

O'Neil's Charges Repetitious Says Education Board Chief

Dr. Edwin L. Novak, president of the State Board of Education, has answered charges made against the board and the superintendent of Public Instruction by Board Member James O'Neil of Livonia.

The detailed reply was made at Tuesday night's regular board meeting as requested by O'Neil, only O'Neil was not present at the meeting to hear the answers he demanded.

O'Neil had charged poor administration by Dr. Irvin Polley, superintendent of public instruction, and asked that an answer be provided at Tuesday's meeting.

While answering the charges, Novak said, "It is absolutely clear to me that every one of Mr. O'Neil's criticisms has been considered before, sometimes repeatedly, and there is little to be gained in further repetitious discussion of them."

"More could be said in answer to the multitude of points which Mr. O'Neil raises, but nothing could be gained. As one board member said at the June 26 meeting, we cannot keep having these 'constant upheavals'."

NOVAK admitted the state has lost key administrative personnel during the past one and a half years but questioned O'Neil's claim that the losses had a diverse effect on the department's operation.

Respecting for differing reasons, Novak said, were the deputy superintendent, state librarian, and research bureau head. The librarian was replaced with an employee with an even greater variety of library experience, he said.

The new deputy superintendent has a great many years of experience in Michigan's educational systems and has added a useful balance to the job, Novak said.

A research bureau head is expected to be named shortly following a nationwide recruitment effort to find a successor.

O'NEIL'S main criticism centered on the State Plan for Higher Education, which has been the primary subject of many board meetings and has been constantly evolving according to Novak.

"No past version of the plan is the main version," Novak explains. "Most certainly not the September edition which Mr. O'Neil concentrates on so heavily."

"The current version seems to be a distillation of many, many minds and if it can be considered the primary work of one man at all, that one man is not the superintendent but Dr. Harold Smith, who has to this point done an admirable job and deserves the highest commendation of our board," Smith is the coordinator and director of the plan.



JAMES O'NEIL

Novak answered charges by O'Neil that he did not receive two-weeks notice for the 1968-69 school aid budget as proposed by Dr. Polley. Novak explained that the final proposal, for the most part, consisted of items which had been presented to board members at earlier meetings. Almost all proposed new programs, Novak added, had been approved by the board on Aug. 23, 1967.

"In respect to the alleged lack of inclusion of a request for state financing of summer programs in a state school aid proposal," Novak said, "the board adopted the superintendent's proposed request of \$1 million for summer work-study programs and of \$1.5 million for additional services in an extended school year."

"Both of these proposals were for summer programs. While these proposals might be viewed as inadequate, the fact remains that even these failed passage by the Legislature."

ALSO DENIED was a claim by O'Neil that the 1966-67 expenditures for vocational rehabilitation had increased 70 percent over the previous year and "results" only four percent.

Novak stressed that the facts, as presented by the staff, are that the expenditures increased 29 percent, not 70 percent. The results were four percent, Novak admitted, but several months ago the board was advised there was no direct correlation between expenditure increases and rehabilitation improvement in 1966-67 because the staff personnel expansion could not become fully productive during the first year.

Also, Novak said, costs continually rise and there are many expensive cases to be dealt with that increase the per-case cost.

"However, one important point to be made here is that for the 1967-68 year, it is expected that the percentage of rehabilitation cases will increase about twice the percentage increase in expenditures," said Novak.

NOVAK ADMITTED that \$300,000 of library funds were misdirected. Although the monies were recovered, he explained, the misdirection was caused by a subverting of the established accounting system. A full description of the case has been supplied by Dr. Polley to board members, Novak said.

Novak also answered O'Neil's criticism that agendas for the board's meetings were being mailed late. He noted some items do arrive less than 10 days prior to meetings, but the agendas represented a large bulk of staff work requiring many man hours of preparation.

The time limit is very narrow, said Novak, because the board meets every two weeks and many times agendas include items resulting from actions taken at meetings only four days before the agenda must be mailed.

O'NEIL, EXPLAINING his absence from Tuesday's session, says he may be absent from future meetings unless the board rescinds its action regarding him for "misusing" official stationery for personal press releases.

Although absent from the meeting, O'Neil sent a letter of apology to fellow board members "for any actions or statements I have made that have contributed to this most unhealthy and undesirable situation," referring to the recent friction among board members.



John W. Helton has been appointed products manager for Burroughs Corporation business machine's group.

"It is a generally known fact that has been admitted by members of this board that an inordinate amount of partisan political pressure was exercised in the appointment of the superintendent of public instruction."

O'Neil says the friction is

Introduces Six Bills McDonald Seeks New Crime Laws

Congressman Jack McDonald, whose district includes Redford and Livonia, introduced a six bill anti-crime package in the House last week.

McDonald's bills cover modified search and seizure procedures, syndicate investigations and the auto theft racket.

He said, while introducing the bills, that the crime rate has risen 88 percent between 1960 and 1967, while the nation's population growth was only 10 percent.

"The permissiveness in our society has resulted in a general air of defiance of the law on the part of many of our citizens, especially our young people. And the cap on the beat is all too often the target of abuse," the congressman said.

McDonald, praising the Supreme Court's upholding state "stop and frisk" laws, said one of his bills would extend this authority to Federal offenses.

A second bill would allow a Federal agent to enter the premises if he suspects gambling or narcotics.

Two other bills would prohibit certain investments involving syndicates and their infiltration of legitimate business.

One would prohibit investment of income received from criminal activities in any business engaged in interstate or foreign commerce. The other would bar investment in the business of intentionally unreported income from another.



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