

LSD—The Big Issue; It Threatens Lives, Says Rafferty

By Mel Baughman
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The alarming increase in use of drugs by juveniles and widespread lawlessness among younger elements of the population stand as the major issues facing California education today.

This is the belief of Dr. Max Rafferty, state superintendent of public instruction. Interviewed last night before addressing a group of citizens, Dr. Rafferty told The Sentinel, "One of the big issues is LSD. I wouldn't kid you about that because that's the only one that actually threatens lives. We have students now jumping out of windows and killing themselves and going crazy. This has to be the big issue right now all over the state"

Rafferty said his department is taking steps to combat the drug problem. He said the Department of Education has revised its handbook on drugs and has sought the advice of prominent physicians and other experts.

Turning to lawlessness, Rafferty deplored "law violations, defiance and contempt for the law generally." He said the "schools are going to have to get into this with both hands and feet by stressing in their citizenship and civic classes and in all other classes the fact that you obey a law until it's changed."

Although he declined to mention personalities, Rafferty denounced those who advocate law violations. Said he, "Any

person in a democracy who advocates violating a law instead of changing it through orderly due process is rendering not only a disservice, but is actually a law breaker and violator himself and deserves the penalty of the law."

Dr. Rafferty predicted the current session of the state legislature would provide additional aid to schools and at the same time enact proposals to provide property tax relief. He said, "I think the schools can expect to get somewhere between \$50 and \$100 million in new state aid this year and perhaps \$150 million in local tax relief."

He added, "I think next year when there is a general overhaul of the school finance program, this relief will be much

more massive." He said efforts to increase school aid and at the same time give relief to property owners were thwarted by the "\$500-million deficit inherited by the Reagan administration."

Rafferty stated he is "exploring the possibilities" of becoming a candidate for the Republican nomination for U.S. Senator in 1968. Noting there "isn't any race yet," the schools chief said, "I'm getting a lot of very kind comments urging me to run."

He said he hasn't made up his mind. "I want to see how much of a demand there is, how popular a candidacy of mine would be, whether the sinews of a campaign would be forthcoming." He stated a staff is working on these questions. Rafferty suggested

his decision would be made next winter.

Rafferty noted that recent opinion polls show he is narrowing the lead held by the incumbent, Senator Thomas H. Kuchel. He said three months ago he was 12 points behind, but as of Tuesday had narrowed the margin to eight points.

He commented, "This is significant, especially this far ahead of the election." He also saw significance in the fact that "the combined opponents who have been named so far to the incumbent are way ahead in the polls as far as their combined vote is concerned."

Noting that if all remained in the race, Kuchel would "get in like a breeze," Rafferty commented, "If all of them were to drop out but one, I'm afraid the

incumbent would have kind of tough sledding."

Rafferty renewed his plea for an amendment to a bill intended to return control of school curriculum to local school boards.

He expressed the hope the legislature would amend the bill's provisions regarding physical education. Instead of taking physical education out of the required subjects altogether, Rafferty urged that his office be permitted to experiment with various time groupings for two years.

He suggested the bill, SB 311, would have difficulty in obtaining approval in the Assembly and by the governor unless the physical education provisions are altered. He said, "The governor wants some evidence that by taking out the daily physical

education requirements, we're not going to be interfering with the sound mind, sound body concept."

Rafferty said he supports other provisions of the bill and its basic purpose.

On unification, the superintendent said he opposes any effort to make unification mandatory in districts without a vote of the residents concerned. He said unification is making progress in California and cited the fact that since 1940 the number of districts has been reduced from about 3000 to about 1100.

(For a report of a speech delivered last night by Rafferty to local Republican organizations, see Page 7 of today's Sentinel.)