

1920

## SCHOOL SYSTEM

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systems or works be included within such proposed district. Lands already irrigated and riparian lands may be included in the district if in the judgment of the board of supervisors such land will be benefited, or if the water used thereon or the rights to the use of water thereon should in the judgment of the board of supervisors, be taken or acquired for the district. Any person whose lands are susceptible of irrigation from any of the proposed sources may, upon his application, in the discretion of said board, have such lands included within said proposed district.

Section 9. The board of supervisors shall meet on the second Monday succeeding such election, and shall proceed to canvass the votes cast thereat, and if upon such canvass it appears that at least two-thirds of all the votes cast are "irrigation district—yes," said board shall, by an order entered on its minutes, declare the territory duly organized as an irrigation district, under the name theretofore designated, and shall declare the persons receiving respectively the highest number of votes at said election to be duly elected.

#### ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF AMENDING THE IRRIGATION DISTRICT ACT.

This act changes the irrigation district law by requiring a majority vote instead of a two-thirds vote in order to organize an irrigation district.

The measure passed the senate with no dissenting votes, and after careful and prolonged consideration, passed the assembly with only fourteen votes against and fifty-seven votes for it.

The greatest source of the potential and undeveloped wealth of the state lies in its water supply. With its highest possible development, there is not enough water in the state to irrigate all of the arid land. It therefore is essential for the prosperity and well being of the state that the laws for the use and development of this water be made as liberal as possible. The measure in question merely applies to the formation of irrigation districts the democratic principle of majority rule applicable to practically all other governmental functions. The power which this amendment gives to the majority in any proposed irrigation district to determine whether or not such district shall be organized is amply protected from abuse by the fact that the state engineer and the other members of the state bond commission, consisting of the attorney general and superintendent of banks, possess what is in effect a veto power, and are fully authorized to prevent the attempted carrying out of a visionary or unsound irrigation scheme, in spite of a favorable vote by the electors. The prosperity of the state imperatively demands the full utilization of our

very meager water supply, and by giving to the majority, instead of two-thirds of the people within any specified territory, the right to determine whether they desire to use this water to irrigate their lands, a small minority ignorant or ultraconservative people will be prevented from blocking progress and condemning fertile land to perpetual aridity. Since the public is protected from unsound projects by the state board above mentioned, it is rather difficult to understand the objection to the proposed amendment.

The organization of an irrigation district merely provides the machinery to enable the people in the district to make the necessary engineering and other investigations so that they can decide whether or not it is wise to proceed with the project. Under existing laws there are no means by which the necessary organization can be effected and funds provided for such investigation, without organizing a district. If after such organization by a majority vote, careful engineering investigations show that the project is not feasible, or if the people in the district do not desire to proceed with the project, the matter can be abandoned. It should be kept in mind that the vote involved in this measure is merely the vote upon organization, and the people in the district are in no wise committed to go ahead with such project unless, after full investigation, it appeals to their sound judgment.

L. L. DENNETT,

State Senator Twelfth District.

#### ARGUMENT AGAINST AMENDING THE IRRIGATION DISTRICT ACT.

The purpose of this act is to permit persons owning twenty per cent of the land to propose an irrigation district and to permit the same to be organized on a vote of a majority of voters in the district instead of by a two-thirds vote as at present. The present Irrigation District Act was formed for the purpose of preventing the numerous failures in irrigation districts, and was intended to increase the stability of such districts and improve the salability of the bonds thereof. This proposed amendment would permit a small minority of the land owners to petition for a district and permit a bare majority of the voters in the district to form the district against the will of the land owners interested. It would permit the lands of the district to be so laid out as to include towns which could vote the formation of districts entirely against the will of the land owners.

The amendment is clearly reactionary and will weaken the bonds of irrigation districts and cause a repetition of the failures of earlier irrigation districts in the state.

J. E. OLCESE.

**SCHOOL SYSTEM.** Initiative measure amending Section 6, Article IX of Constitution. Adds kindergartens to public school system; requires addition to state school fund, and creation of state high school fund, from state revenues to provide elementary, secondary, and technical schools, respectively, with minimum of thirty dollars per pupil; requires county tax levies producing for elementary schools amount not less than state apportionment, and for secondary and technical schools amount at least twice state apportionment; requires school district tax levies for school purposes; applies state apportionment, and at least sixty per cent of county school taxes, to teachers' salaries exclusively.

YES

NO

Sufficient qualified electors of the State of California present to the secretary of state this petition and propose to the people of the State of California that section six of article nine of the constitution of the State of California, relating to the public school system, the state school fund, and the state high school

(Part 2)

fund, and the use of those funds, be amended so as to read as follows:

PROPOSED AMENDMENT.

(Proposed changes in provisions are printed black-faced type.)

Section 6. The public school system shall include day and evening elementary schools,

and such day and evening secondary schools, technical schools, kindergarten schools and normal schools or teachers' colleges, as may be established by the legislature, or by municipal district authority.

The legislature shall add to the state school fund such other means from the revenues of the state as shall provide in said fund for distribution in each school year in such manner as the legislature shall provide an amount not less than thirty dollars per pupil in average daily attendance in the day and evening elementary schools in the public school system during the next preceding school year.

The legislature shall provide a state high school fund from the revenues of the state for the support of day and evening secondary and technical schools, which for each school year, shall provide for distribution in such manner as the legislature shall provide an amount not less than thirty dollars per pupil in average daily attendance in the day and evening secondary and technical schools in the public school system during the next preceding school year.

The legislature shall provide for the levying of a county, and city and county, elementary school tax, by the board of supervisors of each county, and city and county, sufficient in amount to produce a sum of money not less than the amount of money to be received during the current school year from the state for the support of the public day and evening elementary schools of the county, or city and county; provided that said elementary school tax levied by any board of supervisors shall produce not less than thirty dollars per pupil in average daily attendance in the public day and evening elementary schools of the county, or city and county, during the next preceding school year.

The legislature shall provide for the levying of a county, and city and county, high school tax, by the board of supervisors of each county, and city and county, sufficient in amount to produce a sum of money not less than twice the amount of money to be received during the current school year from the state for the support of the public day and evening secondary and technical schools of the county, or city and county; provided that the high school tax levied by the board of supervisors shall produce not less than sixty dollars per pupil in average daily attendance in the public day and evening secondary schools of the county, or city and county, during the next preceding school year.

The legislature shall provide for the levying of school district taxes by the board of supervisors of each county, and city and county, for the support of public elementary schools, secondary schools, technical schools, and kindergarten schools, or for any other public school purpose authorized by the legislature.

The entire amount of money provided by the state, and not less than sixty per cent of the amount of money provided by county, or city and county, school taxes shall be applied exclusively to the payment of public school teachers' salaries.

The revenues provided for the public school system for the school year ending June 30, 1921, shall not be affected by this amendment except as the legislature may provide.

#### EXISTING PROVISIONS.

Section six, article nine, proposed to be amended, now reads as follows:

(Provisions proposed to be changed are printed in italics.)

Section 6. The public school system shall include day and evening elementary schools, and day and evening secondary schools, normal schools, and technical schools as may be established by the legislature, or by municipal district authority. The entire revenue derived from the state school fund \* [and from the *general state school tax*] shall be applied exclusively to

the support of day and evening elementary schools: \* [but the legislature may authorize and cause to be levied a special *state school tax* for the support of day and evening secondary schools and technical schools, or either of such schools, included in the public school system, and all revenue derived from such special tax shall be applied exclusively to the support of the schools for which such special tax shall be levied.]

\*NOTE.—Provisions enclosed in brackets were by implication superseded by those of section fourteen, article thirteen, adopted November 8, 1910, which section provides for a system of taxation for state purposes. As above section six was, however, not specifically referred to or repealed by said section fourteen, section six is reprinted as it stands with type indicating changes which will specifically be brought about by the proposed new section six.

In section six reference is made to the state school fund. Section four of article nine, which provides for said fund, reads as follows:

Section 4. The proceeds of all lands that have been or may be granted by the United States to this state for the support of common schools, which may be, or may have been, sold or disposed of, and the five hundred thousand acres of land granted to the new states under an act of congress distributing the proceeds of the public lands among the several states of the union, approved A. D. one thousand eight hundred and forty-one, and all estates of deceased persons who may have died without leaving a will or heir, and also such per cent as may be granted, or may have been granted, by congress on the sale of lands in this state, shall be and remain a perpetual fund, the interest of which, together with all the rents of the unsold lands, and such other means as the legislature may provide, shall be inviolably appropriated to the support of common schools throughout the state.

In subdivision (e) of said section fourteen, article thirteen, provision is made for additional moneys for school purposes, as follows:

(e) Out of the revenues from the taxes provided for in this section, together with all other state revenues: there shall be first set apart the moneys to be applied by the state to the support of the public school system and the state university. In the event that the above named revenues are at any time deemed insufficient to meet the annual expenditures of the state, including the above named expenditures for educational purposes, there may be levied, in the manner to be provided by law, a tax, for state purposes, on all the property in the state, including the classes of property enumerated in this section, sufficient to meet the deficiency. All property enumerated in subdivisions a, b, and d of this section shall be subject to taxation, in the manner provided by law, to pay the principal and interest of any bonded indebtedness created and outstanding by any city, city and county, county, town, township or district, before the adoption of this section. The taxes so paid for principal and interest on such bonded indebtedness shall be deducted from the total amount paid in taxes for state purposes.

#### ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF SCHOOL SYSTEM CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT.

This constitutional amendment was framed to provide more definite and adequate support for public schools. It will increase the state's contribution for support of elementary and high schools about \$270 yearly for each teacher employed. The average yearly salary for elementary teachers is about \$1,000. This amendment will raise this average to about \$1,270. This is not too much to pay teachers who hold in their hands the destiny of America.

A salary is worth only what it will buy. The amendment will not really increase teachers' salaries, but will merely restore a fraction of the purchasing power of teachers' salaries taken away by the war. It will restore about 27 per cent whereas the cost of living has increased 100 per cent.

The chief beneficiaries of this amendment will be the children and State of California. Men and women need not teach. Business and industry have proved this by taking teachers away from the schools. In August, 1920, there were over 600 schools in California without teachers, mostly in country districts where yearly salaries range from \$600 to \$1,000.

American parents will not make their homes where schools are unsatisfactory. They will move away. If their places on farms are not taken, production is decreased and city dwellers must pay more for food. If their places are taken by Japanese and other Orientals, Californians will be sacrificing their birthright. This amendment will help secure good country schools to hold Americans on farms.

The amendment restores the old principle, that the state and the county should be equal partners in supporting elementary schools. Up to 1911, the state paid more toward salaries and other expenses of elementary schools than the county. Before 1908, it paid more than county and districts combined. In 1911, the state contributed \$533 per teacher; in 1913, it contributed \$421, a decrease of \$112; in 1918, the county contributed \$433 per teacher; in 1918, it contributed \$439, an increase of \$6. In 1911, the district contributed only \$211 per teacher; in 1918, it contributed \$602, an increase of \$391.

The state has been shifting its school burdens to counties and school districts. A small increase of state support by the last Legislature did not restore the balance. This amendment will restore the principle of equal support and guarantee it by constitutional provision. It increases state aid for high schools from \$15 to \$30 per pupil. The county contribution for high schools is not increased.

"Why not let districts take care of the schools?" Hundreds of districts are too poor. In rural counties the total assessment of many school districts is about \$20,000 each. If the maximum district rate for elementary schools were levied, only \$60 a year would be raised! This is pitifully insufficient. This amendment is their chief hope for relief.

A vote for this amendment will uphold the principle that money for schools shall be raised where income is, and distributed where children are.

WILL C. WOOD,

Superintendent Public Instruction.

#### ARGUMENT AGAINST SCHOOL SYSTEM CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT.

All good Americans are friends of the schools, and favor adequate pay for efficient teaching. Salaries are fixed by school boards. The question here is purely ways and means.

The purpose of a constitution is to embody the organic law of the state and lay down fundamental rules and principles for the conduct of its affairs. Details belong in statutes.

If this new tax scheme is voted into the constitution, not a word of it can ever be changed except by vote of the people at some future election, after some one with a barrel of money gets up a huge petition of about 80,000 signatures (at present) to get it on the ballot. On the ranches we call such a situation "roped and hog tied."

This whole amendment in detail, already sanctioned by the constitution and for many years provided for in the statutes.

It increases the state aid for elementary schools from \$17.50 to \$30 per pupil in average daily attendance. The present legislature raised it to \$17.50 from \$15. The original bill said \$21, but the official advisers insisted that an increase of more than \$2.50 per pupil was impossible for lack of money.

The present legislature also increased the minimum county elementary tax from \$13 to \$21 per pupil. This amendment raises it from \$21 to \$30. Supervisors now have discretionary power to raise this tax to the legal limit of 50 cents per \$100. The proposed amendment does not provide any limit. But it does carefully provide for continuing the district special tax.

The amendment increases state aid for high schools from \$15 to \$30 per pupil, leaving the county high school tax at \$60 for the minimum.

The state aid to counties, fiscal year 1917-18, was \$6,854,346. When this amendment can be put into effect, if carried, that amount will be around \$8,000,000, owing to natural increase in attendance and to new attendance laws. The proposed amendment virtually doubles that sum to approximately \$16,000,000.

Where is that extra \$8,000,000, increasing every year, to come from? There is only one known source. That is a state tax on all property. The state will force the money out of the people as a new tax, and distribute it among the counties as a gift.

One can charitably believe that the school heads who concocted this scheme and the teachers who are assessed for propaganda expenses, never got to the bottom of it.

The State Controller says the state and counties expended \$46,000,000 last year for educational purposes. "When such an enormous sum does not supply sufficient salary for the real teacher who is the heart of her school, something is rotten in the state of Denmark."

Here is a little pointer from the last biennial report of the State Board of Education, page 118, the Commissioner of Elementary Schools speaking: She says, "We are teaching much in the elementary schools that does not tend toward either efficiency or spirituality, in fact that does not lead anywhere."

W. A. DORAN,

Assemblyman, Eightieth District.