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March 29, 1974

House Passes Controversial
Education Bill, Senate Next

By Stan L. Hasteay

WASHINGTON (BP)--The U.S. House of Representatives has passed an education bill which provides for bypassing state prohibitions against aid to nonpublic schools.

The new measure authorizes an expenditure of more than \$18 billion and extends for four years the major provisions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

Under the bill, which passed by a 380 to 26 vote, the U.S. Commissioner of Education is empowered to provide funds for disadvantaged children attending nonpublic schools in states which have laws prohibiting such aid.

During the House debate on the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1974, an amendment to the so-called "bypass" provision was passed. The amendment, proposed by Rep. Lloyd Meeds (D.-Wash.), included three provisions:

--The amendment insures that the criteria for furnishing programs and services to educationally deprived children attending nonpublic schools shall remain the same as the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

--The amendment makes clear that there would be no cutoff of that portion of federal funds to be used for public school children when the commissioner chose to invoke the bypass.

--The amendment provides for administrative and judicial review in states where the bypass might be invoked.

Two other amendments, which would have deleted the entire section of the bill dealing with funds for nonpublic schools and the bypass provision, failed to muster enough support to reach the House floor for votes.

Another major feature of the new bill is an anti-busing provision which prohibits virtually all school busing designed to achieve racial balance. Under the measure, enforced busing would be forbidden except in extreme conditions. When employed, busing would never be beyond the school closest to the pupil's home, according to the amendment.

The new education bill, which came to the House floor from the Education and Labor Committee, chaired by Rep. Carl D. Perkins (D.-Ky.), must now survive what is expected to be a difficult battle in a conference committee with the U.S. Senate.

A major Senate education bill, which has yet to come before that body, differs widely from the House-passed measure. The Senate version does not include an anti-busing provision and has been threatened with a veto by President Nixon if passed without it.

The Senate version, however, does call for bypass provisions in funding programs for disadvantaged children attending nonpublic schools similar to those approved by the House.

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Wrapup
Seminar Registrants Peer
Into Murky Economic Window

3/29/74

By Robert O'Brien

HOUSTON (BP)--Registrants from 22 states spent three days peering into the complex world of economics from the perspective of how Christians can season it with their salt and illuminate it with their light.

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To some, their efforts resembled an attempt to "see through a glass darkly."

"Of all the general areas in the field of social ethics, none is as little known, as poorly understood and as sadly neglected as economics," explained Foy Valentine of Nashville, executive secretary of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, sponsor of the three-day seminar.

The commission's annual national seminar offered an array of diverse viewpoints, not to promote any particular economic or political school of thought, but to offer "an orch stration of ideas to communicate the gospel of Jesus Christ has relevance to the world of economics and that God is dealing with His people today to lead us to be the salt of the earth's economy and the light of the world's economic processes," Valentine said.

The 300 registrants heard the populist views of former U.S. Senator Fred Harris and th consumer advocacy of Ralph Nader, "Public Citizen."

Other speakers included Carl Madden, chief economist for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce; Vester T. Hughes, tax attorney from Dallas; Arthur A. Smith, a retired economics professor and retired senior vice president and economist of First National Bank of Dallas; Julia Montgomery Walsh, the only woman official of the American Stock Exchange and senior vice president of Ferris and Company, Washington; and William M. Dyal Jr., president of the Inter-American Foundation, Washington.

Dyal identified the key issue on "everybody's list of worries and issues" as the economy, both in its global interdependence aspects and in affluence.

"The time is here when developing nations, acting in concert, may be able to veto the wasteful use of minerals, food and other resources. The politics of oil is only the visible tip of the iceberg," said the former employee of both the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board and Christian Life Commission.

Nader, a United Methodist whose informal style and knowledgeable responsiveness impressed most participants, said the church has a great potential for bringing moral influence to bear on the needs of American citizens.

He and several other speakers emphasized the power the church has to bring about economic justice and challenge the marketplace with ethical concerns.

"The question is not whether we want the power or whether we have the power, but at whose disposal we will put it," said Ernest T. Campbell, pastor of New York's Riverside Church.

We must be willing to pay the price, said Madden, but "are we? It is not the failure of the biblical faith, but of witnesses to the biblical faith, who are often parochial in their outlook. It is often the church that is the most conservative element in our society and spokesmen for the church who seem to think they have the pipeline to wisdom and truth."

Nader said, "The church has never come to terms with the need to come to terms with power." He noted that the public at large--as well as the church--also has not gotten around to demanding ethical and moral standards from organizations, seeing such institutions as manifestations of political power."

It is not a question of whether or not the church should challenge the marketplace. It must challenge the marketplace if it intends to be an authentic channel of the love of Jesus Christ, added Jimmy Allen, pastor of First Baptist Church, San Antonio, Tex.

"The first telltale sign of a society's deterioration is not when the basic norms are violated, but when the norms themselves are repudiated," Nader said.

An economic peculiarity of the modern day is that "the economy has achieved the ability to grow without meeting the real needs of people," Nader declared. "That was supposed to be theoretically impossible, but it has happened."

Harris, Smith and Mrs. Walsh touched on inflation. "Much of the inflation of the nation," Harris said, "comes from a few monopolistic corporations, which are non-competitive. Many

of the regulatory agencies--Interstate Commerce Commission, Civil Aeronautics Board-- actually are bulwarks against competition and are supportive of the monopoly system," he said.

Smith raised a specter of depression, created by rampant inflation, which will lead to totalitarianism and "to blood in the streets, because too many people have been pampered for too long into thinking the government can perform miracles."

But Mrs. Walsh, in contrast to many of the speakers, said, "I don't look at what is happening in the economy today as a crisis. It is a time of dramatic change, but it is not a crisis. Inability to cope with change is a crisis."

Concerning the tax structure, Hughes took the position that the United States "has evolved the fairest overall approach to taxation in history." It is not perfect, he said, but is "a reasonably balanced system which must be constantly surveyed, modified, rethought and changed. In my view, there are no clearly immoral tax levies. . . currently in the U.S. today, although undoubtedly specific examples in the administration of property and other taxes do exist."

But Harris, former senator from Oklahoma and former national Democratic Party chairman, said 90 per cent of the tax returns are filed by people who earn less than \$15,000 a year.

"But the loopholes don't come into action until it is around \$50,000," said Harris, a Southern Baptist and current chairman of New Populist Action. "We are supposed to have a graduated tax system, but we have graduated loopholes."

Hughes urged Americans, now in the process of filing tax returns, to critically examine their "own personal morality in dealing with the tax system. Certainly," he said, "the impetus to private morality in taxation has not been pushed forward by the questions raised with respect to the President's tax return."

Although the conference didn't solve the economic problems of the world, it did provide, according to a number of observers, insights from various economic perspectives and an overall call to Christian involvement in those problems.

A number of speakers synthesized what they felt was one absolute: The ultimate test of an economic system is not material possessions, nor the condition of the economy, nor the state of technology, as important as they are.

That ultimate test, they felt, is the quality of the individuals in the system and the ability of Christians to bring God's love and justice to bear on the economic order, although they have no answers to all its complexities.