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Expense, Taxes, School Bonds County Problem

FARMERS FIGHT REALTY TAXES CLAIM LEVIES UNJUST

Organized farmers of Maryland are bitterly opposed to proposals to increase real estate levies in order to provide additional state funds to balance the budget, it was announced Monday by President Harry H. Nuttle of the Maryland Farm Bureau. The Farm Bureau has long held that real estate is bearing an unfair share of the tax burden, and that other methods of taxation must be adopted in order to balance the tax load, he reports.

Mr. Nuttle called attention to the tax report which has been adopted by both the Maryland State Grange and Farm Bureau which outlined the stand of organized farmers on real estate taxes in these terms: "Maryland tax system is not balanced in that real estate pays an unjust portion of the taxes, county, city and state. Real estate taxes are levied arbitrarily on the assessed valuation and with no direct bearing on the return on this value. Our State system needs to be better balanced and this serious inequality corrected."

Members of the Farm Bureau's legislative committee consisting of Mr. Nuttle, P. C. Turner, Fred Jones, L. O. Jarrell, John Bushey, F. Schillinger, A. G. Ensor, Ellis Bowen, Roby Mullinix, A. K. Austin, and A. M. Etzler met Monday to lay plans for presenting the farmers' views to legislators.

Committee members stated that it was high time that legislators faced the entire tax problem and worked out a fair balance of the tax load between various classes of tax payers. "It is time that the system of patching up revenues on a temporary basis along the lines of least resistance is discarded and while conditions are good, a fair division of the tax burden be made through relief of real estate," said Mr. Turner one of the members of the committee. "If the habit of assessing real estate because that is the easiest way out is not discarded owners of real property will be forced to join in a fight for some form of constitutional limitation of real estate taxes to force the shifting of the tax burden."

Police Pay Raise Looks Doubtful Says Allen

Jack Allen, staff correspondent of the Washington Star writes from Annapolis that the final decision regarding proposals to increase the salaries of Montgomery County policemen, supported by many civic organizations and the Board of County Commissioners, probably will be tossed back into the hands of the latter agency.

"It appears unlikely," says he "in view of divided opinion among the county's six Representatives in the Senate and House, the State Assembly will enact any legislation this session that would be in the nature of a mandate requiring the board to install a higher scale of pay."

Senator Prescott said he does not favor any step that would make it mandatory for the commissioners to put in the wage boosts.

"Since the commissioners are the fiscal agents of the county," he declared, "I feel they should be given the authority to raise the policemen's salaries and let them decide for themselves whether the raises should be granted."

FROM THE WASHINGTON STAR

Federation Endorses School Bonds

Indorsement of a $723,000 school building program and a proposal that no future bond issue be approved unless accompanied by a corresponding retirement of outstanding county bonds resulted from a hectic meeting of the Montgomery County Civic Federation Monday night at Bethesda.

The lengthy debate forced the federation to confine its deliberations to these two proposals and a third recommendation that legislation be enacted providing for an elective board of education in the county. Action on the remaining items of the federation's legislative program was postponed until next Monday night.

Much of the debate over the school program arose over a motion to defer action for another month. The motion carried with it a recommendation that the committee revise its schedule of proposed expenditures to eliminate all "luxuries." The program was defended by Chairman Brewster and a number of delegates who declared that adequate school facilities are essentials rather than luxuries. Brewster cited the high cost of crime which he says has its breeding place in localities frequented by school children because they lack playgrounds, gymnasiums and other facilities for recreation.

Charges that the committee program is "extravagant" also were hotly denied by several delegates who declared that the county school system is the last place where petty economies should be put into practice. A suggestion that double shifts be utilized in present buildings to avoid additional construction was speedily swept aside.

The proposed elective board of education legislation was indorsed by an overwhelming vote although several delegates spoke against such a charge. An amendment seeking to limit members to one term in office was defeated by a wide margin.

The school committee report made no specific recommendation with regard to securing the funds to finance the $723,000 program. A bond issue was anticipated by the finance committee, however, which led to introduction of the resolution to bar further bond issues without a like reduction in current indebtedness. Thus the federation placed itself on record as favoring retirement of $723,000 in county bonds during the next two years if the school program is to be financed by a bond issue. The finance committee resolution was presented by Chairman H. S. Yohe and received little debate.

HAMILTON OF G. O. P. SPEAKS TUESDAY IN MONTGOMERY

John D. Hamilton, chairman of the Republican National Committee, will address the Republican Club of the Thirteenth Election District Tuesday at 7:45 p. m. in Woodside Elementary School, Silver Spring.

Hamilton will talk on plans for revitalizing add rebuilding the Republican Party "so that we may restore constitutional Government to our Nation," according to John W. Coffman, president of the club.

Election of officers will be held at the meeting. Elmer Goebel, chairman; Herold Haynes and L. V. Lampson, members of the nominating committee, have prepared the following slate: President, Wilson L. Townsend, of Kensington; vice presidents, Robert L. McKeever, of Silver Spring; E. E. Boyner, of Indian Spring Terrace; Kenneth Simpson, of Kensington, and M. C. Taft, of Takoma Park; corresponding secretary, Olive D. Kinsman, of Silver Spring; recording secretary, Fred B. Linton, jr., of Takoma Park; treasurer, William Miles, of Forest Glen; paliamentarian, Robert M. Lyon, of Takoma Park.

The Alexander Hamilton Club, Inc., of Maryland will hold its seventh Lincoln Day dinner and dance at 7 p. m. at the Emerson Hotel, Baltimore. The club has a membership in many counties in Maryland.

William P. Lawson, chairman of the Republican State and City Central Committees, is chairman of the Lincoln Day dinner. Among the speakers will be Governor Harry W. Nice.

Mrs. Clara C. Holmes, of Rockville, represents Montgomery County on the Board of Directors.

Commissioners Say School Bonds Up To Legislature

Responsibility for issuance of school bonds is entirely on the Legislature and the Board of Education, the Montgomery County Commissioners decided Tuesday in refusing to take action on the proposed $500,000 two-year school building program proposed by the Board of Education.

The commissioners directed Ira C. Whitacre, clerk to the county commissioners, to acquaint State Senator Stedman Prescott with the action of the board. The action followed receipt of a letter from Senator Prescott asking that the legislators be informed on the views of the commissioners.

Whitacre's letter stated that the commissioners have no control over school affairs and pointed out that even the ordinary expenditures for education each year in accordance with the school budget must be approved by the commissioners without discretion.

A recommendation made by auditors who completed recently an audit of the county's books, that no further county bonds be issued until provision is made for retiring outstanding county obligations of approximately $10,867,000 as they mature, was cited in the commissioners' letter.

The $500,000 program was proposed by the county school board several weeks ago as part of the long term school development program. The Montgomery County Civic Federation approved an even larger program amounting to $723,000 at its meeting Monday night.

Reaffirming their belief that maturing bonds in the next two years should be refunded, the commissioners informed Senator Prescott that "it is the view of the commissioners that unless the Legislature authorizes the refunding of these bonds the tax rate will be too great a burden on the average taxpayer."

Police Court Fines

Fines and costs in the Montgomery County Police Court amount to $1,323.50 in January, Harry M. Williams, clerk of the police court, reported to the Montgomery County Commissioners Tuesday.

COUGHLAN SCORES HIGH FEES AND EXPENSE

The majority of the Montgomery County commissioners feel that no further county bonds should be sold without a referendum on the question, Commissioner Paul M. Coughlan told the Silver Spring Citizens' Association last week.

Discussing the financial situation in the county, Coughlan questioned the feasibility of floating the proposed new bond issue of $650,000 for school purposes.

"I favor adequate schools," he said, "but I believe the time has come to retrench a little."

In discussing the "high price" of schools in the county, Coughlan said he felt that a number of the schools which have been built could have been constructed at a more reasonable figure. He scored the high fees paid the architects and declared he believed it would be an economy measure to employ a full-time architect.

Another item in the school budget which is rather large, he asserted, is the expenditure for bus transportation, which last year cost the county $60,000. Much of this could have been avoided if the small schools had been allowed to remain open, he said.

Coughlan also said he felt every cent of the gasoline tax should be used for the maintenance and construction of roads.

States Seek Repeal Of Federal Gas Tax

Repeal of the duplicating Federal tax upon gasoline, recommended in a resolution adopted by the Third General Assembly of the Council of State Governments, at which Maryland was represented, is endorsed by J. P. Lanigan, secretary of the Maryland Petroleum Industries Committee.

"Repeal of the Federal gasoline tax, which cost the taxpayers close to $190,000,000 in 1936 alone, would mean relief and greatly would aid the states," said Mr. Lanigan.

"This state, like every other state, needs gasoline tax revenues to finance highway programs. The federal gasoline tax takes money out of this state to spend for general purposes, not highways. There is no good reason why motorist taxpayers longer should contribute.

"The Council acted wisely in adopting the resolution calling for repeal of this expensive and duplicating levy. It is to be hoped that Maryland's representatives in Congress will act accordingly."

Takoma Democrats Want Vote Change

A resolution urging an amendment to the town charter, which would permit otherwise qualified persons to vote in municipal elections after a term of residence three months prior to the election, was adopted by the Young Men's Democratic Club of Takoma Park last night.

The proposed amendment would not apply to special elections. The resolution will be presented to the Montgomery County Democratic Campaign Committee for approval and presentation to the county delegation in the State Legislature.

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