

New Yorkers Reject School Budget for Third Time

By FREDERICK H. TREESH
United Press International
COPIAGUE, N.Y. (UPI)—Silently, without fanfare or apparent leadership, the residents of this moderate-income residential community on Long Island's south shore have revolted against rising school taxes.

In effect, they said "no" when the local board of education called on them to ante up a few more dollars per household to meet the rising costs of operating an up-to-date school system. On Oct. 1, voters rejected for the third time the school board's proposed budget which would have hiked taxes 79 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation over last year's rate of \$8.57.

The rejection of the proposed \$4,187,000 budget, which school superintendent Dr. Jerome Botwinick declared was a rock-bottom, no-fat estimate, caused the 5,400-student school system to begin the year on an "austerity" program.

Under state rules, austerity means elimination of interscholastic athletics and hot lunches in school cafeterias, parents are assessed rentals for books and charged for workbooks, paper and supplies, school bus service is curtailed, use of school facilities by Scouts, service clubs or other civic interests is disallowed and adult education programs are prohibited.

Vote Once More
With the school system about to enter its third month under austerity, the district's voters will be given a fourth—and presumably last—opportunity to reconsider. The board of education voted last week to submit a revised budget to another vote on Nov. 13. The new budget will call for a tax increase of 23 cents per \$100 less than the previous estimate, the saving resulting from reduced expenditures during the austerity period.

The budget crisis in Copiague apparently is symptomatic of increased taxpayer dissatisfaction with soaring school costs across the nation. Although direct voting on school budgets is peculiar to New York State, the National Education Association reports an apparent national trend toward rougher sledding for proposed bond issues to finance school capital improvements.

Where a few years ago 85 to 90 per cent of the bond issues submitted to voters were approved, the nationwide percentage now has declined to about 65 per cent, an NEA spokesman said.

Detractors Rebel
In a major city example of tax resistance, Detroit voters last April turned down a bond-tax proposal the school district advanced. After the defeat, the school administration announced it would go on half-day sessions in the first, fourth and seventh grades, but it rescinded the plan after a lawsuit. Instead a second vote is scheduled for next month on a lower millage proposal.

Copiague, like thousands of other communities on Long Island and elsewhere in the nation, for years has been caught in the squeeze between the need for expanding and improving its school facilities and steadily rising costs. The result has been tax increases—modest but frequent.

Seven times in the last 11 years the voters have turned down a school budget. But always before the new school term opened, or within a few weeks after opening day, a new and larger budget was okayed and normal school services, extra-curricular activities and the athletic program were continued.

This year, however, a record number of voters turned out for

Whooping Cranes Arrive at Refuge

WASHINGTON (UPI)—The first contingent of the world's last wild flock of Whooping Cranes has arrived at wintering grounds at the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge on the Texas Gulf coast, the Interior Department reported Wednesday.

It said four of the big white birds were sighted Tuesday from an observation tower on the 47,261-acre refuge.

There were 32 Whoopers counted at Aransas last fall. Only 28 were counted last spring as they started their 2,500-mile return trip to Canada for summer nesting.

Georgia Pacific Records High Sales

PORTLAND (UPI)—Georgia Pacific Corp. said today sales earnings and cash flow for the first nine months of 1963 were the highest in its history.

Net earnings were \$20,575,000 compared with \$18,785,000 for the same period last year. Cash flow was \$44,130,000 compared with \$40,900,000. Sales were \$336 million compared with \$276 million.

The firm said on a per common share basis, profit for the first nine months of 1963 was 39.10 compared with 31.92.

the third vote Oct. 1 and rejected the budget, 1,556-1,245.

Public Misinformed
After the voting, School Board President James O'Reilly was dismayed.

"The public must be misinformed—they'd like to have education for less cost, but, clearly, we can't accomplish this," he said.

School administrators who have worked hard to trim non-essentials from the budget and promote its passage confess they don't know where the tax resistance is centered. There is no organization opposing the

budget and no individual speaking out against it or distributing anti-budget propaganda.

Observers describe the situation generally as a taxpayer revolt and suggest that the core of resistance may be among older persons, many with low and fixed income, who no longer have children in the school system.

Copiague, a community of slightly more than 14,000 persons, is 40 miles east of New York. The work force is employed primarily in business and light industry on Long Island. Most of the homes are modest

one- or two-story shingle dwellings, the median price \$13,700.

School administrators say the typical school tax bill of around \$200 a year is substantially less than many Long Island communities, especially the closer-to-New York commuter suburbs dominated by executives and professional men. But Copiague's median income of \$6,400 is substantially less too.

Educators Disturbed
The administration and board of education find the situation "challenging," to say the least, and are disturbed about trimming away some of the extras

which an austerity budget requires. This being a relatively modest income community, school officials feel a special burden for raising the horizons of students—especially encouraging them to continue education beyond the high school.

As an example of what can be done, an aggressive counseling program resulted in the percentage of 1963 graduates going on to college jumping to 48 from 28 per cent the year before. And drop-outs in the senior year declined to 6, compared to 46 the year before.

Going under austerity meant

cutting expenditures by \$144,000 from the proposed budget vetoed by the voters. Elimination of the athletic program, for example, may cost a number of promising athletes college scholarships. Parents have to shell out \$12 to \$15 a year per student for books and supplies and many students previously entitled to school bus service now must get to classes by other means. The school administration also fears a severe loss in spirit, morale and efficiency among students and teachers, which might be reflected in a higher dropout rate.

Even with the budget dilemma unresolved, the board of education has another money problem in the offing. The District's high school, though relatively new, already is overpopulated by 400 students and the student body is expected to expand by 200 students a year in the future.

The board feels it must, in the months ahead, go to the electorate again and ask for authorization to spend \$4.7 million for a new high school to be financed by a bond issue and another tax increase.

The cash crisis here is a vivid example that the post-war popu-

lation boom and corresponding demands on public education will continue to hit Americans where it hurts—in the wallet.



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