

## LONGEST SCHOOL BUS RIDE INVOLVED

# Education Committee Studying Measure for Seeley Lake HS

By THOMAS E. MOONEY  
(Missoulian State Bureau)

HELENA—A bill designed to help eliminate "the longest school bus ride in the United States" is being considered by the education committee of the Montana House of Representatives.

The measure is written in all-inclusive terms, but its application at this time is aimed specifically at Missoula County, and more specifically, at Seeley Lake.

Chairman Oscar Kvaalen, R-Richland, said the committee will give the bill full consideration in the next few weeks. The measure was introduced by the Missoula County delegation in the House—Reps. Robert D. Watt, D; Elmer Flynn, D; G. W. Deschamps, R; Harry T. Northey, R; Tom Haines, R—and Rep. Ralph J. Beck, R-Powell.

In discussing Missoula County's need for the bill, the House group from that county pointed out that at present about 50 Seeley Lake high school pupils are transported

the approximate 65 miles from that community to the city of Missoula each school day.

This means a 130-mile bus trip for the students five days a week, with the bus leaving the first home about 6 a.m. and that students are not getting back home until around 6 p.m.

This transportation costs somewhere around \$10,000 a year—and the Missoulians feel a second bus may be necessary in the next year or so as the Seeley Lake community and surrounding area is growing in population.

They pointed out there actually is a potential of about 100 high school students in that area, but at present many of them stay in Missoula throughout the school week, others go to high school in Whitefish, Arlee and Kalispell, and many either do not go to high school at all or drop out after attending for a few weeks or months.

The solution to this whole problem, say the Missoula lawmakers, is to build a branch high school at Seeley Lake. This would be a part of the present Missoula County High School, but changes in state laws are necessary in order to make the construction of such a branch legal. Technically, the bill, HB182, would insert in present state laws regarding the establish-

ment of high schools, wording permitting the same procedure to apply to branch high schools.

The lawmakers pointed out the proposal has unusual possibilities from the education standpoint as, for instance, such a branch high school would permit certain teachers from the main school to spend a few days at the newer institution setting up particular courses or methods of instruction. From there, the school's regular teachers could take over the instruction.

They also said it would give the Seeley Lake pupils an opportunity to engage in extracurricular activities tied to the school program, something they cannot do at present because of the hours spent in travel.

The present situation was described by one as "lots of confusion—the kids go everywhere, and some don't go at all." A few even try to complete their high school education by correspondence.

Land is available for the build-

ing of such a school at Seeley Lake, adjacent to the elementary school there. No cost estimates were given, as plans are not in the making unless the law is changed to permit the construction.

Meanwhile, the longest school bus ride in the U.S. continues.

Rep. Beck joined in authorship of the bill because his county, Powell, adjoins Missoula County and it is possible a similar problem might arise there.



Mooney

**GAY NINETIES**

**HELD OVER  
5 More Days**

To See and Hear  
**"Diamond Ed"**  
And His Toy Band  
A Spectacular performer — absolutely  
the last week to  
enjoy him

Headquarters For All  
**Dr. Scholl's Foot  
Relief**  
**YOUNGREN'S  
SHOE SHOP**  
121 West Front

## Branch High School

Several years ago the Seeley-Swan parents asked for a branch of the county high school in their valley in order to spare their children a bus ride of approximately 60 miles each way.

When the trustees pointed out that it is impossible to provide as many educational opportunities in a small school as in a large one, the parents said they would rather have their children go to a near-by building with fewer advantages than to a distant building with more advantages.

The question then arose as to what educational opportunities should be provided in the proposed branch of MCHS and what should be omitted.

Unfortunately, MCHS cannot afford to give all groups with special interests, pupils with special gifts, and pupils with limitations everything they want; nor can it afford to give the small group of pupils living in the Seeley-Swan Valley everything they want.

At the present time, the high school board is faced with a difficult decision.

Is it better to start with half a gym, basketball teams, and less than desirable facilities for the rest of the school program, and hope that the latter can be gradually improved in the years ahead?

Or is it better to start with more nearly adequate facilities for the rest of the school program and hope that a gym and basketball teams can be added later as the community grows?

—Mrs. L. G. Browman, Missoula County High School trustee.

# Seeley Lake Bill Advances

HELENA (AP) — The Montana House, without a "no" being heard, gave tentative approval Sunday to a branch high school measure known in Missoula County as the Seeley Lake Bill.

The bill, expected to clear the House Monday and go to the Senate, would let any of Montana's 16 county high schools set up branch schools, with public approval.

HB182 is sponsored by the five Missoula County representatives and Rep. Ralph J. Beck, R-Powell.

It was guided through Committee of the Whole by Rep. Robert D. Watt, D-Missoula. He said that under present law Missoula County is unable to establish a branch high school in the lumbering and resort community at Seeley Lake.

As a result, Watt told an obviously sympathetic House, children of the area must make a 138-mile roundtrip by bus to attend high school in Missoula.

They are away from home from about 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. each school day and "never see their homes in the daytime during the winter months," he said.

Watt said the bus service has been operated about eight years and in that time "no child has ridden steadily and ever graduated from high school. I think it's

the longest school bus run in the United States."

"The children can't take the gaff," said Rep. Harry T. Northey, R-Missoula. "It's one of the worst highways in the nation in winter."

Other Missoula County representatives spoke for the bill as did Rep. Magnus Aasheim, D-Sheridan.

Aasheim read a letter written by a Seeley Lake eighth-grade girl, Peggy Eldridge, who pointed out the long bus trip leaves little time for outside activities.

# Board Completes Canvass of Vote On Levy for Seeley Lake School

The official canvass of the special mill levy election to provide funds for construction of a high school at Seeley Lake was completed Tuesday morning.

The final count, as completed by the Missoula County Commissioners and Clerk and Recorder Martin S. Behner, was 1,430 for and 797 against. The unofficial tally from the Saturday vote showed 1,440 for and 807 against.

A levy of approximately 10 mills will be required to build the \$278,000 branch unit of Missoula County High School at Seeley Lake.

In other action Tuesday morning the commissioners took six bids for gasoline and diesel fuel contracts under advisement.

Bids for the fuel contracts had been called for in June, but a mixup in dates caused confusion among the bidders at that time. The county clerk and recorder ran legal advertisements calling

for bids June 25, but another county office sent out "duplicates" of the announcement calling for bids June 27.

As a result the commissioners opened bids on June 25, took them under advisement and then on June 27 received more bids. On advice from the county attorney, the commissioners readvertised for the fuel bids.

## SLOW LEARNER COURSE AUTHORIZED

# Board Hires Architect For New Seeley School

By JOHN A. FORSSEN

Trustees of Missoula County High School Tuesday night hired an architect to plan the proposed new high school at Seeley Lake and committed themselves definitely to start a special education program for slow learners beginning in September of 1964.

A delegation of half a hundred residents of the Seeley Lake area took part in a discussion of what the Seeley Lake school should have in the way of facilities, with a number strongly advocating a gymnasium for physical education and interscholastic sports.

Also mentioned in the requirements to be handed the architectural firm of Witwer & Price were five or six classrooms, science

teaching rooms, a multipurpose room and other facilities.

The trustees received a petition and vigorous arguments from a parents group advocating special education beginning next fall but insisted that proper space for the class or classes could not be provided.

Gary R. Marbut, chairman of the Parents Committee for Special Education, asked how space could be provided two years hence, when estimates are that both the South Avenue and Higgins Avenue buildings will be filled to capacity, if it cannot be provided now.

But in the end he said his group would "retreat as gracefully as possible" from its position and give full support to the board in

order that the best could be done for the children concerned

In response to Seeley Lake residents who asked for a gymnasium for the proposed school, board members said the cost has to be held down to the point where it will be accepted by taxpayers who must vote on a bond issue to build the school. The date for this election has been set for August.

A Seeley Lake resident who did not give his name told the board he felt that "we don't have to be too fearful about asking for what we have a right to expect. We don't have to pare this down to a two-room school or forego a gymnasium."

"We could spend a million without even trying," board member Gerald Diettert commented at one point in the lengthy discussion.

July 10-63

AVERAGE COST ABOUT \$10

# Seeley School's Financing Explained

"Construction of a Seeley Lake branch of Missoula County High School would cost the average homeowner about \$10."

This statement came Wednesday from the Seeley Lake School District 34 board of trustees, Marshall Gray, chairman. Other members of the board are Dick Duncan and C. B. Rich.

The board said based on an estimated \$10,000 average resale value of a residence the 10-mill levy required to build the \$278,000 school would amount about \$10 per residence in many cases.

Missoula County taxpayers will vote July 20 on a special mill levy for construction of the proposed branch high school, the first of its kind in the state. Main purpose of the proposed school is to eliminate a bus ride which extends as far as 136 miles round trip for some students.

The board said the proposal is for a one-shot mill levy rather than a bond issue which would include interest payments over a number of years. Under a mill levy the construction would be paid off in a single year.

The new school, designed for 150 students, would be ready for use beginning with the fall term of 1964. It would include five classrooms, a study hall, a science laboratory and a large multipurpose room which would include lunchroom, gymnasium and other facilities.

The board said the school would be fully accredited and offer as good an education as offered in the Missoula units of MCHS.

Just getting the issue on the ballot has involved five years work including a law change by the last

Legislature. Previously law did not permit a county high school to construct a branch at a location away from its primary site. The bill permitting the branch construction was passed unanimously by both houses, the board said, prior to its signing by the governor.

# Seeley Lake HS Unit Election Set July 20

The Missoula County High School board of trustees decided Tuesday night to place before the taxpayers of the county a mill levy not to exceed 10 mills to be used for construction of a high school unit at Seeley Lake.

It was further decided to have architects' drawings made for a four-year plan high school building, with the facilities to be determined later. The mill levy election was set for July 20.

The plan to have a gymnasium suitable for athletic contests was discussed, as was a plan to have a multipurpose room which could be used as a general physical ed-

ucation area as well as a limited space basketball court. Final decisions were postponed until architects' plans are completed, and costs can be studied.

In other action the board agreed to sign the contract with Witwer and Price, authorizing the architectural firm to draw the plans for the Seeley Lake high school unit.

Principal W. W. Wetzel announced that the budget meeting will be June 24. Mills Folsom was appointed representative to the transportation committee which will meet with the county superintendent of schools.

Dr. Gerald Diettert, a board

member, expressed dissatisfaction over the basketball schedule as set up by the Montana High School Association. It was the opinion of the board that a formal letter of protest be written to the association expressing the board's feeling. In the discussion it was pointed out that the schedule as it stands will reduce the gate receipts at home games, severely curtail the B squad basketball program, and involve considerably more travel expense.

The board passed a motion to instruct the secretary to write a letter to Miss Agnes Brown accepting her resignation from the teaching staff with regret and expressing the board's appreciation for her many years of service to MCHS.

A communication was received from C. S. Porter, retiring superintendent of School District 1, thanking the board for courtesies shown him by the MCHS board.