

Something for the Teachers

The Governor gives his views on recent legislative appropriation for higher education. He says increase in state support was voted to make it possible to raise faculty pay.

By GOVERNOR JOHNSTON MURRAY

Students, teachers and school administrators all have good reason to be grateful to their public officials. Never before has Oklahoma's entire educational system been treated so generously. From the smallest country school to the vast expanse of buildings and grounds which make up the University of Oklahoma, the cause of education in our state has been greatly enhanced.

About 30 bills relating to education came to my desk during and immediately following the recent legislative session. They have now been signed into law. Fully half these measures have to do with spending important sums of money. All are aimed at providing Oklahoma with the best possible schools. If we fall short of that goal, the blame must be assumed by our educators. Ample funds are available, it seems to me, for a well-rounded program in every field of education.

Higher education has fared especially well. Expenditures for the University of Oklahoma and for other state-supported colleges during the next two years will be the largest in the state's history. Oklahoma taxpayers will be furnishing nearly a third more money for higher education than ever before. Our elected representatives have chosen to be generous, I believe, because they are hopeful these added funds will be spent where most needed.

No fair-minded person can say we have been niggardly with our schools. Citizens of our state insist on the best education possible for their children. Insofar as money can buy the kind of education we want for our young people, it has been provided throughout the years. A study of appropriations for school purposes in the past will reveal that educational opportunity has always rated at the top of the list of needs so far as the average citizen is concerned.

While studying legislation voted by the legislature and signed into law by me, I noted at least 15 bills containing provisions for spending money for some phase of education. It's not chicken feed. Several of these bills call for expenditures totaling many multiplied millions of dollars. Others are for lesser amounts which, in the ag-

gregate, still amount to huge sums. Our modern educational needs include such things as free textbooks, pasture improvement stations, educational television, and training and education of war veterans. Almost any project which carries the magic name "education" is sure to receive a sympathetic hearing here at the capitol.

If you wonder why this administration has been so kind to higher education, you can find much of the answer in a some-



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what critical report issued against one of our colleges by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. Only one Oklahoma college was singled out, but I believe the same shortcomings are common in many other institutions of higher learning. To me, it was a sad commentary on our methods of spending education funds to discover our greatest weaknesses were found in the most fundamental cornerstone of any educational system, its teachers.

We have many magnificent college campuses in Oklahoma. We have some of the finest buildings to be found anywhere. Inside these buildings you walk on deep carpets, peer at impressive works of art hanging from the walls, sit in soft chairs. But

it takes much more than brick, mortar, and works of art to educate our young people, the future leaders of Oklahoma. The most important ingredient of all, which we appear to have neglected in recent years, is the faculty.

What the administration had in mind in favoring generous appropriations for higher education was to improve the kind of education our students get. Those of us who are the lawmakers have done our part. Now the burden of getting value received from these huge appropriations lies with our college administrators.

No amount of plush furnishings ever educated anyone. It takes professors to get that job done, good professors. Apt pupils and wise professors can form a fine university under a shade tree. By the same token, the most majestic building program of all time doesn't guarantee the transfer of a single bit of wisdom to any student.

These things were in my mind as I signed the many record-breaking school appropriations. I'm hopeful, and I'm positive our legislators are equally anxious that we use whatever amounts of these funds are needed to make the faculties in our Oklahoma colleges compare favorably with any in the land.

Too many of our best teachers have been leaving their chosen profession in droves the past several years. The reason is not hard to find. We simply haven't been paying them enough. A professor is no different from the rest of us. He wants to support his family as comfortably as possible. In order to do so, a great many of our best teachers have been forced to move on to other lines of endeavor.

"Why teach school," asks the high school instructor, "when I can make more money tightening bolts in a defense factory?" The answer is obvious. "Why teach," inquires the college professor, "when private industry will pay me double the salary for less taxing work?" Again the answer is easy to find.

Our better teachers, whom we desperately need, have often become disgusted with paychecks which bore no relation to

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June 8. President Cross, administrative officials and faculty members were on hand to greet graduates and their families.

For one graduating senior, the new diploma means an end to three years of undergraduate confusion.

George M. Cross, business administration major from Clinton, was presented a diploma by George L. Cross, University of Oklahoma president, and a mix-up that had caused switched mail, phone calls and social invitations was ended.

George M. (Marion) claimed that whenever he signed his name at the University, his signature was usually greeted with suspicious looks or unbelieving chuckles. Letters and telephone messages meant for President Cross found their way to George M. and vice versa.

But in spite of the confusion it has caused, George M. claims he still likes the name and wouldn't have any other.

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the rising cost of living. As the outer trappings of our colleges and universities grew more imposing with each passing year, the quality of our faculties, in many cases, slowly degenerated. We simply could not allow that to continue. It is the one big reason, I firmly believe, why we have been so generous with school appropriations at this time.

A healthier, happier, more prosperous way of life is what we're all striving for. College students of today will be the leaders of tomorrow on whom we must depend to lead us to these desirable goals. Therefore, we cannot afford to neglect them in any way. We have not done so.

Nobody in educational circles can legitimately complain they don't have enough money this time. The recent legislature appropriated far more money for education than ever before. They did so in the hope of correcting whatever shortcomings exist. If it requires more money to get and keep highly qualified teachers, that's where a good deal of the money should be spent. It should be used first for the fundamentals of an educational system. Bigger and better buildings are nice, too, but should have second priority. That was the legislature's intention and that is my intention.

Whether we get what was intended depends on those administrators who control the educational purse strings. They asked for a lot, and got it. It's now up to them to deliver, not only fine buildings and green lawns, but also the best possible education our students can absorb. I believe they will do so.

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