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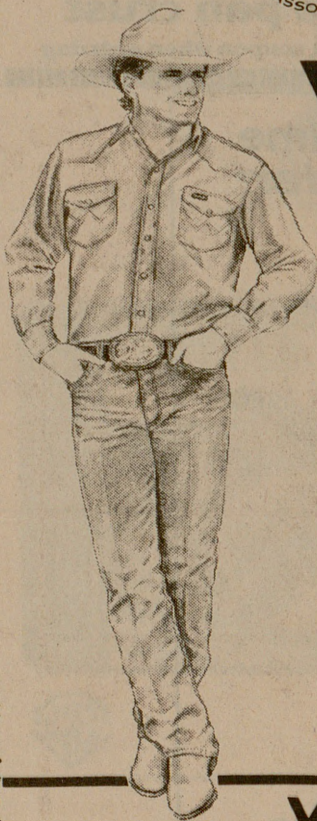
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Clements: Justice already decided on funding issue

AUSTIN (AP) — Gov. Bill Clements, during a speech urging approval of a constitutional amendment to keep school funding a legislative issue, Thursday suggested that a Supreme Court justice already has made up his mind on the case.

The justice, Oscar Mauzy, angrily branded the governor's allegation as "outrageous, totally irresponsible."

The charge came during an appearance by Clements before the Texas Association of Taxpayers, where he continued criticizing a state district court ruling that found the state's system of funding public schools unconstitutional.

Clements warned that he will keep the 1989 Legislature in session for as long as it takes to win passage of a proposed constitutional amendment that would guarantee legislative, not court, jurisdiction over public school funding.

Ruling on a suit filed by 67 school districts with low property values, Judge

Harley Clark said the system is unconstitutional because it doesn't ensure that each school district has the same ability to obtain money to educate students.

The state is appealing the case, which is currently pending before the Austin-based 3rd Court of Appeals.

The case has yet to reach the Texas Supreme Court.

Clements, a Republican, told the taxpayers association he thinks Mauzy, a Democrat, already had made up his mind on the case.

"I would bet you money here this morning that opinion is already written in anticipation of it getting to the Supreme Court. And Oscar Mauzy already has an opinion written," Clements charged.

"And I know what that opinion will be. It'll uphold Judge Clark. And it will destroy, literally destroy, the public school system in the state of Texas as we know it today," he said.

Presidential battle heats on furloughs

AUSTIN (AP) — Heat from the battle for the White House scorched the statehouse Thursday as Lt. Gov. Bill Hobby said Gov. Bill Clements and other Republicans have distorted the record of Democratic presidential hopeful Michael Dukakis.

Speaking to reporters during a break in the Legislative Budget Board meeting, Hobby described Clements' criticism of the prison furlough program in Dukakis' homestate of Massachusetts, as "intellectually dishonest."

Clements, co-chair of the state campaign to elect George Bush president, and other Republicans have sharply attacked Dukakis on an incident in which a convicted murderer was allowed a weekend pass from a Massachusetts prison.

The inmate escaped while on furlough and later raped a woman and attacked her fiancé. Dukakis has noted most states have prison furlough programs, that the

law allowing the inmate on furlough was in place before he took office as governor and that the law was tightened under his administration.

Hobby, a Democrat, said Clements should do his homework better on the Texas prison furlough system before criticizing other programs.

About 5,000 felons, including 517 convicted of murder or voluntary manslaughter, have been furloughed in Texas since 1987, according to reports.

On Wednesday, Clements denied responsibility for the Texas program and blamed it on the bureaucracy within the Texas Department of Corrections.

The program is under the control and under the jurisdiction of TDC, Clements said. "That's what the legislation says," Clements said. "I don't have any direct control over it. I did not know what was going on. I don't share any responsibility for it."

Jury finding costs Hunt \$17 million

NEW YORK (AP) — Texas businessman Lamar Hunt paid \$17 million to Peru's state-owned mineral company Thursday to settle his part of a jury finding that he and two of his brothers plotted to corner the world silver market.

The settlement was approved by U.S. District Judge Morris E. Lasker, who presided over the nearly seven-month civil trial in Manhattan of Hunt, 56, and his brothers, Nelson Bunker Hunt, 62, and William Herbert Hunt, 59.

The brothers, all from Dallas and sons of the late oil billionaire H.L. Hunt, were sued by Minpeco S.A., the Peruvian minerals concern.

The settlement only concerned Lamar Hunt, owner of the Kansas City Chiefs of the National Football League.

His attorney, Paul Curran, told Lasker that Hunt was settling the matter because he wanted to put an end to the heavy legal and emotional costs of the litigation.

Hunt's Kansas City, Mo., office issued a statement saying "\$17 million is a small fraction of the liabilities possible under the judgment, interest and on-going costs inherent in continuing the legal action."

But Curran maintained the settlement did not alter Hunt's contention that he had done nothing wrong. Hunt's statement said, "In spite of the fact that the claims against me were totally unwarranted, because of the uncertainties of litigation and the substantial cost associated with further proceedings, I made the business decision to put the litigation behind me so that I

can spend my time pursuing positive business interests."

A lawyer representing some 17,000 investors are suing the Hunts and others in two large class-action suits complained to Lasker about certain aspects of the settlement.

The lawyer, Herbert Deutsch, noted that the settlement, the Minpeco verdict against Lamar Hunt could not be used in the class action lawsuit as allegations would have to be proven all over again, making over 6 months of trial a nullity.

But Lasker said he was pleased to approve the settlement.

"I always believe settlement is better than litigation by other means," he said.

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