of objections to said Final Account and Report and for the settlement of estate.  
Donald O. McDermid  
Administrator  
T. Lester Johnson,  
Attorney for Administrator  
Pub. Jan. 26, Feb. 2-9-16, 1951.

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From where I sit . . . by Joe Marsh

**Right Under Our Nose!**

Sometime back, we got word from the Governor, asking if we wanted to use the State Fire Inspection Team—a group of experts they send around to communities to inspect public buildings.

We sent a letter saying: "Okay! Give us the once-over!" They came down, all right—last week.

After the inspection, we got their report. Came out pretty well, all told. Town Hall and the School were O.K. Post Office just needed more sandbuckets. In fact, everything got a clean bill of health, except—the Fire Station!

Joe Marsh

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