

Boston Court Says Aid Bill Is Unconstitutional in Mass.

Boston —(NC)— The Massachusetts supreme court, for the second time in a month, declared June 9 that legislation to aid nonpublic education would violate the state constitution.

An advisory opinion of the court held that a proposed House bill to grant \$100 annually for every student enrolled in a nonpublic school would violate an anti-aid amendment.

On May 11, another bill to permit the state to purchase educational services from nonpublic units was labeled unconstitutional.

The court held that "there is no deprivation of the equal protection of the laws" in ruling out parochial or private school aid.

"The parents and their children have equal access to public schools," the court observed. Declaring that "it is not essential to a valid scheme of tax-

fit from it in precisely the same manner that all the people benefit," the court added, "a parent has no constitutional right to exemption from taxes for the support of schools or other services merely because he does not make use of them."

State Rep. John J. Mooney of Canton, Mass., a sponsor of the grant proposal, said the court neglected to draw a distinction between a "purchase of educational services" and the tuition voucher system. He said the voucher measure should be construed as aid to individuals rather than to institutions.

He opined that the court ruling might threaten other state aid for education in Massachusetts.

"One of the major programs in doubt," the legislator said, "is the state scholarship program for students attending college."

or another. He said "barriers" are mainly caused by bureaucratic unconcern and weakness in U.S. laws, and he called for the opening of "new doors."

Priest Says the Elderly Suffer 'Benign Neglect'

Washington, D.C. —(RNS)— Another segment of the U.S. population, the elderly, is being treated with "benign neglect," especially with regard to housing and health care, a Catholic priest told a Senate special committee hearing.

"Reduction in existing programs is evident, as is a lack of new programs for the elderly," charged Father Charles F. Fahey, chairman of the Commission on Aging, National Conference of Catholic Charities.

He spoke before a U.S. Senate Special Committee on the Aging, headed by Sen. Harrison A. Williams (D-N.J.) which heard religious, civic and labor leaders on the subject of "sources of community support for federal programs serving older Americans."

Father Fahey said he was extremely concerned about the Nixon Administration's new housing bill since it makes no mention of housing for the elderly.

"The elderly and the mentally ill," he said, "seem to be caught in the middle of a federal-state pushing match as each establishment tries to pass responsibility for them to the other. There seems to be too little concern for the elderly who cannot be rehabilitated. These folks too have become our 'out-of-sight, out-of-mind' poor."

The priest, who is also director of Catholic Charities for the Syracuse, N.Y., diocese, said "there are many signs that the Administration is pursuing a cause of 'benign neglect' in regard to the elderly."

He noted that Medicare benefits for extended care patients have virtually ceased and sections of the 1968 Housing Act which assist the elderly, have, in effect, been discontinued. He said both developments have crippled or curtailed church programs in these areas.

Sen. Williams, acknowledging in his opening statement that the federal government cannot meet all the needs of older Americans, said that "it needs the help of churches, labor unions and organizations which have either a direct or indirect interest in the well-being of the elderly."

He said he has been disturbed by reports that church and other non-profit groups have encountered "difficulties" in trying to serve the elderly through federal programs of one kind

Ladies of Charity Benefit Indians

St. Louis —(RNS)— A Catholic women's organization announced that Indian missions in the western U.S. have received some 8,000 pounds of clothing and nearly \$1,000 in cash as a result of a nationwide drive by the agency. A total of 219 associations of the Ladies of Charity of the United States (ALCUS) participated in the campaign.

Courier-Journal

Bishops' Department Lobbies for Farm Workers

Washington, D.C. —(NC)— A department of the United States Catholic Conference is urging senators to present passage of the Employment Security Amendments of 1970 until steps are taken to insure unemployment compensation coverage for farm workers.

In a letter to 22 senators, John Cosgrove, director of the USCC Department of Social Development, said that the action of appointed conferees to exclude the farm workers provision "perpetuates an unconscionable denial of justice to a significant segment of the American labor force."

Some U.S. senators agree. Sen. Fred Harris (D-Okla.) along with Sen. Jacob K. Javits (R-N.Y.) and Walter F. Mondale (D-Minn.), plans to introduce a motion that would require the House to call a new conference.

However, this motion can be made only if they can get the

Senate to reject the present conference report.

The Senate and the House have gone round robin on the Employment Security Amendments since last November, when the House Ways and Means Committee voted to continue the present exclusion of farm workers from coverage. It did this in spite of a request from the Nixon Administration to extend coverage to 400,000 farm workers.

The Mouths Of Babes

Greece is just a little spot on the map.

Such sage sayings have been culled from the work of children in a Detroit grade school and distributed via "The Michigan Catholic" and NC News Service.

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Wednesday, June 17, 1970