

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

New Grant Bill Okayed

By BILL LYNCH (States-Item Bureau) BATON ROUGE—The House Appropriations Committee today gave 10 to 9 approval of a bill designed to supplant the grant-in-aid program should the present law be knocked out by a federal court.

The committee acted following long debate on the bill yesterday and after proponents watered its affects down considerably.

Chairman Robert Munson of Rapides Parish reportedly cast the tie-breaking vote for committee balloted to a 9-9 deadlock. One member of the committee was absent, attending another committee hearing.

REP. JOHN GARRETT, Claiborne Parish, chairman of the Joint Legislative Committee on Segregation, said his group agreed to several significant amendments, including one that limited expenditures to \$3.6 million.

The \$3.6 million is the same as the appropriation for the grant-in-aid program next fiscal year.

Other amendments tacked on by the committee restore the non-sectarian feature.

eliminate any appropriation for paying school teachers by public school boards, and one is planned to make certain retarded children statutes would not be affected.

GARRETT'S BILL, drafted by Plaquemines Parish political boss Leander H. Perez, would draw on state moneys receipts to pay grants to needy children and retarded children.

It had an open end appropriation feature that would have permitted the expenditure of unlimited sums. This was changed to the maximum \$3.6 million.

It also had started out with a \$2 million appropriation for local school boards to pay teachers' in private schools. This was reduced to \$1 million yesterday and eliminated this morning.

THERE WERE SOME fears expressed that the wording of the bill wiping out conflicting statutes might adversely affect laws pertaining to retarded children. Garrett said that an amendment would be made to take care of this part.

Rep. Munson declined to reveal how the committee had voted. He said that since it was in executive session he would have no comment to make on the vote.

The committee started out with all 20 members present, according to Munson.

IT WAS LEARNED that the committee voted even on the controversial measure before Munson cast the tie breaker. Ordinarily chairmen of committees do not vote unless there is a tie.

The committee session started about 9 a.m. and the group took up routine matters, hearing a number of witnesses on other appropriation bills.

Then about 10:30 a.m. the committee went into executive session and it was not until just before noon that a decision was revealed.

THE CURRENT grant-in-aid program is in danger of being ruled unconstitutional by a three-judge federal panel which has taken under advisement a suit by a group of Negroes and the Justice Department.

The suit charged that the grant-in-aid program is a subterfuge to get around desegregation rulings of the court.

Current grants are provided for out of the sales tax and the proposed bill would take funds from the welfare excess revenues.

THE PROPOSED bill does not contain any feature that would hold it in abeyance until the present program was knocked out, but a spokesman for proponents said it was not likely to be used unless the program were eliminated.

Nonetheless it would provide, if passed, an additional \$3.6 million in state funds for the grant-in-aid program if the courts should not declare the present law illegal.

The grant-in-aid bill became the single largest issue pending before the Legislature, in addition the general appropriations measure which is not expected to have much difficulty passing.

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