

Courier Comments....

"Give Them Light With Which To See And Stimulus To Reflect"

Don't Blame Rocky

The voters of St. Lawrence County who pay taxes have been horrified by the news the last two weeks of the cost of Medicaid in St. Lawrence County. The proposed Welfare Department budget for 1968 in this county is \$11,422,550. Of this enormous amount \$6,250,000 is for Medicaid. Under Medicaid 70 percent of the 111,239 persons in this county or 78,000 are eligible for Medicaid. That is seven out of 10 of all men, women and children in this county. They are all eligible for complete medical, surgical, dental, hospital care at the expense of the taxpayers.

In 1967 the total welfare budget in this county was \$8,217,330. The budget for 1968 is up \$3,205,220. And one fourth of this total cost has to be paid by St. Lawrence County taxpayers. The other three fourths is paid by the Federal and State governments, which means the taxpayers too, and St. Lawrence County taxpayers pay their share of this.

Gov. Rockefeller is unjustly blamed for Medicaid and this unbearable cost to St. Lawrence County and every county in the state. It is little realized that prior to the Medicaid legislation all hospital bills were paid for families of four with an income of less than \$5,400 (on their application) while hospital and medical bills were paid for families of four with an income under \$4,400 (on their application).

The Federal government demanded that New York State enact a new medical aid bill to bring it in line with Federal requirements and standards or the government said it would discontinue all aid to New York State and its counties. The Democrats who controlled the Assembly insisted through Speaker Travia — with the open backing of Sen. Kennedy — that benefits should be available to families of four with an income of \$6,700. Gov. Rockefeller proposed, on the basis of recommendation by the State Board of Social Welfare, that the limit should be \$5,700.

With the Democrats controlling one house and insisting on the higher limit, a compromise had to be made in order to get any bill passed — since if no bill was passed the State and counties would have lost all Federal aid from existing programs. The compromise was reached at \$6,000.

Much of the difficulty is related to a little known requirement of the Federal law — namely, that there must be a statewide standard of fiscal eligibility rather than one tailored to the economics of an area. This being so, the eligibility standard must be fixed at a level appropriate for the highest cost of living level in the state — which is New York City and the surrounding suburbs. A family income of \$6,000 for a family of four in the latter area would be about a subsistence level in view of the high cost of food, fuel, clothes, shelter, everything. However, in St. Lawrence County and rural and lesser populated counties like it a \$6,000 income for a family of four is much more meaningful in terms of purchasing power. It is well above the average income in the county. However, the Federal law requires a statewide standard.

Last year Sen. Javits introduced a bill in Washington which would amend the basic Federal legislation to permit flexible fiscal standards, or income standards for eligibility for Medicaid, related to the particular area of the State. However, he has not been able to move it to passage, or even get out of committee.

Gov. Rockefeller asked for and got a Joint Legislative Committee to review the operation of the Medicaid statute in this State. This committee will doubtlessly come up with recommendations for legislation at the 1968 session. However, it must be remembered that we are unfortunately still faced with a situation where we have the Assembly under Democratic control and consequently no change can be accomplished without their approval.

It is the Democrats who proposed that every family with an income of \$6,700 or below should be available for benefits. Gov. Rockefeller proposed that the limit should be \$5,700. He has backed Sen. Javits in his attempts to get Congress to pass a law which would permit New York State to set a standard of income eligibility tailored to the economics of the area instead of on a statewide standard. If this were accomplished the standard of eligibility in St. Lawrence County would certainly be lower than \$6,000 which was set by New York City and its suburbs.

We admit that Medicaid as it is now set up is a monster which may well bankrupt the county and the State. But let's be fair about it. Let's realize that Gov. Rockefeller did not write this law, did not want the income standard of eligibility nearly as high as it is now, is in favor of a standard of eligibility which is based on the economics of the different areas of the State. The Democrats who control Congress and who control the Assembly in Albany — and they alone — are responsible for the law as it is today — and the crisis it has forced on St. Lawrence County — not Gov. Rockefeller. (FRL)

Uniform Holidays

The idea of uniform Monday holidays is drawing rather widespread support, for many people feel that the innovation would be beneficial to employers, employees, and the public generally.

A Senate bill provides that Memorial Day would be observed on the last Monday in May; Independence Day on the first Monday in July; Veterans Day on the last Monday in October; and Thanksgiving Day on the fourth Monday in November. In addition, Washington's Birthday would be designated as "President's Day" and fall on the third Monday in February.

It is urged that S. 1217 be approved, the law becoming effective on the first day of January of the third year following the date of enactment.

Courier & Freeman

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Published every Thursday by the Courier-Freeman, Inc., 71 Market St., Potsdam, N. Y. Member of the New York Press Association, The National Editorial Association and the Audit Bureau of Circulations. The Associated Press is exclusively entitled to the exclusive use for publication of all news dispatches credited to it or not otherwise credited to this paper.

Subscription rates: Carrier home delivery in Potsdam 70 cents per month. By mail outside Potsdam in St. Lawrence County \$3.50 per year, and \$6.00 elsewhere in United States and Canada. Entered in the post office at Potsdam, N. Y., as second class matter.

Favors Retention of Blaine Amendment

Editor's Note: Mrs. Lillian M. Cassel of Colton has requested this "thought-provoking" article from the Christian Science Monitor be printed in the Courier and Freeman. The article maintains the Blaine Amendment should not be deleted from the State Constitution now being revised by the State Constitutional Convention. The convention has voted in favor of repealing the amendment, which if passed by the electorate, would allow the state to support parochial schools.

By way of introduction may I say that I am an ordained minister of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. At the present time our denomination operates the second largest parochial school system in the world, and the third largest in the United States. This clearly indicates our attitudes on the importance of parochial schools.

Since we are a relatively small group, numbering only about 400,000 members in the United States, our school system represents a tremendous financial burden. In addition to this, of course, we are also paying our taxes to support the public school system.

From a personal standpoint, I likewise find myself weighed down with heavy financial responsibilities due to parochial educational needs. Keeping two youngsters in an elementary church school, and another in a church college is not easy. In fact, my wife has had to work for the first time since our marriage, so that we can keep our children in our parochial school system.

With all this in mind, it might seem that Seventh-day Adventists ought to be in the forefront of those advocating the use of public tax money for the support of church schools. This is not the case. We are firmly opposed to the repeal of the so-called Blaine amendment, and with good reason.

First of all, may I state that we think very highly of our country's public school system, and we are happy to pay our taxes to support it along with every one else. However, we do not think it fair that Baptists, Lutherans or Catholics be taxed to help our children become strong Seventh-day Adventists. Neither do we find it possible to be enthused about paying our tax dollars to indoctrinate children into becoming Baptists, Lutherans or Catholics.

Some would have us believe that the teaching in a parochial school varies not one whit from that in the public school system. Surely no one is naive enough to actually accept this idea. The only reason for the existence of a parochial school is to indoctrinate the student in that which the supporting church considers to be Truth, along with the regular teaching of the "three R's."

Although we believe strongly that any religious group ought to have the privilege of operating its own school system, we also believe that that organization ought to be willing to finance it. If it isn't worth the sacrifice involved, then it ought to be given up. Never should people of one persuasion be forced to support financially some other religious organization whose tenets they do not accept.

In order to bring pressure to bear, the warning is often repeated that if the government does not support the parochial schools financially, then they may be closed down and an unbearable load will thus be placed on our public school system. We should never submit to this form of blackmail. The public school system exists for any child who wishes to attend and it is up to us as citizens to pay for whatever expansion of facilities may become necessary.

Finally, the statement is made that "the separation of church and state is not the issue." On the contrary, it is very much the issue. The so-called Blaine amendment was placed in our New York Constitution for the very purpose of protecting the wall of separation between church and state. History, both ancient and modern, is replete with warnings to all who will read with care. What the state pours its money into, it eventually seeks to control. Eventually one church receives preferential treatment above all others and oppression of minorities begins.

In a land as affluent as ours is, it is difficult to be concerned about our basic freedoms. They are so easily taken for granted. Let us try to cherish them to the extent that we become alarmed by, and give opposition to, any attempt to subvert them. One good place to begin is to insist that our new constitution retain the plain stipulation that the citizens of New York State not be forced to pay taxes to support parochial school systems. — Dan Hawley in the Chelsea Clinton News, New York City.

Listen Convention Viewpoint Veteran

Educational assistance allowances for veterans attending school full-time under the New GI Bill have been increased from \$100 to \$130 a month for a single veteran; from \$125 to \$155 for a veteran with one dependent; and from \$150 to \$175 for two dependents with an additional \$10 for each dependent in excess of two. Proportionately smaller allowances will be paid for part-time training. New allowances are effective Oct. 1.

Full educational assistance allowances will be paid to "educationally disadvantaged" veterans so they can complete high school without reducing their eligibility for advanced educational benefits. Veterans must qualify under the New GI Bill. This new benefit is effective Oct. 1.

A reimbursement of \$250 is now allowable under the New GI Bill toward the funeral and burial expenses of an eligible deceased veteran of the Vietnam era.

Veterans and dependents of deceased veterans receiving VA pension under the current pension program will receive a cost-of-living increase averaging more than 5 percent with widows in the lowest income categories receiving an increase of about 8.5 percent effective Oct. 1.

We Get Letters... Navy Needs Nurses

With only 11,000 nurses in the Armed Forces and the United States' world commitments on the rise the need for nurses has also risen. The Navy now has two hospital ships on station in Vietnam, the USS Repose and the USS Sanctuary, both ships have 30 nurses on their staffs. There are also Navy Nurses stationed "in Country" at the NAVAL Support Activity, Da Nang. These nurses not only treat U.S. Vietnamese and Free World Forces but also the Vietnamese people under the "Medical Civic Action Program."

This shortage of nurses has prompted a visit by LCDR Helen Fitzgerald, LT Frances Allwegg, (both graduates of St. Peter's Hospital School of Nursing, Albany, N.Y.) and LT Sulkowski (just returned from Vietnam and duty aboard the USS Repose) to the Potsdam area. These three nurses are here to discuss the advantages and opportunities for graduate nurses in the Navy and the financial assistance offered under the Navy Nurse Corps Program to nursing students (both men and women).

Next week...the first of a series of columns outlining the major provisions in the proposed constitution.

This column will, beginning

Small Business Management Course To Begin Monday in Ogdensburg

Ogdensburg — A six-week Small Business Management Course for area businessmen and women is scheduled to begin Monday in Ogdensburg, State Commerce Commissioner Ronald B. Peterson announced this week.

Two Appointed As Coordinators

The Ogdensburg course, Commissioner Peterson said, will consist of six two-hour sessions featuring instruction in expense control and profit planning, merchandising, sales advertising for retailers, credit and collections, and financing.

The course, part of the Department's business assistance program, is conducted in cooperation with the State Education Department and the U.S. Small Business Administration.

Sessions will be held in the John F. Kennedy School, Park St., Ogdensburg, from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. each Monday through October 30. Information on registration may be obtained by contacting the school.

VOX POP!... ALSO MOM AND THE KIDS!



Ballot Box

What is permanent personal registration anyway? Legislation passed by the 1965 New York State Legislature requires that permanent registration be in operation statewide by the elections of 1967 — this November!

This means that ALL voters must register in person, this year to be eligible to vote — regardless of what system you voted under in previous years. Under this system, once registered, you are permanently registered unless you move or fail to vote in a two year period. Don't lose your vote in 1967. St. Lawrence County voters have only four more days in which to register under the new law:

Oct. 3 from 10 a.m.-10 p.m.
Oct. 7 from 7 a.m.-10 p.m.
Oct. 13 from 10 a.m.-10 p.m.
Oct. 14 from 7 a.m.-10 p.m.

Registration will be on these dates only at your local polling place. Past registrations are not in effect. Everyone must register in person in 1967 to vote. Don't lose your voice in government. Register to vote!

No Deposits for Area Residents At Post Office

While elsewhere in the nation, Post Office officials are trying to locate persons who still have unclaimed deposits in Postal Savings accounts, the Potsdam Post Office revealed that all local accounts have been closed out for the last five years.

The nationwide search was brought about by action by the U.S. Post Office Department which discontinued the postal savings system last April and stopped paying interest on the deposits as of July 1.

-Governor for a Day-

Rep. Robert C. McEwen was suddenly — and quite unexpectedly — catapulted into the Governor's chair in Albany Wednesday, and nobody was more perplexed than McEwen.

My Neighbors

