

Powerful House Group OKs Half-Million-Dollar Teacher Pension Boost

Bill Calling for Extra \$525,000 State Appropriations Wins Unanimous Nod

By ANDY OLOFSON

A half-million-dollar increase in teachers pensions today had the blessing of the powerful Ways and Means Committee in the Indiana House of Representatives.

The bill, calling for an extra \$525,000 state appropriation, is the first one to be reported out by the committee, which yesterday voted unanimously to recommend the bill's passage.

The measure, as amended in committee, calls for an increase of 85/100ths of a cent in the state property tax levy beginning in 1953. It originally had called for a 1-cent increase in 1953 with an additional extra cent to be added in 1954.

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In the committee meeting yesterday, State Police Superintendent Arthur M. Thurston told the group that he would be willing to drop any interest in the requested appropriation of \$1,300,000 for a new state police headquarters providing the committee would support an extra \$250,000 in salary increases for his state troopers.

Mr. Thurston is asking for a \$50 a month across-the-board increase for all state policemen. Troopers at the present time receive \$200 a month with a \$70 subsistence allowance.

The author of the "Little Hoover" commission bill, Rep. Paul Moellering of Ft. Wayne, also told the committee that the requested \$1,000,000 appropriation for this government-study group might be cut in half without endangering the project.

The committee also discussed amending the bill to require the printed report of the commission to be in the hands of the legislators by Dec. 1, 1952, so that they would have time to study it before the 1953 session starts.

Tax Study
Republican strength in the Indiana House of Representatives was being massed today to support a bill calling for an 11-member state tax study commission to re-examine the state's whole tax structure and make recommendations to the 1953 session.

Following a meeting of the GOF policy committee meeting, it was announced that the bill would be introduced by Rep. Glenn Sienker, majority leader from Monticello, and Rep. Laurence D. Baker of Kendallville.

The bill will appropriate \$25,000 for expenses of the commission.

The commission will be made up as follows:

The three members of the state budget committee—the Governor, state auditor and state treasurer.

Four members to be named by Rep. W. O. Hughes, Speaker of the House—One representative from each party in the House and two lay members.

Two members to be named by Lt. Gov. John Watkins, president of the Senate—one senator and one lay member.

Two members to be named by Sen. John W. Van Ness, president pro tem of the Senate—one senator and one lay member.

A bill introduced earlier in the Senate will be shunted into the discard pile, G. O. P. leaders explained.

Withholding Tax

A second gross-income tax withholding bill with bi-partisan sponsorship will be introduced in the House today or tomorrow.

It will be introduced by Rep. James Hunter, East Chicago Democrat, and Rep. Walter Acker, the Evansville Republican who just this week returned from Navy duty in Korean waters.

The new measure differs from the bill introduced yesterday by Rep. Ralph W. Myers, Anderson Democrat, in that it will exempt the first \$1,000 of wages or salary from the withholding provision rather than pro rata the exemption over each pay period.

Rep. Hunter, who led the unsuccessful fight for this bill two years ago, says the new measure will make it easier for employers to compute the amount of tax to be withheld and also will eliminate many refunds that may be necessary under the other plan.

In co-sponsoring the bill, Rep. Acker said that many workers in the Evansville area had personally asked him to support such a measure.

"This bill will eliminate many of the present evasions of this state tax and should increase the state's revenues by several millions of dollars a year," he declared.

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Married Teacher Bill Passes House

Measure OK'd
After Long Debate

Thou shalt not force any Hoosier woman into the lifetime status of "old maid school teacher."

This commandment to Indiana school boards was included in a bill passed 67-25 by the House of Representatives yesterday after extended debate.

The bill prohibits any school board from refusing to hire a teacher because she had married.

Fight against the bill was led by Rep. David L. Grimes, Fillmore Republican who is both a teacher and a farmer.

He based his argument on the ground that the measure was just another step to abolish "home rule," since it would further limit the discretion of local school officials in hiring teachers.

Many Improve

But Rep. Addison Beaman, Booneville Democrat, declared:

"Many teachers actually became better teachers after they are married and I think it only right that the legislature prohibit any local prejudice against hiring married teachers."

The debate also brought the first comment of the session from Rep. Philip Wilkie, the heretofore silent Rushville Republican who introduced bills to increase state aid to schools and to raise teachers' salaries.

"In these difficult times," said the son of the 1944 G. O. P. Presidential candidate, "we not only face a shortage of manpower, but we have potential womanpower shortage too. We may find that we will desperately need married teachers and I don't think there should be any rule against hiring married women."

Seeks Wage Boost

A 30 to 40 per cent boost in wages of mental hospital employees was asked by Dr. Herbert McMahan, new superintendent of Westville State Hospital.

Warden Dowd recommended salaries of prison guards be hiked to a minimum of \$250 a month. At present the starting wage is \$200.

He also urged passage of a House bill to set up a retirement plan for guards.

Mr. Dowd revealed 80 prison employees—including 65 guards—have quit since the start of the Korean war to take better-paying jobs in private industry and federal defense plants.

Mr. Loftin cited surveys showing that Indiana stands at the bottom and pays lower salaries to mental hospital employees than any other state. He called for wage boosts to "hold present personnel and to attract new personnel."

"We have fine physical plants in Indiana," Mr. Loftin said. "But buildings don't care patients as you know. We must have competent men and women to staff them."

Dr. McMahan described the new Westville Hospital as "the most modern psychiatric plant in the world today."

"But it won't be worth a nickel unless we get a trained staff," he said.

10 Weekly Payment

Isadore Levine, president of the Westville board, called for passage of a bill requiring payment of \$10 a week for care of patients. He said it would bring in \$10,000 a week to help lessen the state's financial burden.

Mr. Levine warned that unless the hospital's \$4.5 million appropriation was doubled, completion of the institution will take two years longer.

Regarding the flood of requests from state departments for additional appropriations, Sen. Kenneth said:

"With four weeks of the legislature past, we are now nearing the zero hour. There isn't a department which hasn't made a request in the last week because of competent help leaving in droves."

"It's a problem of whether the people of Indiana are willing to pay the bill. It is apparent that this committee is going to have that everything leads to the center of town," he said.

State Institutions Ask Pay Hike

Mental, Prison Chiefs Appeal to Senators

By JOHN V. WILSON

"Salaries of employees of state institutions are 10 years behind the times."

With this keynote, state mental hospital and prison officials asked the group that he would be willing to drop any interest in the requested appropriation of \$1,300,000 for a new state police headquarters providing the committee would support an extra \$250,000 in salary increases for his state troopers.

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