

Antiquated School Laws Blamed For Unequal Revenue

Springfield, Ill., April 8—School districts in Lake County, as in all other Illinois counties, suffer remarkable inequalities in ability to support schools. One school may have a surfeit of income. The next starves. Antiquated school and revenue laws are to blame. They breed unfairness to schools, to teachers and to pupils.

When one district rolls in wealth and a neighbor is mired in poverty something is wrong. One good sign is that the public, finally becoming informed, is beginning to be aroused. More than 90 per cent of a school's support today must come from local property taxes.

Under the present law a school board may levy, without referendum, a tax rate of one dollar to the \$100 of assessed valuation on all property in the district for educational purposes. Let's see what that means—

Spring Valley school district, Saline County, has 43 children. Assessed valuation, all property in the district, is \$12,130. That district, taxing itself to the limit, can raise only \$2.82 per child per year.

Dieckes school district, Kane County, has one child; assessed valuation, all property, \$177,419. That district, taxing itself to the limit, can raise \$1,774.19 to educate its child.

In the York House district in Lake County there are 5 children and the assessed valuation of all property is \$113,805. That district, taxing itself to the limit, can raise \$227.61 per child per year.

In the Hickory district in Lake County there are 31 children and the assessed valuation of all property is \$149,645. That district under the same law can raise only \$48.27 per child per year.

Similar comparisons with similar inequalities can be found in practically every county in the state.

Duncan district, Saline County, 52 children, has an assessed valuation of \$25,050; Saratoga district, Union County, 43 children, \$55,628; Runcombe district, Jackson County, 65 children, \$63,836; Hicks Branch district, Hardin County, 59 children, \$50,609.

Here are 225 children, in four separate districts in four counties, with only \$195,123 in assessed valuation behind the lot of them. That's an average of \$8.67 per child per year.

Now change the picture— Addison district, DuPage County, 23 children, has property assessed at \$1,221,045. That's \$530.88 per child per year. Or turn to Bond County where the Marti district, 4 children, has an assessed valuation of \$228,252. That's \$570.63 per child per year.

Under the law a district through which a railroad runs receives taxes for all the railroad property in that district. Districts without railroad property get no railroad taxes. Hence the railroads pay as high as 50 and 60 per cent of school support in some districts and none at all in others. Yet the railroad may get more revenue from the district to which it pays nothing than from the one it helps to support.

The state gives special aid to the poorer districts. This special aid comes out of the state school fund of \$10,500,000 which it is presumed the state contributes to school support. But the joker in the deck is that the state is delinquent nearly \$15,000,000 on its payments to that fund. It is short \$7,000,000 in its payments for this biennium alone and even more for previous bienniums.

Hundreds of school districts, in desperate condition, would face no trouble at all if the state would only pay them—money promised under the law and in good faith. This situation would be corrected quickly, no doubt, if all districts were in trouble. What seems to be halting the cure is this:

Too many residents of the impoverished districts, with starved schools and unpaid teachers, admit they are licked. Fight is gone out of them. In their dismay they silently admit helplessness. They're taking it lying down.

On the other hand, most residents of wealthy districts are undisturbed and uninterested. "All's well with the world," they say, and let it go at that. Their houses are not on fire.

Other states have modernized their school laws. Many other states have no similar problems. Numerous states, using a pinch of wisdom, have ironed out their inequalities. It isn't difficult. California, New York, Delaware, New Jersey, Indiana and Kentucky are all bright examples. They have proved what can be done if the school laws are brought up-to-date.

Victims of Illinois' antiquated school laws are saying to the legislature, "Do something about it."

Bingo Party April 30 in Holy Cross Parish

The next parish activity of the Holy Cross Church in Deerfield will be a bingo party Tuesday evening, April 30, at the parish hall. Mrs. Hubert McGuire is chairman of arrangements. A meeting of her committee was held Monday evening at the Rectory.

Civic Talks Heard at Deerfield Club

Assessor E. H. Selig in an interesting talk at the Deerfield Women's Club last Tuesday, told how property was valued and assessed in West Deerfield Township. There are over 5,000 listings. One hundred per cent real estate is the Briar Hill subdivision, according to Mr. Selig. Second is Briar Woods across from the Deerfield Grammar School, and the third most desirable location is Woodland Park subdivision. The average lot is 150 feet in depth. For every additional 25 feet in depth, five per cent is added to the assessed value and ten per cent is added for corner lots.

Personal tax collected in the entire township is only one-tenth of the real estate value. Deerfield residents are assessed \$5.69 per \$100 valuation.

Carleton Scribner, village trustee and chairman of the water department, told the women the history of the water question, beginning in 1913 with a charge of 8 1/2 cents and an increase to 9 cents up to 1923. In 1925 the use of water was limited and the following year a bond issue was voted to run a new line from Highland Park, erect a new pump house and tank. In 1929 Highland Park voted a new pumping station and increased the Deerfield rate to 15 cents. Deerfield board members refused to pay the increase and in 1932 were still paying the old rate. The village was threatened with injunctions, and Deerfield's debt for water was \$21,970.

When Mayor Harry Clavey and his board of trustees took over the regime in 1932 the water situation was settled. Deerfield agreed to pay its water bill when able and signed a contract which runs to April 3, 1938. During the two years of office the present board has kept all current water bills paid and has paid off \$7,000 on the old bill. Deerfield sends out monthly water bills and charge 35 cents plus 5 cents penalty. When Deerfield's debt is paid its water rate to villagers will undoubtedly be lowered. Deerfield has not had to use its pumping station since Highland Park built its new water works.

Supervisor James O'Connor and Mrs. William Tennermann of the Illinois Emergency Relief Commission told of the township's assistance in this depression.

Deerfield Rotarians Elect New Directors

The Illinois Wesleyan Apollo Club sang at the Deerfield Grammar School last Thursday. They were the guests of the Deerfield Rotary Club and after the weekly Rotary luncheon the men went to the school and shared the music with the four upper grades. Harold Vant was in charge of the program.

Dr. J. P. O'Connell will present today's program.

"The Pinion," Deerfield Rotarian publication, contains the following: "Visitors last week included Geo. Youngs and Alex Smith of Glencoe; Roy Irsdale of Winnetka; Frank Whitlock of Highland Park."

"At the annual election of the board of directors last week the following members were elected as directors for the Rotary year July 1, 1935, to July 1, 1936: Bates, Bickford, Host, Jordan, Metcalf, Piepenbrock, Vant. These men will meet next week and elect their officers."

"Dr. Walter Metcalf made a splendid talk last week on the development of the medical profession since he began to practice. It seems like more talks about our intimate lives and work would be very appropriate and interesting."

Art-Music Service at Bethlehem Church

Reproductions of old masterpieces of art will be shown Sunday evening at 8 o'clock in the Bethlehem Evangelical Church, Deerfield.

Harold R. Vant has arranged an interesting program of stereopticon pictures of "The Resurrection and Ascension of Christ in Scripture, Music and Art."

An interpretation of the pictures will be given by Rev. Earl J. Brusio interspersed with scriptures, special music and anthems by the choir.

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