Angry teachers hit city for 'fiscal foolishness'

By ROGER J. NISSLY

Teachers, fighting mad, supporters of higher taxes, including two city councilmen who threw their weight behind the earnings tax, and impassioned pleas to stop the "neglect" of school children were the ingredients of an intense drama played before the Board of Estimates Wednesday afternoon.

The scene was the packed hearing room in City Hall, where representatives of 17 groups begged, reasoned, cajoled and demanded restoration of funds to the Department of Education's $124 million budget for the 1966-1967 fiscal year.

Outside, angry pickets from two teachers' groups lined the corridors and the sidewalks.

It was the first time teachers had so vigorously decried the faults of an inadequate budget — due in part to the fact that the hearing was rescheduled to 4 p.m. to allow them to attend.

Also a $4.2 million pay raise and 93 additional teaching positions promised them earlier by the Board of Estimates had been abruptly dropped — as two dozen members of the Baltimore Teachers Union made forcefully clear in their short speeches after the other groups had finished.

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NOTICEBLY ABSENT in the three-hour hearing were the humorous touches that have characterized previous hearings, as if the "crisis" situation outlined by School Board President Eli Frank Jr. were too grave to admit it.

In an impassioned plea, Mr. Frank said the restoration of salary increases has "got to be done, got to be done for the aroused citizenry of Baltimore backing you up."

On the teachers irritation at the salary cut — which the board said would require an earnings tax and a property tax increase of 50 cents to restore — Frank observed, "Something has happened in the past few days to the teachers.

"I don't blame them one bit."

* * *

CITING THE salary increase that had been formally approved by the Board of Estimates earlier in the year — including a starting salary of $200 above the present $5,200 — Frank concluded that he was confident the board would not "play fast and loose" with the loyalties of the teachers.

The significance of the cuts was outlined by Dr. Laurence G. Paquin, superintendent of schools, who called the situation a "moment of truth."

He said that the orginal budget of $124 million, "not something pulled out of the air," was first pared to $117 million then in an "unclear" move an additional $5 million went, eliminating the new salary program.

In a lengthy and reasoned manifesto, he called the last 10 years in education in Baltimore "discouraging" and the budgetary methods "fiscal foolishness."

Where Baltimore used to be a leader in staffing and in low class size, the city now has fallen behind other state systems, he said.

These facts, Paquin stated, "are not just alarming trends, these are very, very dangerous trends."

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FOR THE teachers the city has recruited for next year under the promised pay scale, Paquin said the city had no ethical choice but to release them from their verbal agreements.

In the last year, he also noted, the city has lost $2 milion in Federal money for programs because it was not able to recruit sufficient staff for them.

Citing teachers' groups terms of "withdrawal of services" and "sanctions," the superintendent said he was not threatening, but advised the board not to "make the mistake of taking these matters lightly."

His statement, "This country has a new breed of teachers — thank Heaven for that," brought loud and prolonged applause from the room peopled with a majority of teachers.

He said the teachers were "angry and militant" because "they care about their jobs, their professions and the children they work with every day.

"What we have seen in the last few days . . . is good people on the point of saying, 'If no one else cares, why should I?'"

When he stated that he did not think the teachers were "in any mood to wait till next year," he was again halted by applause.

The decision in an affluent society, Paquin felt, is not between guns or books, but "the question is whether you want to pay for books."

The people of Baltimore are willing and want the best school system possible," he concluded to applause.

* * *

BOTH CITY Councilmen Leon Rubenstein (D., Fifth) and Jacob Edelman (D., Fifth) appeared as frustrated councilmen who cannot restore cuts after they are made by the board and announced their intention to vote for higher taxes to support the school budget.

Rubenstein, calling on the city to be "big league in education" and noting that all of the major cities spend a higher percentage of their budget for education than Baltimore, stated, "I'm not afraid to vote for higher tax rates."

Edelman, though he observed an earning tax was personally abhorrent to him and that he would get "plenty H—," said that if the body restored the salary hike, "I am ready to vote for an earnings tax."

Then it was the teachers' turn.

Kenneth K. Muir, vice president of Public School Teachers Association, announced the group's support of the earning tax and underscored the "betrayal" which brought 3,000 teachers to its meeting on Monday.

When the mayor announced that the board would disregard its own promise to teachers, Muir said, this was "evidence of the board's lack of commitment to the importance of public education."

* * *

TEACHERS, MUIR said, "concluded that the Baltimore City Schools will deteriorate very rapidly if our elected officials do not understand the importance of public education.

"The teachers also concluded that they alone cannot prevent the rapid deterioration of public education in this city without the partnership of the Board of Estimates and the City Council."

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DENNIS CROSBY, president of the Baltimore Teachers Union, thanked the board for changing the meting time and stated that in reality the door of the packed hearing room had been closed in many teachers' faces.

Noting that teachers were in the hallway and around the block, he requested and got permission for a core of teachers to address the board after the other groups finished.

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FREQUENT REFERENCE was made during the hearing to the fact that the large contingent of policemen stationed around the building kept a number of teachers outside the hearing room, including several who were scheduled to speak.

CORE spokesman Raymond Ford drew an analogy between this act and the "closed door on colored children and all kids in the public schools."

Among those refused entry was School Board Member Mrs. Elizabeth Murphy Moss, who was advised by an officer, "I don't care you can't get in."

Later, Mrs. Moss maneuvered a walk around to the press entrance and stood in the rear until offered a seat by Superintendent Paquin.

She told the AFRO this year's hearing had a serious and concerned tone. "I am confident," she said, "that our city fathers will heed the teachers' pleas."

Joe Cascella, national representative for the AFL-CIO affiliated group, declared that the group was "here today to serve notice that the teachers will not accept this budget cut.

"Baltimore teachers have had enough. We have surrendered for the last time.

"From now on we fight."

Cascella said that any "militant action you force upon us" will be the board's responsibility.

* * *

UPON QUESTIONING by Board President Thomas J. D'Alesandro III, Cascella replied that the union would not support the earnings tax as a regressive tax, but would support any other "progressive" taxes to finance the pay hike.

Thomas Bradley, representing the AFL-CIO Council, said the union would support its teachers local "in any action they deem necessary."

Furman Templeton, director of the Urban League, representing the Citizens School Advisory Commit'ee as its vice chairman, said it was good to see the teachers "a little mad. They have been a little bit professionally too nice for too long."

CORE and the NAACP also made presentations.

CORE's Raymond Forbes charged that from the cut budget "the children and the schools in the black ghetto will suffer most.

"A cut in the budget will only add injury to insult in an already intolerable situation."

* * *

MRS. JUANITA MITCHELL, for the Baltimore NAACP, said the group supported a pay raise for teachers and "the full uncut budget" and "whatever taxes are necessary to make our school system so that it can educate first class citizens." She said she thought "we should commend the teachers for dramatizing the needs of the public school system."

* * *

AMONG OTHER groups which supported restoring the budget and higher taxes were: the Principals Association, League of Women Voters, Baltimore Junior Chamber of Commerce, Baltimore Council of Jewish Women and PTA groups.

Train on job

The Baltimore Urban League announced today that its On-The-Job Training Project is looking for young men 18 - 15 interested in being trained as machine operators with a local manufacturer.

Men selected will be paid a minimum of $.50 per hour while undergoing training for a period of 4 weeks. Upon successful completion of training the trainee will receive $1.65 per hour.

Persons interested in applying for this and other on-the-job training opportunities such as heliarc welders, forklift operators, route salesmen and helpers should apply to the Baltimore Urban League On - The - Job Training Project, 1404 Pennsylvania Ave. or call 523-1060.

YW meeting

The Madison Ave. YWCA will hold its annual meeting on Monday, May 9, at 6:30 p.m. Edgar M. Ewing, BURHA executive, will be guest speaker. Mrs. Grace Gates is chairman of the committee on administration. Mrs. Grace Hunt is branch executive.

BALTIMORE JUNIOR COLLEGE attracted delegates from 105 colleges and universities for the dedication this week of building complex. Seen on campus are public schools Supt. Laurence J. Paquin, Sen. Verda F. Welcome (D., 4th), Eli Frank Jr., school board president; Municipal Court Judge Robert B. Watts and Saul M. Perdue, BURHA commissioner.

Show at Civic Center will be free to public

Baltimoreans may pick up free tickets, courtesy of the Rotary Club, for a musical production called "Sing Out '66" to be held at the Civic Center in a one performance only show beginning at 8:30 tonight (Friday).

The cast is composed of 140 students from 17 countries who have appeared as guests of the governments of Tokyo, Korea and West Germany and are scheduled for all U.S. military bases across the country.

The theme of the show is America's youth and what they have to say in original songs.

The group was met Thursday on the steps of Charles Plaza in a reception with Gov. J. Millard Tawes and Mayor Theodore R. McKeldin.

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Peace Corps test set for May 14

Richmond area residents interested in putting their skills to use in developing nations around the world are invited to take the Peace Corps Placement Test at 9 a.m. on Saturday, May 14 at Room 517, Parcel Post Building, 11th and Main Sts.

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NOW PLAYING
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STUDENTS at Baltimore Junior College with new fieldhouse in background.

Baltimore Junior College dedicates building complex

With the long fight for its construction over, Baltimore Junior College officials could relax Wednesday as they dedicated their new complex of buildings during a full day

The dedication attracted leaders in two arts — politics and teaching — including delegates from 105 colleges and universities.

And during the day it was president of the college Harry Bard, primarily responsible for its present status, who came in for many of the salutes.

The featured speaker for the day, Dr. John H. Fischer, former school superintendent here, and now president of the Teachers College of Columbia University, received a note of admiration from present superintendent, Dr. Laurence G. Paquin, who introduced him.

In 1954 — a "landmark date" for the Supreme Court's school decision —Dr. Paquin said the Baltimore school system under Dr. Fischer "was the first great city in the nation to make that move."

Educators "watched with admiration this splendid display of educational leader ship," Paquin stated.

NOTING THAT "education has become a necessity," Dr. Fischer compliments Baltimore on providing "the first group of buildings for the education of its people beyond high school, as a matter of public investment."

In the nation we have not achieved universal education, but the most we can claim is "universal literacy, not even that," he said in a country were only 75 per cent of the youths can pass the selective service mental test.

Observing that education should begin before the age of six, Dr. Fischer stated that "to be truly inclusive a school must do more than open its doors to a student.

"When he enters, he must be made to feel he is important — not because he is a star, but because he is himself and therefore uniquely valuable."

cians who stole the show, embroiled as they were in a school budget squabble and threat of a teachers' strike.

HYMAN A. FRESSMAN, the Bard of City Hall who called himself "Hyman of the Avon," set the tone with two lines:

"You're just perfect as we judge it.

"You'd better be or we'll cut your budget."

City Council President Thomas D'Alesandro III said that giving the teachers a pay raise on an increased property tax alone is like "facing a tiger with a cap pistor."

And Mayor Theodore McKeldin, accepting the keys to the college along Gov. Millard Tawes, observed that Eli Frank Jr., the unpaid of job School Board president, was the only person "who has not asked for a raise."

Clarence Mitchell at People's Church

WASHINGTON

Clarence Mitchell 3rd, member of the Maryland House of Delegates from Baltimore City, will be the guest speaker on Sunday, May 8, for NAACP Day at People's Congregational Church, 4704 13th St., NW.

The Howards, father, son, die same week

Daniel H. Howard, 74, will be buried next week in his native Howard Chapel home in Montgomery County, Md. He died this morning (Friday).

He is survived by two sisters, Mrs. Blanche Mebane, Raleigh, N.C., and Mrs. Elsie Davis, Chicago.

He also leaves 13 children.

The fourteenth child, James Edward Howard, 42, of 1021 N. Payson St., Baltimore, died on Tuesday

Funeral services will be held 1 p.m. Saturday at the Kelson Funeral Home.

He is survived by his wife, Mrs. Bertha Howard.

The Howards are nephew and cousin of the late Mrs. Martha Howard Murphy, wife of John H. Murphy Sr., AFRO founder.

Commission policies

NEW YORK — A report to Mayor John V. Lindsay released last week by the City Commission on Human Rights indicated that complaints filed with the Commission from Feb. 1 of this year have quadrupled since William H. Booth, Chairman of the City Commission, took office.

Officials 'startled' that poor, tan families overcome odds

NEW YORK — A former high official in the Department of Labor calls it "startling" that America's poor colored families have done as well as they have under extremely adverse conditions.

In a signed article in the current issue of "Look" Magazine, former Assistant Secretary of Labor Daniel P. Moynihan notes, "colored children are still raised to believe in American ideals and, child for child, have aspirations and ambitions that should shame — or inspire—all of us."

* * *

MOYNIHAN CITES in "Look" the fact that in one-third of the nation's colored homes, one or both parents are absent. Most of the missing are fathers. He believes this situation is caused by economic oppression in a largely segregated society.

"Whatever the reasons — divorce, desertion, death — the fact that a family is poor greatly increases the chances that it will sooner or later break up," Moynihan states.

"Despite all the torment and degradation of racial prejudice and economic oppression," Moynihan notes, "colored children are still raised to believe in American ideals and, child for child, have aspirations and ambitions that should shame — mothers who give strength and hope to their children."

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CONTEST RULES
1. The AFRO Student of the Year contest begins April 16th and continues through the issue dated June 18th.
2. This contest is open to all students in the 9th through the 12th grades of any accredited school in the State of Maryland.
3. The top students will be the four boys or girls, who receive the most votes in the contest. The top winner will be known as the "Student of the Year."
4. Any qualified student may be entered in the contest by submitting 200 votes or more. One voting coupon clipped from AFRO is worth 100 votes.
5. First prize will be $500 cash; second prize, $300; third and ninth prizes will be $200 cash; and there will be twelve additional cash prizes of $25 each.
6. Anyone may vote in the contest as often as he wishes, and for any qualified student of any accredited school. Students are eligible from the grades 9 through 12, and must be enrolled in school during the contest.
7. AFRO employees and their immediate families are not eligible to win.
8. Decisions and interpretations of these rules shall be final with the AFRO-AMERICAN.
9. Student contestants agree to the use of names and pictures for publicity purposes.
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