
Statement by the Honorable James A. Burke, chairman of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means, regarding the general appropriation bill for the fiscal year nineteen hundred and sixty-six (see House, No. 3939, amended).

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year One Thousand Nine Hundred and Sixty-Five.

FROM THE OFFICE OF
SENATE WAYS AND MEANS CHAIRMAN SENATOR JAMES F. BURKE

December 9, 1965.

REMARKS OF SENATOR JAMES F. BURKE, CHAIRMAN OF SENATE WAYS AND MEANS, ON THE FISCAL 1966 GENERAL APPROPRIATION BILL.

The Committee on Ways and Means submits herewith its recommendations for appropriations for fiscal year 1966. These appropriations total \$699,184,496.

It has been a difficult year. We have had the staggering problem of revenue and increased demands for spending. The budget we received from the House was admittedly inadequate. The Committee has taken the position that a budget that fulfills only a portion of the actual needs of the Commonwealth is not conducive to sound business practices. Accordingly, the Committee has withheld action pending a clarification of the revenue situation.

We feel that this position is a sound business-like approach. No business, no family could function without planning its future expenditures and without knowing where the money was coming from or how the bills were to be paid. The committee has provided in this budget adequate financing for our needs.

The committee has recommended \$700,000 for the staffing and operation of the divisions created by the Harrington-Willis Commission to get that vitally needed agency functioning. We can not allow the needs of education to be delayed. We must start the work going now.

We have provided in this budget sufficient money for educational

institutions to fulfill their financial commitments this academic year similar to the recommendations of His Excellency the Governor. Extra needs of a supplementary nature can be considered later.

One of the more difficult problems that has perplexed this committee is the operation of fiscal autonomy in our institutions of higher education. It is impossible for the Budget Bureau and the Bureau of Personnel to prepare a total budget accurately with five different pay scales, varying personnel policies, salary increases, merit raises, step raises and purchasing policies. Our twenty-four institutions of higher education are filling a vital need. The dedicated men and women who staff these colleges are doing a good job. But the time has come to put our "education" house in order.

If fiscal autonomy is to continue, the executive department as well as the Legislature must have agreement on ground rules of operation of fiscal autonomy with the trustees of our educational institutions. Fiscal autonomy is not fiscal license.

By providing adequate revenue we are also able to bring current our payments to the cities and towns and provide much needed local property tax relief. Briefly, the House Appropriation bill (H-3939) provided only one half of the needs of the old method of payment.

Additionally, 41.3 million was needed to continue this method. We have added this amount and increased it further by \$58 million. Thus our actions will bring these payments current.

Electronic data processing in our state agencies is expensive. It is costing over a million dollars a year. We recognize its need and the effectiveness of saving time and work. However, the diversity of our agencies and type of work must be coordinated so that in saving time we are not wasting money.

Accordingly, we have added a new section (16A) to the budget to provide a mechanism for such coordination.

This is a tight budget. There are no frills or unnecessary items and I recommend its passage.