

## Beacon Hill Roundup



## Texaco recalls state agency credit cards

BOSTON (AP) — Texaco Inc. has recalled hundreds of gasoline credit cards it issued to the state because the commonwealth was delinquent or too slow in paying February bills.

A telegram from the company's Houston office ordered 20 state agencies to return credit cards, with credit cancelled as of last Monday. Affected, according to state officials, were some divisions of the Department of Public Works, the Youth Services Department, Civil Defense, the Veterans Services Agency, the Department of Agriculture and others.

Arthur Sweeney, administrator of the state auto fleet, said Thursday he hopes to straighten this out through Pat Mountain, Texaco's coordinator on the Massachusetts contract. He said he has had difficulty in contacting Mountain.

Sweeney said he has checked vouchers at the comptroller's office the past two weeks and verified that substantial payments were cleared for the oil company.

The problem surfaced, Sweeney acknowledged, in a communique from Texaco to about 25 agencies dated March 18. This notified the agencies that if payment hadn't been received by March 31, credit would be withdrawn as of March 31.

Sweeney said 20 of these agencies received the second notification Monday that their credit was cut off and that the credit cards must be returned. He said he didn't know how many, if any, might

have been returned.

One source indicated the amount owed to the company might be in the range of \$300,000 but Sweeney thought this was "much too high" and said total billings on Feb. 2 were probably closer to \$100,000. He said no determination had been made of how much of the February billings has actually been received by Texaco.

He said there are 3,000 Texaco credit cards, representing "about 97 per cent" of all motor fuel cards held by state employees. A scattering of other cards have been authorized for employees in areas where there are fewer Texaco service stations, he said.

Massachusetts has negotiated a six-month credit contract with the oil firm, Sweeney said. The purchasing bureau received no bids for the annual gasoline contract last December, he added.

Previously, the contract included discounts at certain outlets but the present arrangement calls for payment of the posted prices, Sweeney said.

It is believed this is the first occasion in recent years where a major state vendor has begun cancellation action against the commonwealth.

The state has 6,840 registered vehicles, many of which are serviced at state pumps. Vehicles that aren't accessible to state supplies or are barred from those outlets use credit cards, according to a recent report on state gasoline purchases that was filed by the legislature's post audit committee.

## Pressure builds

# Racial imbalance law wins support

BOSTON (AP) — Pressure is building on Massachusetts legislators from both sides in the escalating campaign to repeal the state's unique, nine-year old racial imbalance law.

The legislature's education committee spent a second full day Thursday hearing testimony on 33 bills to repeal or amend the controversial law.

The vocal and emotional opponents of the law, who marched on the State House by the thousands Wednesday, were countered Thursday by supporters of the statute. They included state education officials, Humberto Cardinal Medeiros and black leaders from Boston and Springfield.

The speakers also noted that they were using their testimony to commemorate the anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King's assassination.

The supporters of the imbalance law gave repeated standing ovations to a long list of speakers who defended the statute as the only means for guaranteeing equal educational opportunities to all school children.

The law, which has been the focus of annual attempts at repeal or crippling amendment, states that any public school with a student body more than 50 per cent non-white must be further integrated to alter the ratio.

The law has its greatest effect in Boston, where it will require a school busing plan this fall, and in Springfield.

Most of Thursday's testimony came from Boston residents, but a contingent of several Springfield men and women also attended. The greatest ovation was for Atunna Bruce, a fourth grader, who told the legislative committee "If I could vote I'd vote to keep the law on the book."

She said she would not mind riding a bus to school because it would help her "see new places, meet new friends and learn a lot."

Earlier, state Education Commissioner Gregory Anrig urged the committee to "stand fast" against efforts to repeal the law. Supported by Board of Education Chairman Rae Cecilia Kipp, Anrig quoted a state Supreme Judicial Court decision on the imbalance law which said: "The time for testing the meaning of the statute has long since passed and the time for prompt action to implement it is at hand."

This was echoed by other speakers, including Cardinal Medeiros, who said implementation of the law is "a step on the road to racial justice."

Support also came from organizations with generally liberal and suburban memberships such as the Massachusetts Parent Teacher Student Association, the League of Women Voters, Americans for Democratic Action and the Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts.

Other spokesmen represented the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts, the United Church of Christ, the Jewish Community Council, the New England

Conference of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Boston NAACP and the Massachusetts Teachers Association. Several black legislators testified, including Rep. Royal L. Bolling Sr., D-

Boston, a sponsor of the original law. He implored the suburbanites on the committee who have continually supported the statute to "keep the faith of the minority people alive in the commonwealth."

The education committee has rejected past efforts to repeal the law, as has Gov. Francis W. Sargent. Sargent, who did not testify, said last week he would support unspecified changes in the law, but not its outright repeal.

## State aid listed in cherry sheet shows increase of \$708 million

BOSTON (AP) — State aid to Massachusetts cities and towns will total more than \$708 million in fiscal 1975, with all but two communities getting more money than in the last 12 month fiscal year, according to Gov. Francis W. Sargent.

Sargent announced Thursday that the so-called "cherry sheets" of estimated receipts and charges have been mailed to the 351 cities and towns.

Only Belmont and Plymouth will get less money than in 1973, as a result of reimbursements for school building construction which will not be repeated in the coming year, Sargent said.

The \$708 million is almost \$163 million more than in 1973. The comparison is based on the fact that fiscal 1975 (starting July 1) is the first regular 12-month cycle for the communities since an 18-month transitional period in which cities and towns shifted from a calendar to a fiscal financial year.

Sargent said the new estimate includes \$37 million recently recommended for loss of local taxes on state-owned land, school transportation and

police pay incentive programs.

The town of Bourne, with a large amount of state-owned land, is expected to receive \$1.25 million more in fiscal 1975 than in calendar 1973—a 55 per cent increase. Some small Cape Cod communities will have local aid increases of more than 100 per cent.

Comparing the coming fiscal year to calendar 1973, the governor said county taxes will increase by \$22 million throughout the state. The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority assessment in member communities has been reduced by almost \$20 million due in part to new state subsidies.

The cherry sheets—so named because of their pink color—also show increases in local aid for school construction, school transportation programs, general school aid and a proposed special education grant of \$9 million. A new law requires communities to establish special education programs this fall.

Reimbursements from the state lottery and beana revenue were estimated at \$36.5 million, an increase of \$1.5 million over calendar 1973.

State Tax Commissioner Nicholas L. Melaxas, in a letter to local boards of assessors, said that the cherry sheets show estimates from agencies administering the 31 local reimbursement or assistance programs.

Here are the estimated cherry sheet allotments for some communities, along with the increase over the amount distributed in calendar 1973, the last 12 month financial year in the cities and towns:

Adams \$851,991, up \$165,511; Amherst \$1.02 million, up \$945,525; Athol \$993,208, up \$336,029; Attleboro \$3.28 million, up \$1.62 million; Boston \$77.06 million, up \$22.14 million; Brockton \$11.69 million, up \$2.89 million; Cambridge, \$4.03 million, up \$675,030.

Fall River \$10.92 million, up \$2.46 million; Fitchburg \$3.08 million, up \$891,922; Framingham \$5.12 million, up \$2.36 million; Gardner \$1.16 million, up \$338,096; Greenfield \$1.06 million, up \$303,609; Haverhill \$4.88 million, up \$1.46 million; Holyoke \$4.59 million, up \$1.17 million; Lawrence \$5.85 million, up \$797,366.

Lowell \$9.04 million, up \$2.90 million; North Adams \$1.95 million, up \$769,592; North Attleboro \$2.02 million, up \$378,596; Northampton \$2.32 million, up \$657,245; Pittsfield \$5.53 million, up \$1.28 million.

Quincy \$7.04 million, up \$1.24 million; Salem \$2.59 million, up \$1.20 million; Springfield \$17.66 million, up \$6.96 million.

Taunton \$5.02 million, up \$1.23 million; Waltham \$3.33 million, up \$973,799; West Springfield \$365,368, up \$249,297; Worcester \$19.86 million, up \$3.60 million.

## Gasoline shortage boosts retail sales in state

BOSTON (AP) — The gasoline shortage seems to have perked up sales a bit for Massachusetts retailers.

Many Massachusetts residents living near the New Hampshire border shop across the state line to avoid the 3 per cent sales tax. New Hampshire has no sales tax.

But now some economists believe recent figures show that Bay State consumers bought more at home because they wanted to save gasoline.

U.S. Commerce Department figures, according to New England Telephone Co. economist Edwin Estle, show surprising strength in retail sales this year.

"Retail sales were up 7 per cent in January in Massachusetts over the previous year but only 5 per cent in the rest of New England," Estle said in an interview.

Sales and alcoholic beverage tax collections provide further evidence, he said.

February sales tax collections, reflecting January sales, fell by only 3 per cent this year, compared to 7.7 per cent last year. January collections reflect Christmas buying and are always higher than February's. The New Hampshire state-owned liquor stores always have drawn Bay Staters because of their low prices.

Estle came to his conclusion after studying retail sales—before the

gasoline drought—for the annual report of the board of economic advisers to the governor.

Until the gasoline shortage, retail sales as a proportion of personal income had been falling in Massachusetts for three years. That proportion had been constant for the state, New England and the nation in 1970, a bit above 46 per cent.

But in the first half of 1973, Bay Staters spent in stores only 43.6 per cent of what they earned, while the rest of New England spent 45.8 per cent, and the country as a whole, 47.5 per cent.

Employment growth in wholesale and retail trade "has been virtually nil since 1970," Estle wrote. If trade had kept pace with the rest of the country, the state might have enjoyed 37,000 more jobs.

Economists Paul Anderson and Fred Slantz of the Federal Reserve Bank in Boston believe Estle might be largely right. They pointed out, moreover, that the relatively strong retail business might be a one-shot phenomenon that will fade with the easing of the gasoline crunch.

On the other hand, James Nowell, chief economist for the First National Bank of Boston, believes "Ed (Estle) is looking at something that isn't there. These changes in numbers could be normal fluctuations."

## House backs bill creating two additional holidays

BOSTON (AP) — The Massachusetts House has endorsed legislation to create two additional holidays next year and another for 1976.

In action Thursday, initial approval was given to a three-day Patriot's Day observance—April 19, 20 and 21, 1975. This would mark the 200th anniversary of the start of the American Revolution.

Given both readings and sent to the Senate was a bill to make the presidential election day in 1976 as a state holiday. There was no debate on either issue.

After a sharp debate, the House killed, 36 to 7, a bill to let cities and towns establish zones where prostitution would be legal. Rep. Charles R. Doyle, D-

Boston, called the proposal "repulsive."

Rep. Barney Frank, D-Boston, the sponsor, argued that failure to recognize the existence and problems of prostitution is "hypocrisy." He said zones could be created and controlled for prostitution.

Rep. Royal L. Bolling Sr., D-Boston, said if the bill is not approved this year it at least should be studied. He supported it and said there ought to be some way to approach the issue without "bringing down the wrath" of many citizens. Bolling said he suspected many colleagues would be anxious to serve on a study commission.

The House put off until next week a final vote on a bill that would permit the open burning of Christmas trees at sunset each Jan. 5. The bill notes this would perpetuate the "ancient Christian observance of the Eve of the Epiphany."

## Court to rule on school bus referendum

BOSTON (AP) — The state Supreme Judicial Court will be asked whether a binding referendum on school busing in Boston is constitutional.

Tom Reardon, press spokesman for Gov. Francis W. Sargent, said Thursday the governor will ask whether the referendum violates separation of powers since Boston's integration plan was ordered by the courts.

"We hope the court will act quickly," Reardon said.

The referendum question asks whether the school committee should be forbidden to assign a pupil to a school because of his or her sex, creed or race if the parents object.

The House on Thursday enacted and sent to the Senate legislation to establish the referendum.

The governor has said he would sign a bill to establish a non-binding referendum.

## State House calendar listed

BOSTON (AP) — On the calendar at the State House Monday (subject to change):

—10 a.m., Joint Counties Committee, report on expenditures for Plymouth County, Room 427.

—10:30 a.m., Education Committee, hearing on four bills dealing with metropolitan area-wide measures for racial balance in the schools, Room 488.

—10:30 a.m., Local Affairs Committee, hearing on regional planning bills, Room 472.

—10:30 a.m., Public Service Committee, hearing on bills increasing legislative salaries, Room 438.

—11 a.m., Taxation Committee, hearing on bills reducing taxation of life insurance companies, including one from the governor, Room 237. —11 a.m., Natural Resources and Agriculture Committee, hearing on miscellaneous bills, Gardner Auditorium.

—11 a.m., House meets formally. —1 p.m., Senate meets formally. —1 p.m., Federal Financial Assistance Committee, hearing on miscellaneous bills, Room 257.

## Clubs

### MONDAY CLUB

The Monday Club will have its next regular meeting Monday at 2 p.m., in the First Congregational Church parlors with Zane Wilson as guest speaker.

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### PROPOSAL

SEALED PROPOSALS for 1 TOWED TYPE ASPHALT PAYER Will be received in the office of the Commissioner of Public Works at the City Hall, North Adams, Massachusetts on Monday, April 8, 1974 at 2:00 P.M. and at that time will be publicly opened and read. Each bid must be accompanied by a certified check in the amount of 10 per cent made payable to the Treasurer of the City of North Adams as a guarantee that the person or persons awarded the contract will enter into same. The right is reserved to reject any or all bids or to accept the one deemed most advantageous for the City of North Adams.

Specifications may be obtained at the Office of the Commissioner of Public Works in the City Hall, Joseph J. Girard, Commissioner of Public Works

March 29, April 5, 1974

Open: April 6, 1974