

Educational financing hazards explained at conference

Educators and public officials concerned with school financial problems brought on in Texas and California by court cases must be careful not to put the cart before the horse, advises a nationally prominent educator well versed in finance.

Dr. Edgar L. Morphet believes proper educational financing is critical, but he warns against funding changes taking precedence over providing for all educational needs.

"Changes in provisions for fi-

nancing schools are urgently needed," Morphet stressed at the School Administrators and Supervisors Conference, which concluded last Wednesday at A&M, "but the changes should be based on a carefully developed plan for the improvement of education supported by lay citizens and educators."

Morphet directs a Colorado project for improving state leadership in education. He was formerly in finance in Alabama and Florida State Departments of Ed-

ucation.

Morphet's remarks were supported by Leon R. Graham, assistant commissioner of education in Texas, and E. L. Galyean, Texas State Teachers Association associate executive secretary, in their "Status of Education in Texas" reports to the conference.

Graham, a 21-year veteran in his state education position, received the "Golden Deeds for Education" award presented annually at the TAMU June conference.

Morphet said certain provisions

must be incorporated with new plans for financing schools. At the minimum, appropriate provisions should ensure a comprehensive program for capital outlay and debt service, greatly increase percentage of funds from non-property tax sources, equitably apportion funds on the basis of needs including early childhood and continuing education and, if local finance effort is required, ensure that it is based on full or equalized property valuation.

Provisions should also include

that all districts develop long-range plans for improvement of instruction and learning with districts annually reporting to the state and public on progress, Morphet declared.

Districts too small to provide adequate and comprehensive programs of education should be eliminated through reorganization, he added.

"We say we believe in equity for taxpayers in provisions for supporting education," the University of California at Berkeley

education professor declared, yet practically all state constitutions "have established and perpetuated gross and indefensible inequities."

"Rather than the generation gap, the real and most dangerous gap in this country is between what we say we believe and what we actually do or fail to do," Morphet claimed. "This leads to disillusionment, frustration and sometimes even to blind and destructive revolt."

"I can empathize at times with those who feel the latter course

is necessary."

Graham said he is not optimistic about major federal aid education in the next few years. "I'm not against it," he said, "but I just don't believe it is going to happen. If our new Texas education finance plan is based on the ad valorem tax, it must be true or market value of property. The legislature must decide whether intangible property is to be included, and I don't know if the legislature is prepared to do that far."

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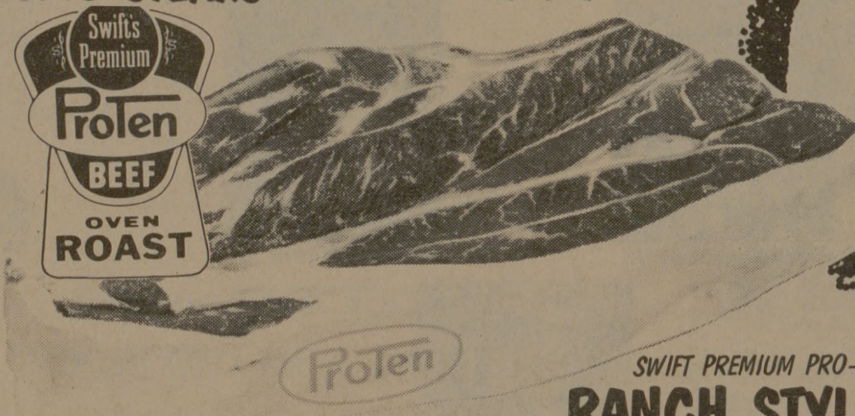
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