

For the people

Schools want taxes collected twice a year

I have been reading and hearing a lot about semi-annual collection of school taxes? Why has an interest developed in this lately? Mrs. B. Birmingham.

A. Local school districts do not have the authority to collect taxes themselves, so the municipalities within the school districts act as the collecting agents.

The local school districts have been asking municipal governments for some time to collect school taxes twice a year to enable them to begin the school year on July 1 without borrowing funds and thus incurring interest charges.

Some of these savings will be offset by the additional cost of billing residents twice a year. Essentially semi-annual collection involves only a change in the payment schedule and not in the total tax itself.

Half of your taxes would be due on the date and the rest six months later. Some municipalities within our

school districts already operate on a semi-annual collection basis.

Q. I need help in filling out my federal income tax return and am unable to afford the services of an accountant. What can I do? A.R. Troy.

A. Citizens of Oakland County may receive free assistance in filling out federal and state income tax returns from the Oakland County Commission on Economic Opportunity. For further information call 334-2434 in Pontiac. The Internal Revenue Service booklet, "Your Federal Income Tax," is available at \$1 a copy at all post offices.

Q. I am very confused about the term "impeachment." Exactly what is impeachment and what is involved in an impeachment process? Mrs. C. S. Bloomfield Hills.

A. Impeachment means that an accusation is brought against an individual in government, in this case we are talking about the President. Before the House of Representatives even votes on impeachment, there is an investigation and hearing in the House Judiciary Committee. This is now in progress. The President, through his attorneys, may challenge in court the processes of the committee but not its final decision. If a majority of the committee reports a resolution of impeachment (or accusation) to the

House, the full body must approve it by a majority vote.

Then the House Judiciary Committee draws up articles of impeachment, a list of specific charges. The President may again challenge these charges in court. If his appeal fails, the House, sitting as a jury, debates the charges and can add to, subtract from or alter them.

If the House by a majority vote approves the charges, that is impeachment.

The President again may challenge the House's decision in the courts. If the charges are upheld, they are sent to the Senate for trial. The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court presides over this judicial process which has all the aspects of any other trial — the calling of witnesses, presenting of evidence, cross-examination.

It takes a two-thirds vote of the Senate to convict. Any conviction may again be appealed to the courts. Conviction results in expulsion from office but does not punish him in any other way.

If you have a question about your community government write The Observer & Eccentric, Editorial Department, 1225 Bowers, Birmingham 48012; The Rochester Observer & Eccentric, 410 N. Main, Rochester 48063; or The Southfield Observer & Eccentric, Box 68, Southfield 48075.

Larsen's bill blocks strikes

A bill which its sponsor admits is "heading into a stiff wind of controversy" in its attempt to end strikes by Michigan school teachers will get its first public airing in Oakland County this weekend.

Oakland County legislators will join Rep. Mel Larsen (R-Oxford) at 10 a.m. Saturday in a public hearing on Larsen's bill to amend a 1947 state law which prohibits strikes by public employees. The hearing will be held in the Oakland County Service Center auditorium, 1300 N. Telegraph, Pontiac.

The Larsen bill, now before the House Committee on Labor in Lansing, would amend the 1947 law by establishing a timetable for reaching a new master contract between local school boards and teachers' unions.

It would also impose a fine of \$25 per person per day on any public employees' union which called an "illegal strike" for the duration of the strike and would require each member of a striking unit to forfeit one day's pay for each day the unit prevented classes from being held under the state's mandatory 180 days of classroom instruction.

The bill defines "illegal strikes" as those called before employers and employees reach "a point in the collective bargaining or negotiation process at which a further progress is impossible."

An impasse cannot occur before both parties have appealed for third-party mediation or arbitration of a contract dispute through the Michigan Employment Relations Commission.

ARBITRATION is binding upon the union, but not upon the local school district, according to the bill. In other words, local teachers may not reject an arbitrator's award. School districts can reject such awards if they feel it would not permit the board to manage local tax dollars wisely, according to Larsen.

However, if the teachers are unhappy with the arbitrator's decision, they may call a strike if they feel further negotiation would not resolve the impasse.

"It is time the legislature seeks answers to the problems of public employer-employee disputes and imposes in a positive way," Larsen said recently. "We must recognize the fact that there is no sure way to prevent all strikes (by public employees)."

In addition to Larsen, the bill is co-sponsored in the House by 33 other representatives, including Reps. James J. Damman (R-Troy), Kirby Holmes (D-Utica), James E. Detebaugh (R-Birmingham), Raymond L. Baker (R-Farmington), R. Robert Geake (R-Northville) and William R. Keith (D-Garden City).

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