

Rocky Switches, Pledges Aid for Private Schools

Albany—(RNS)—Gov. Rockefeller, declaring that New York's non-public schools face a "greater crisis" than public schools, indicated here that he is drawing up a multi-million dollar program of aid to parochial schools.

In pledging aid to parochial schools, over and above the \$28 million mandated services program, textbook loans and transportation costs, the governor apparently reversed a stand taken two weeks earlier when he strongly opposed the major bill aimed at assisting parochial schools.

Speaking at a news conference here (Feb. 22), Gov. Rockefeller said he still opposed the Speno-Lerner tuition-aid bill because it involved "outright grants" to parents.

At the same time, the governor noted that his program, the details of which are not completed, will not require the repeal of the so-called Blaine Amendment, the constitutional prohibition against state aid to non-public schools.

The governor's statement followed by just two days an impromptu meeting with several Catholic educational leaders following the funeral of Sen. Edward J. Speno, one of the tuition aid bill's co-sponsors. The governor and the Catholic leaders reportedly conferred in the rectory of St. Agnes Cathedral, Rockville Center.

A day before Rockefeller's news conference announcing the new parochial program, several hundred angry parochial school parents from Brooklyn demonstrated at the state Capitol in Albany, protesting the

governor's opposition to the Speno-Lerner tuition-aid bill.

Conceding that he is separating the public and parochial aid issues, the governor told newsmen that "there is a greater crisis by far in the private schools than there is in the public schools. There is going to have to be additional aid," he added.

The governor's program also is expected to bring spirited reaction from public school administrators in New York who have been told that they cannot expect any financial assistance this year because of the state's fiscal crisis.

While he did not indicate what form his new program would take or how much money it would involve, the governor expressed the view that aid must come this year even before the repeal of the Blaine Amendment. He said:

"If Blaine isn't repealed and this crisis has grown very seriously, the actual cost to taxpayers of closing private schools and having to expand the public schools would be greater than some additional aid to private schools."

The Blaine Amendment had been expected to undergo a second repeal vote in the state legislature this Spring before being submitted to the voters next November.

However, legislative leaders postponed action when parochial school officials opted for the Speno-Lerner bill as a faster method of obtaining state aid. The bill's sponsors believe that tuition-aid grants are constitutional even under Blaine.



Berrigan Rally

At a recent rally in New York attended by about 450 persons in support of Fathers Daniel and Philip Berrigan, more than 300 persons calling themselves the "Hoover Vacuum Conspiracy" claimed credit for destroying draft records in New Jersey, Dec. 17, 1970.

Rabbi Lectures At Gregorian

Rome — (RNS) — The first Jewish scholar ever named to teach at the 419-year-old Pontifical Gregorian University gave his first lecture on "Judaic Literature in the Time of the New Testament."

Dr. David Neiman, 49, an ordained rabbi who is on leave from Boston College, a Jesuit institution where he teaches Old Testament literature and Jewish theology, told his class of 23 students:

"You'll hear a lot about the New Testament from me. It is one of the most significant creations of Judaism—it is Jewish literature."

Dr. Neiman is the third non-Catholic ever to teach at the Jesuit-maintained Gregorian University. The others were Dr. Robert Nelson, an American Methodist pastor, in 1968, and Dr. Dale Moody, a Baptist theologian, in 1969.

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