

# The Visitor

Devoted to the Interests of Agricultural Education in Minnesota Schools

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## A MATTER OF MONEY \*

Americans are about to witness the first major thrust of federal participation in elementary and secondary education. This area has been traditionally a matter of state and local control and financial responsibility. There can be little doubt that public (and private) education will face problems and issues of a scope and gravity never before encountered. The difficulty of adequately financing public education for all pupils is basic to the concern of the federal government at this point in history. Whether the laws as presently drawn are appropriate or constitutional and whether this is, indeed, an appropriate role for the federal government are issues that the people must decide in the immediate future. The inclusion of support for private and parochial schools is bound to provide problems not heretofore faced. In addition there will be the question of whether it is possible to provide massive financial support without concurrently entering into the direction and control of programs thus financed. Will a matter of money erode and ultimately demolish local control of public education? Will this be a desirable accomplishment or will America have lost something of value in its heritage? There will be much discussion of this question and it can only be hoped that such discussion will provide at least equal amounts of light and heat.

### The Public Education Tradition in America

Since its early history the United States has had public schools. The idea of free public education for all is an idea uniquely American. In fact, it is perhaps the one completely American concept that has played a major role in the development and growth of the nation. Local control, local responsibility and local support characterized the early evolution of American schools in a way unmatched by other countries. It has been assumed

that education is one of the functions referred to in the Tenth Amendment to the United States Constitution: "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people." State legislatures passed laws permitting local school districts to tax themselves for the support of public education. Subsequently the states granted aids to encourage local districts to tax themselves and to share the burden. Later the states required local districts to tax themselves for public school support. During the early 1800's states assumed the responsibility of enforcing minimum standards as a condition for receiving further aid and assuring each child a minimum education. Management of the schools was left to the local boards of education. Population growth, increased costs, urbanization, changing philosophies and shifting social values have contributed to the creation of a complex of problems and issues each of which are related in greater or lesser degree to a matter of money. Should the federal government assume a "hands off" policy and let the states decide for themselves what kinds and amounts of education their children should have? Obviously those responsible for federal policy have decided against such a policy and have taken a direct hand in an effort to improve and extend educational opportunity. This represents a marked departure from the historic tradition and is lauded and applauded or viewed with alarm by proponents and opponents respectively.

The federal government has, in fact, aided public education in a variety of ways over the years. The approach has been limited as to scope and purposes as indicated in the examples that follow:

Land Ordinances of 1785 and 1878 and other grants giving land to states for education.

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Morrill Act of 1862 for land-grant colleges.

Smith-Lever Act of 1914 supporting agricultural extension services.

Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 and subsequent Acts supporting vocational education in the secondary schools.

National Youth Administration and CCC during depression years.

Aid to federally impacted areas.

G.I. Bill for World War II and Korean War veterans.

National Defense Education Act of 1958 giving loans to students and supporting programs in languages, science, guidance and audio-visual methods.

School lunch programs.

Aid for Indian schools.

National Vocational Education Act of 1963.

None of these compare in scope, money and federal participation with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. All will be more or less influenced by the pattern of the new law as it enters into the administrative stream at the state and local levels.

### A Look at Minnesota

Minnesotans generally have shown an awareness for the needs of the people involved in public education. The Minnesota Constitution clearly provides that public money must be used for public education. It further recognizes the importance of public education by stating in Article VIII, Section 1, that: "*The stability of a republican form of government*

*depending mainly upon the intelligence of the people, it shall be the duty of the legislature to establish a general and uniform system of public schools."*

The Constitution of Minnesota provided for state aid to schools to be distributed in proportion to the number of students. This apportionment aid comes from the interest accruing to the Endowment Fund which was created from the sale or lease of school and swamp lands. As of the close of 1964 it included a principal of almost \$265,000,000.

Interest from the Endowment Fund proved insufficient and state aid was supplemented by legislative appropriations largely from general revenue. Prior to 1915 efforts were made to provide uniform financial aid for all school districts on flat grant aids paid on a single criterion such as number of pupils. In 1915 a first real effort was made towards equalization by providing supplemental aid to districts with low assessed valuations and high tax rates. In 1922 a constitutional amendment imposing the iron ore occupation tax was adopted. Since 1957, forty percent of the receipts go directly to the support of elementary and secondary schools.

In 1933 the Minnesota Legislature instituted the income tax as a source of funds in which to support public elementary and secondary schools. The first receipts came into the fund in 1934, not a particularly prosperous year. Since then the state income tax, rather than constitutional funds, has become the chief source of state aid to education. In the 1963-64 school year 92 percent of the state aid to elementary and secondary schools was derived from the income tax fund. Not all of the money collected from income taxes goes to elementary and secondary schools. In 1964-65 about 88 percent was so used. Diversions from the income tax are used for other educational purposes.

In 1957 the Minnesota Legislature created the Foundation Aid program which was intended to provide equal financial support for all school districts and promote uniform educational content. This was an effort to improve the quality of education from the state level using money as leverage. School districts do not receive aid unless they meet certain minimum standards as to physical facilities, length of the school year, administrative staff, teacher education, guidance and counseling services and salaries.

Foundation aid includes apportionment and income tax revenue. Two formulas are used in distributing the aids; Formula A for districts with a relatively small tax base in proportion to enrollment, and Formula B for districts with a relatively large tax base in proportion to enrollment. The 1965 Legislature established formulas for the following biennium thus:

Formula A — \$321 for each resident pupil unit not to exceed the adjusted maintenance cost per pupil unit in average daily attendance for the previous school year minus 19 mills on the current adjusted assessed valuation of the district as established by the Equalization Aid Review Committee. For the second year the amount is \$324.

Formula B— \$10 per eligible census child plus \$97 per resident pupil unit. For the second year of the biennium the amount is \$98.

In effect, Formula A is the difference between the amount guaranteed by the state (an adjusted maintenance cost per pupil unit of a generally acceptable education through high school) and the amount of money raised locally based on the ability to pay. Since the bulk of the money raised locally comes from property taxes, an attempt must be made to arrive at property valuations consistent with others throughout the state.

In 1951 the Minnesota Legislature created the Equalization Aid Review Committee consisting of the Commissioners of Education, Taxation and Administration. It was found that because of local variations state attempts at equalizing school aid was futile. By 1955 all districts had been studied by the Committee and a state aid law was passed that recognized varying assessment practices. Since 1957-58 foundation aids have been determined by using valuations known as equalized assessed valuations approved by the EARC. These valuations are used only for figuring school aid; tax levies are made on the assessed valuations and not on the equalized valuations.

The 1965 Legislature provided \$361,000,000 for foundation aid for the biennium. This is no trifling amount, but local districts contribute more. In 1963 local districts provided 64% of their own revenue. The state share was 32%; county share 2.5% and the federal share was 1.5%. In the vocational programs the state and local units over the years have pro-

vided about five dollars for every federal dollar.

### Highlights of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act

#### TITLE I

##### *Aid to Educationally Deprived Children*

This title declares that it is the policy of the United States to provide financial assistance to local educational agencies serving areas with concentrations of children from low-income families.

A three-year program is set up to encourage and support the establishment, expansion and improvement of special services. Funds can be used for such things as dual enrollment (one student enrolled in a public and parochial school) educational TV, mobile equipment, health services, school breakfasts, guidance and counseling. Although the Act is not designed to relieve classroom shortages, where lack of facilities is the major obstacle for conducting good educational programs for low-income children, a limited amount of classroom construction could be carried out. The programs are to be developed by school boards in cooperation with public and nonprofit agencies responsible for community action programs.

Four-fifths of the first year's funds go to Title I projects. The Act authorizes \$1.33 billion to be spent the first year with \$1.06 billion to be spent on Title I.

The maximum basic grant to a district is figured by means of a formula; 50% times the average per pupil expenditure in each state times the number of 5 to 17 year old children in the school district from families with an annual income below \$2,000 or with a higher income resulting from relief payments.

To be eligible a school district must have at least 100 deprived children or 3% (at least 10) or all their children must be deprived, whichever is less. It is estimated that there will be districts in 94% of the counties in the nation eligible for aid.

#### TITLE II — *Instructional Materials*

This title provides for a five-year program of grants for buying school library resources, textbooks and other printed instructional materials for the use of teachers and children in public and private schools. The materials are to be allotted according to the number of children (i.e., no income limit) in the district.

A state or local public educational agency approves the choice of materials, procures them, holds title to them, and controls their use. They may be loans to teachers and pupils in non-public schools. The materials obtained with federal funds are supposed to supplement, not supplant, other materials.

Proponents of this legislation maintained that this portion of the Act is important since 29.6% of U. S. public school pupils do not have libraries in their schools. One-fourth of the school systems in 128 of our largest cities do not provide free textbooks at the high school level. Minnesota's situation in regard to libraries is much better than the national average, and textbooks are provided free to all public school students.

Estimated payments for the first year amount to \$100 million.

#### TITLE III

##### *Supplementary Educational Services*

This title provides for a five-year program of grants for supplementary educational centers and services to provide "vitally needed" educational services not otherwise available in quality or quantity and to establish model school programs. Each state is to receive \$200,000 plus an apportioned amount based on the number of children and the total population in the state compared to that of the United States.

Some obvious type of supplementary services would be bookmobiles, portable science laboratories, and classes for the handicapped and gifted children. However, the bill is vague enough to give latitude to districts with special problems or ingenuity.

Other types of centers and services that might be started include:

- a. Counseling, remedial instruction, and health, recreation and social work services to help persons enter, remain in, or re-enter educational programs.
- b. Academic services and vocational guidance and counseling for continuing adult education.
- c. Specialized instruction and equipment for students studying advanced scientific subjects, foreign languages and other courses not offered in local schools or better provided on a centralized basis.
- d. Specially qualified personnel, in-

cluding artists and musicians, for teaching on a temporary basis.

- e. Educational TV and radio.
- f. Special educational services for persons in rural areas, such as mobile equipment, home study courses and visiting teacher programs.
- g. Model schools.

The law requires that planning of programs include participation by state educational agencies, institutions of higher education, nonprofit private schools, public and nonprofit private agencies such as libraries, museums, musical and artistic organizations, educational radio and TV and other cultural and educational resources.

Funds for supplemental centers are completely federal and the model schools are not bound by state laws. Some fear that this constitutes the beginning of a new system of federal-local schools, which are not responsible to any state agency.

The Act authorizes the expenditure of \$100 million for the first year.

#### TITLE IV

##### *Educational Research and Training*

Less than one-fifth of 1% of the \$34 billion spent on public education is spent for basic research, and only .35% of the Federal funds spent in research and development in 1964 went for educational research. Title IV attempts to improve this situation by amending PL 83-531 — the Cooperative Research Act.

The U. S. Commissioner of Education is authorized to make grants to — or enter into contracts or jointly-financed cooperative arrangements with — universities, colleges and other public or nonprofit private agencies, institutions and organizations, and to individuals for research in the field of education and the dissemination of information derived from research. The Commissioner can permit grantees to use funds to provide training in research in education. The funds cannot be used for training in sectarian instruction or work in an institution whose program is specifically to prepare students to become ministers, enter another religious vocation, or teach theological subjects. The Commissioner can also make grants to a university, college or other appropriate agency or institution

for constructing a facility for research.

Funds are not distributed by the states. This by-passes the level of government which has the primary responsibility for education. Moreover, regional research facilities would be tied in with the local supplemental centers of Title III. Research financed by the federal government in curriculum, course content, methodology, materials and professional standards for teachers can be fed into the school through the local-federal supplemental centers and the model schools. Again the states are by-passed.

#### TITLE V

##### *State Departments of Education*

Title V authorizes a five-year program of grants to stimulate and assist states to strengthen their state educational agencies. Fifteen percent of the funds each year will be used for grants to state educational agencies for experimental projects for developing state leadership or the establishment of special services which might help solve problems common to the state educational agencies of all or several states. Then \$100,000 is given to each state, with the rest apportioned among the states according to the relative number of public school students. After the second year, the states have to match between 34 and 50% of the federal funds, depending upon the state's per capita income relative to the whole country.

The departments of education in the states will need funds in Title V primarily to meet the costs of planning and administering the other Titles. Secondly the funds will be used to strengthen the departments in work not directly connected with the Act. The state departments may increase their staffs, pay higher salaries and institute other changes so that they may be better leaders for the local educational agencies. Possible uses for funds would include more extensive use of IBM machines and modern methods of data collection heretofore prohibited because of cost.

Proponents of the Act argue that Title V will improve state departments which can then provide better leadership for local districts so that Federal government won't have to intervene more directly and set national standards. Possibly under this Title nationwide systems of uniform reporting of building needs and salaries can be instituted, thus making compar-

isons of educational inequalities more feasible.

Opponents worry that poor departments of education will only become federal agencies. This fear is heightened by the fact that the U. S. Commissioner of Education can assign people from his office to work in the state agency for periods up to two years. Proponents maintain that these assignments will be only for special projects and will help the federal office to understand better the state's particular problems.

#### TITLE VI

##### *General Provisions*

This stipulates that nothing in the Act should be construed to authorize any government department, agency, officer or employee to exercise any direction, supervision or control over the curriculum, program of instruction, administration or personnel of any educational institution or school system, or over the selection of library resources, textbooks or other instructional materials. It also stipulates that nothing in the Act should be construed to authorize any payment for religious worship or instruction.

#### **Minnesota and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act**

*(as of June 15)*

Only superficial planning has been done so far since the federal guide lines have not been set. After the federal guide lines are made known, Minnesota officials can work on state guide lines. Moreover, Congress has not yet passed an appropriation bill. Title V is expected to be funded in July. Then the State Department of Education can hire needed staff for implementing other titles which will be funded by late summer or late fall.

#### **Dr. Paul Marvin Awarded Honorary State Farmer Degree**

Dr. R. Paul Marvin, associate professor of agricultural education at the University of Minnesota, was among those selected to receive the coveted degree of Honorary State Farmer from the Minnesota Association of Future Farmers of America in 1965. The ceremony was conducted during the annual convention of the Minnesota FFA on May 3, 1965 at the banquet held this year at Aldrich Arena in St. Paul. More than two thousand FFA members and friends of the FFA attended. The citation accompanying Dr. Marvin's

award stated: "Dr. Marvin has taught elementary school prior to his career as a secondary teacher of agriculture. He came to the University of Minnesota in 1956 and in 1960 became a member of the faculty of the Agricultural Education department. Throughout his career Dr. Marvin has given wholehearted support to the FFA and its members and has inspired FFA members throughout Minnesota to greater effort."

Others receiving Honorary State Farmer degrees were: Farley D. Bright, Assistant Commissioner of Education; Herbert Flueck, U. S. Soil Conservation Service; Peter Fog, Vocational Agriculture Instructor at Halstad; C. A. Fountain, St.

Paul Union Stockyards Company; Dr. LaVern Freeh, Director of Short Courses at the University of Minnesota; William Guelker, Staples Area Vocational School; Norbert Hartle, Owatonna, Father of State FFA president; Lawrence Lamberty, Northwestern National Bank, Rochester; Joe Martinson, KWLM Radio, Willmar; Harry Peirce, Jr., Vocational Agriculture Instructor at Winona; Kenneth Relyea, Farmers Seed & Nursery Company, Faribault; The Honorable Carl F. Rolvaag, Governor of the State of Minnesota; Dr. Olaf C. Soine, Northwest School and Experiment Station, Crookston; and Truman Tillerias, Vocation Agriculture Instructor at Blooming Prairie.



Left to Right - Dr. Marvin; David Hartle, Owatonna, State FFA President; Ronald Erpelding, Kimball, State Sentinel; Gene Sim, Lewiston, Vice President.