

Fire by NFU Groups Property Taxes Under

Mel Borden, a National Farmers Union member from Ohio has challenged the right of states and municipalities to tax property for the purpose of education. "This case could go all the way to the United States Supreme Court before it's settled," Borden told a Lancaster NFU meeting on Wednesday night in Quarryville.

Three years ago, Borden told the gathering, the OHIO NFU studied the property tax situation and decided it was wrong. It was especially wrong for farmers, because property taxes in many areas were eating up as much as 25 percent of a farmer's income. Borden and other NFU members approached farmers to ask for their support in getting

property taxes rolled back, not just for the farmer but for everybody. They also sent two NFU members to the state legislature to lobby full-time for the passage of legislation to get property taxes lowered. Things dragged on, Borden said, and nothing much appeared to be happening in the state government. "So one day, we had



Mel Borden, an Ohio NFU official, was the featured speaker at the Wednesday night meeting of the Lancaster NFU chapter held in Quarryville.

150 farmers visit the speaker of the house. This made an impression on the speaker, because his office only holds 25 people. Three days later, the speaker went on record as saying that he supported our movement."

"Finally," Borden said, "the legislature passed a 10 percent property tax rollback. They also passed a graduated income tax, which we felt was a better way of raising money for schools."

Borden pointed out that several courts have ruled that the collection of use of property taxes for educational purposes is unconstitutional, because it means that poorer school districts have to settle for a lower expenditure per pupil. The courts feel that inferior educational systems may result from these tax inequities.

After Borden had finished his speech, Guy Oakman, chairman of the Pennsylvania NFU organization committee, described legislation which is now before the Pennsylvania legislators. The bill Oakman described would make previous for taxing land according to use

rather than the highest market value.

Agricultural land under this bill would be taxed at a rate lower than commercial or residential. In the event the land was converted to other use, however, taxes at the higher rate would have to be paid for the three-year period preceding the sale.

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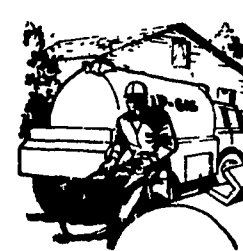
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