

Federal Aid to Education

THE STALEMATE concerning federal aid for current operation of elementary and secondary schools continues on Capitol Hill. Sponsors of the legislation have refused to compromise the principle of separation of church and State beyond the provisions of the Thomas-Taft bill already passed by the Senate. The Senate bill would leave to the states the question of eligibility of pupils in private schools to receive auxiliary benefits such as transportation and health services.

Opponents of the legislation are principally of two groups, (a) those who do not want federal aid at all, (b) those who do not really want it but are willing to permit it to pass provided private schools are allowed to share in it. Any concession to the second group on "auxiliary" services would mean that federal funds would be used to initiate services to pupils in private schools for which the use of State funds is now unconstitutional or illegal under State law in a majority of the states. The Thomas-Taft bill will probably pass if it can be brought to vote in the House.

Reorganization Plan No. 1

The Senate vetoed the President's Reorganization Plan No. 1 in August. It would have created a Department of Welfare with power in its Secretary to allocate health and education functions as he chose. Plan No. 1 violated the Hoover Commission's recommendations on health services, and the medical profession was primarily responsible for its defeat.

If the plan is resubmitted in January, 1950, minus the provisions opposed by the medical profession, educators will have to fight alone to keep the U.S. Office of Education from absorption by "welfare."

This issue is one of paramount importance for the future of education.

School Construction

The School Construction Act (S.2317) is on the Senate calendar, with a favorable report from the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare. The committee recommended for passage at the current session of Congress only the provisions for emergency aid to districts especially burdened by federal activities and for \$5 million of federal funds to states to assist in financing surveys and plans for school construction. This emergency and planning legislation has a good chance for passage sometime during the 81st Congress, but a large-scale federal aid program for construction appears unlikely in the immediate future.

Special Aid for Current Costs

in Federally Burdened Districts

Congress has voted \$7,500,000 for current maintenance and operation expenses in certain local school districts especially burdened by federal activities. The administrative arrangements are admittedly objectionable, and both Senate and House committees recommended consideration of permanent and comprehensive legislation as soon as possible. Hearings will be held in the House on such legislation in September.

There are at least 60,000 school children living on federal properties and several times as many in federally burdened school districts for whom federal funds for education vary from nothing at all to the full cost.

Numerous other bills affecting education are pending.—*Edgar Fuller, Executive Secretary, National Council of Chief State School Officers, Washington, D. C.*

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