

State Ranking On School Financing Under Scrutiny

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9

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The National Committee for Support of the Public Schools recently sent me a report regarding state school support throughout the United States. Their report shows that the State of California supplied 39.8 per cent of the revenue received by the public schools of California and that the national average for the 50 states (including, of course, Alaska and Hawaii) is 39.3 per cent. In other words, the State of California exceeds that national average by one-half of one per cent.

The same report shows that the State of Delaware is first with 79.6 per cent and the State of Nebraska is at the

bottom of the list because it is reported as contributing only 5.8 per cent of the cost of the support of its public schools. California is in 25th place in the national ranking. The State of New York, which has a population second only to California, is in the 20th place, 19 places below Delaware and five places higher than California.

THE SAME report approaches the subject of the financial support of public schools from the opposite end, that is, the 50 states are listed in accordance with the percentage of support supplied by local effort, which includes cities, counties, school districts and any source other than federal

or state. According to this method of rating, California is in the 26th place because local sources account for 56.7 per cent. However, if you add the above-mentioned 39.8 per cent to 56.7 per cent, the sum is 96.5 per cent, leaving a discrepancy of 3.5 per cent.

Apparently, this 3.5 per cent discrepancy represents federal aid or else the people who compiled the report are having trouble with arithmetic.

INCIDENTALLY, I am only reporting what the National Committee for Support of Public Schools released. I am not attempting to attack or defend the above statements.

In addition, I am not convinced that they are correct

because several experts on public education in the State of California have told me that the report of the National Committee for Support of Public Schools apparently does not understand the comparatively complicated system used by the State of California for assisting public schools financially; the report is not up to date; and it is not broken down for California to show the money the State of California spends on the various branches of the State University of California, the four-year State Colleges, the two-year junior colleges, the high schools, the elementary schools, the special system for tutoring the handicapped (blind, deaf, mentally retarded, etc.), and other phases

of public education which are more generously supported by the State of California than any other state but accounted for in such a complex manner that only a comparatively few experts can understand or explain the system.

REGARDLESS of the accuracy or timeliness of the report of the National Committee for Support of Public Schools, the current 1964 Budget Session and the several 1964 Special Sessions have provided additional money for California public education at many levels. Furthermore, because of our rapidly increasing school population, it is certain that the General Session of 1965, which begins on the

first Monday in January, 1965, the Legislature must either find even more money for public education or curtail services somewhere.

State Senator Hugh M. Burns, Democrat of Fresno, who is President pro Tempore of the State Senate, is, by virtue of both his personal ability and his office, the most powerful State Senator and in the opinion of many legislators second only to Governor Brown in influence regarding State legislation.

Of course, some people seem to think that the Honorable Jesse M. Unruh, Democrat, of Inglewood, who is Speaker of the Assembly, is the "boss of the State," but I do not believe that either Governor

Brown or Senator Burns share this belief.

SENATOR HUGH M. Burns has publicly stated recently that he does not see any way to avoid raising the existing State taxes if the various levels of public education continue their demands for more and more money. He also has said publicly that each "pressure group" wants more State money for its own pet project and at the same time the same people who want more money from the State object violently to paying higher State taxes.

I do not know any Republican or Democrat in either the Assembly or the State Senate who disagrees with Senator Burns. If people demand more money for the State, the mon-

ey must come from the people of California. The Constitution of the United States forbids any State to coin, print, or engrave its own money.

FINALLY, almost all bond issues are merely postponed tax bills. For example, a bond issue to provide money now and collect the money from the people over a period of 30 years means that because of the interest on the bonds, the people eventually pay more than twice the amount of money presently received from the bond issue. Money does not fall from Heaven.

Instead of criticism by speech, to show someone a better way to do a thing would be of much greater value.
—John Wanamaker

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