

To state Board: The particular urgency about this matter of the film is that the Dallas Board meets next Wednesday, the 29th, and proposals to show the film again may come up then.....Mrs. Perrine's and Mrs. Harvey's copies of the memos did not include the last paragraph of the 3/16 memo nor the Education Fund section of the 3/23 memo.

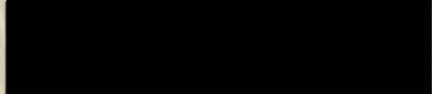
Elizabeth

file

March 24, 1967

In Janice's letter I sent a TH clipping
"Barnes Predicts Urban Bills Defeat".
Barnes said "There's going to have to be more work on the local level by

Mrs. Laurence Perrine



proponents of these bills before they can pass. Joe had private discussions with officials from all the metro areas, & they have reservations about the bills (T&L bills)"

file

Dear Catherine:

I'm enclosing copies of my memos to state Board members Duckworth, Ziegler, Ramey, May, Casperson and Joor regarding the film, "Inside the Texas Legislature". (Mrs. Duckworth, chairman, Mrs. Ziegler and Mrs. Ramey are the Legislature Committee on the state Board; Mrs. May, Legislative Chairman, is a member of all state Board Program committees; Mrs. Casperson, Program Vice President, receives copies of all state Board Program correspondence; and Mrs. Joor, President, receives copies of all state Board correspondence.) I'm also sending a copy of this letter and the memos to Mrs. Harvey, our Dallas League chairman of the Legislature item.

I'm in on this film matter, Catherine, because Mrs. Duckworth asked her committee about the film, Florence couldn't attend our showing of it on the 16th, as a member of our resource committee I was attending, so Florence asked me to give my evaluation of it. I feel that you, as Dallas League president, and Mary Ann, as Legislature chairman, should have my reports, as pertinent information in case the Dallas Board will be considering proposals about the film.

I wish you could have stayed on, on the 16th, to join Mary Ann and me in talking over the film and the various matters related to it.

Yours,

Mrs. E. R. Brownscombe

Encls. 2

CC: Mrs. James B. Harvey
Mrs. F. L. Duckworth
Mrs. S. E. Ziegler
Mrs. Darol K. Ramey
Mrs. Francis B. May
Mrs. Robert E. Casperson
Mrs. William E. Joor

File
March 23, 1967

To: Casperson, Duckworth, Ziegler, Ramey, May, Joor
From: Brownscombe
Re: More on the film, "Inside the Texas Legislature"

My memo of March 16th did not discuss the basic question of: Is this film partisan? I'd like now to present my answer to this question and give the evidence upon which I base my answer. I'll also include further information about our Dallas experience, because other local Leagues may be considering showing the film.

(In my opinion, "Inside the Texas Legislature" is partisan--not blatantly partisan, but subtly so, the soft sell approach. For one thing, the film is obtained through the Republican party, and no political party makes material available unless it thinks it will enhance the party image. I don't know if the film can also be obtained from a strictly commercial source, through purchase or rental. But even if it can be, the facts remain that the Republican party is making the film available and that no political party would do this unless it thought it would be helped thereby.

The film also is pro-Grover in several ways. Scenes of him are posed in the empty House--walking to the rostrum, giving his commentary from the rostrum, descending from it, commenting from the floor. Such pictures focus attention on him. He is very neatly dressed, with his hair carefully combed, and with a calm, unhurried manner. This is in definite contrast to the close-ups, taken during the actual session, of Speaker Barnes and Lieutenant Governor Smith presiding, apparently, at the end of a long, hard day, and of Governor Connally addressing the session. The pictures of the three are unflattering. Mr. Grover, however, is shown at his best, and a personable best it is. Lieutenant Governor Smith is shown with his mouth open; the picture of Speaker Barnes is blurred as his gavel descends; the profile of Governor Connally addressing the session shows him with his chin ducked back, making a double chin. (I'm not forgetting that in another part of the film the Governor is shown in a posed shot vetoing appropriation bill items and handing the pens to watching legislators, and that all of them look personable indeed, but one still remembers that double chin! And to my recollection there were no mitigating shots of the Speaker and the Lieutenant Governor.)

The photographic quality of the pictures of Mr. Grover is markedly better than of almost all of the rest of the film. This is understandable, of course, because the pictures of Mr. Grover could be taken under controlled conditions--an empty House, good lighting, and retakes if desired--while the various pictures of the legislature in action were taken during the actual session when much less control of photographic conditions would be possible. This contrast in photographic quality is, I feel, another way in which the film is pro-Grover.

An additional instance of focusing on Mr. Grover is in the close-up of the electronic board which records the vote. In that shot, attention is concentrated on GROVER by greatly enlarging his name

(with the names above and below him on the board out of focus) and by showing only his vote. This is a perfectly natural way to demonstrate the board, but it does help to build up Mr. Grover.

Our nonpartisanship policy says that as an organization we do not support or oppose any political party or any candidate. The application of this policy to Program is that League Boards, at all levels, have a responsibility to be sure that the manner in which Program is carried out is such that the community and League members themselves cannot reasonably infer that the League is supporting or opposing a political party or candidate. (This is abridged from paragraphs 1 and 2 of page 11 of the STATE BOARD HANDBOOK.) I consider that the film, "Inside the Texas Legislature," is sufficiently partisan (as to both Mr. Grover and his political party) so that the League should steer clear of it. And, as I said in my memo of March 16th, I feel that the film does not add to our understanding of the legislature, and that some of it is misleading through treating really complex situations as if they were simple.

There's an additional aspect to the nonpartisanship problem. When the film is obtained from any political party, as it was from the Republicans for the Dallas League's committee, we incur the probability of having other groups told that we asked for the film. Mrs. McCord (who showed the film to us) named various organizations in Dallas which have seen the film and others which have requested to see it. There is no reason to suppose that the League will not be added to this list. In fact, she expressed particular gratification that we were seeing the film, because of our known objectivity and interest in government. Of course, we would not be subject to this particular embarrassment which we now face if the film had come from a commercial source.

After the Dallas showing was over, Mrs. Harvey, our chairman for the Legislature item, and I stayed on and discussed problems raised by the showing of the film. The meeting had not gone according to plan. Mrs. Harvey had not known until a few days before that the film would be shown by someone (Mrs. McCord) from the Republican leadership. The film was scheduled for the start of the meeting-- 10:00 to 10:30--and the Legislature committee was to meet following that to discuss the film and other business. Mrs. McCord's projector went bad at the very beginning (she said she wasn't surprised, because the projector had been in such frequent use to show the film). If the religious education director of the church where we were meeting had not helped out with the Sunday school projector and made it operable, we would not have seen the film.

During this delay Mrs. Harvey went ahead with the committee meeting to plan the Go-See tour of the legislature April 19th, and Mrs. McCord joined in occasionally with remarks that were intelligent, appropriate, and although partisan, disarmingly so. Included were experiences on a similar tour of Republican women and a couple of appropriate reminiscences complimentary to the League. The upshot of this was that by the time the projector was ready, at 11:10, most of the group had become considerably more conditioned to accept the film at face value than they would have been if it could have been shown at the start of the meeting.

As soon as the film ended, at about 11:40, the interest expressed by almost all of the group (which several times was much more than courtesy required) and the questions asked, kept Mrs. McCord with us for over 15 minutes and left no opportunity before the end of the meeting for the general discussion of the film amongst ourselves which Mrs. Harvey had planned for.

In talking things over, Mrs. Harvey and I tried to discover if there were any way to use this film and have the meeting truly non-partisan. The film, of course, would have to be rented or purchased from a strictly commercial source and shown by a person who would do only that, make no comments, and, if a non-Leaguer, leave immediately after the showing. But the partisan character of the film itself and its simple answers for complex situations were the basic problems, and for these we could find no solution. We thought of having the film discussed, following its showing, by a panel which would include one or two people knowledgeable about the legislature and one or two people knowledgeable about subtle ways of propaganda. But, even if we could obtain such people and they were excellent discussants, we would still be faced by the fact embodied in the saying, "One picture is worth a thousand words." The enduring impression of the meeting would be the film, not what was said about it.

File
March 16, 1967

To: Duckworth, Ramey, Ziegler, May, Joor, Casperson
From: Brownscombe
Re: Film, "Inside the Texas Legislature"

As a member of the Legislature resource committee of the Dallas LWV I attended the showing of the above film today. Mrs. Ziegler (who could not attend) had asked me to assess the suitability of the film for recommending to local Leagues, so I scrutinized it with that in mind.

In Dallas County the way to get the film free is to apply to Republican party headquarters or an influential Republican for a showing to one's organization. The film is shown by someone from headquarters who stays for comments and conversation afterwards. This morning it was Mrs. D. R. McCord, who is very active in Republican circles and is a friend of a Republican precinct worker who is on our resource committee.

The meeting this morning was attended by 13 or 14 people, with 7 being members of the resource committee and 4 being either current or next year's Board members. From the comments to Mrs. McCord after the showing of the film, I think it probable that there will be requests from some of those attending to have the film shown at a League general meeting or unit meetings.

The film is a KUHT Film Production, and at the bottom of that frame are the words, "University of Houston". H. C. Grover, state representative 1960-66, is listed as the producer of the film, and his party affiliation (Republican) is not shown. Mrs. McCord said that he is a high school teacher of government in Houston and that the film is for high school students. (He is now Senator Grover).

The film is 16 mm, black and white, and has a running time of a little less than 30 minutes.

After an introductory shot of the Capitol, "Inside the Texas Legislature" opens with Mr. Grover mounting to the Speaker's rostrum in the House of Representatives and beginning his commentary. He is shown there a good many more times continuing with his remarks. Other scenes are of the House in session; the Senate in session; close-ups of legislators on the floor, the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, and the Speaker (all participating in the session); close-ups of the Governor vetoing items on the appropriation bill and handing out the pens to watching legislature; shots of committee hearings and close-ups of people testifying at them; scenes of legislators attending breakfasts, lunches and dinners; shots of packed galleries and some close-ups of them; scenes of questioning of lobbyists at committee hearings; a shot of the electronic board which records votes in the House and a close-up which shows Mr. Grover's "no" vote on some measure; a close-up of the vote-registering board at the Speaker's rostrum and of the voting mechanism present at each member's desk; and the last scene, as I remember, is the decorated ground glass doors of the House chamber slowly closing.

Mr. Grover's commentary was mostly factual--number of committees, the powers of the lieutenant governor and the Speaker re appointing committees and assigning bills to them, the power of the Governor to veto items in the appropriation bill, etc. His treatment of lobbying was extremely superficial. He gave a simple answer to a complex situation when he said "A lobbyist can have no more influence on a Senator or Representative than the Senator or Representative wants him to have". Continuing, he added, "Certainly no Senator or Representative would let a lobbyist make him a campaign contribution conditional on his vote."

Speaking of committees Mr. Grover said that their function is to "separate bad bills from good". But he gave no explanation of what he meant by "bad" and "good" or what standards determined such a classification of bills.

When the film was finished I asked myself what meaning did I get from it. In addition to what I've already mentioned, my answer is that Mr. Grover puts rank and file legislators in one category and the leadership (Lieutenant Governor, Speaker, and Governor) in another category to which he is subtly antagonistic. As one of the resource committee put it--if you think in terms of the good guys and the bad guys, the legislators are the good guys and the leadership the bad guys.

I feel that the film does not add to our understanding of the legislature, and that some of it is misleading through treating really complex situations as if they were simple.