

# Legislature May Agree on Budget, Schools Shortly

MAY 14, 1964

THE TORRANCE HERALD 21

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Assemblyman, 68th District

Rumbles of legislative thunder about basic issues still unresolved in our special session continue to roll around the Capitol. However, recent signs indicate that opposing sides on the three most important—the budget, money for schools, and Long Beach oil—are getting closer to agreement on terms of the principal bills.

As a result, a proposal that our sessions be recessed in the near future, to reconvene after the June 2 primary election,

was quickly laid to rest. It was "shouted down" in the Assembly Republican caucus, and found no warmer reception in Democratic circles. Even though half of the Senators and all of the Assemblymen have a direct personal concern in the primaries, it was generally felt that the public good requires us to finish our present tasks as soon as possible.

The breach between the two sides in the struggles over the \$3.67 billion budget for 1964-65 has narrowed visibly. The

Assembly Republican minority, still acting as a solid front, has offered a new compromise proposal for a \$9 million cut in welfare. Democratic leaders in that house agreed that the welfare item is the biggest obstacle still existing to passage of the budget bill by the necessary 54 votes.

IN THE FIELD of educational legislation, considerable progress is being made on several fronts, though not without some public displays of verbal lightning. Two bond issues

scheduled for the November ballot have passed the first house and have been approved by hearing committees in the second. The first bill would authorize \$380 million in bonds for new state construction. \$265 million of this would go to the University and state colleges, and \$50 million would be earmarked for junior colleges. The other would provide additional millions for construction loans to local school districts. Originally, it would have authorized \$260 million; it was later increased to \$270

million, but in the Senate has been cut back to the original amount.

The extreme confusion over state aid to public schools has cleared up. The Assembly bill which I have written about before in this column, the one which would provide some \$41 million additionally for the first year, and \$108 million for the second year of operation, survived its committee tests in the Senate. In doing so, however, the bill lost its most hotly controversial feature, the automatic deadline for unifica-

tion of local school districts, July 1, 1967.

THE HEARING on this bill in the Senate Finance Committee produced the most severe tongue-lashing of the statewide teachers' organization heard in years. Members vied with each other in attacking the group's announced intention to put an initiative on the November ballot calling for an additional \$140 million annually for schools. The future legislative effectiveness of the group is now regarded

as considerably damaged by its by-passing the Legislature in this proposal.

The bill to re-divide revenues from the Long Beach tidelands oil pool between the state and the City of Long Beach has been amended to prevent any one private operator from controlling more than 60 per cent of the pool. Its fate in that form is still in doubt. It would raise state revenues by \$1.75 billion over the next generation.

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