

## PACIFIC COAST BOARD OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

### Summary of Background and History

November, 1947

Intergovernmental cooperation on the Pacific Coast for civilian protection became a grim necessity following the attack on Pearl Harbor by the Japanese. Within a few months the Ninth Regional Civilian Defense Board came into being as an authorized Federal-State-local agency for promoting such cooperation. Its early activities were confined entirely to problems of civilian protection. As the keen edge of fear of attack wore off, the Defense Board more and more began to consider problems other than those of civilian protection which required administrative cooperation by various units of government. Thus in the spring of 1944, when rumors began to circulate that the Defense Board might be abolished, several members called for some new vehicle to provide a common meeting ground for Federal, state and local government officials that would preserve and expand their experience in practical inter-governmental cooperation. The proposal was voiced at the April 13, 1944 meeting of the Defense Board by Governor Earl Warren of California and endorsed by others, including Richard Graves, Executive Secretary of the League of California Cities, representing the American Municipal Association; Mayor Roger D. Lapham of San Francisco, representing the U. S. Conference of Mayors, and several regional representatives of Federal agencies. The proposal was ruled as not within the province of the Defense Board by the Chairman with the result that a rump session was held following the close of the formal meeting at which a Special Committee of five was appointed to examine ways and means of creating a Board of Intergovernmental Relations to supplant the Defense Board in the event it were abolished.

Richard Graves was made Chairman of the Special Committee and later was authorized to approach the San Francisco Field Office of the U. S. Bureau of the Budget with the suggestion that it seek approval from the Director of the Budget for its sponsorship of the proposed new board. The field office replied that while heartily in favor of the basic idea, it did not feel such a board should be sponsored by any one agency. The Director of the Budget adopted a similar view but approved active participation by the San Francisco Field Office in the formation of a board, provided it was organized along voluntary, cooperative lines with the several factors of government contributing to any secretariat and with no one agency assuming official sponsorship.

This proposal was presented on June 23, 1944, to the joint meeting at Sacramento of the Western Conference of Mayors and Western Leagues of Cities, which adopted a resolution favoring such a new board as a cooperative, non-sponsored venture of the various levels of government in the West.

Subsequently, the proposal was discussed with the Federal Regional Council at San Francisco, a voluntary association of regional chiefs of Federal agencies on the Pacific Coast which was an outgrowth of the former

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Regional Advisory Council of the Federal Security Agency. The Federal Regional Council approved the idea and authorized its Steering Committee to cooperate in any efforts to organize such a board. Thus there came into being an informal organization committee made up of Richard Neustadt, Regional Director of the Social Security Administration; J. W. Rupley, Chief Field Representative of the U. S. Bureau of the Budget; Richard Graves; Perry Taft, Western Representative of the Executive Secretary of the Council of State Governments; Herman Kehrli, Executive Secretary of the League of Oregon Cities; and Chester Biesen, Executive Secretary of the Association of Washington Cities. Robert Kenny and George Aiken, Chairmen, respectively, of the California and Oregon State Commissions on Interstate Cooperation, later became members of the committee. Governor Earl Warren of California declined to become a member of the committee because of his political activities during the 1944 national election. Following the election he became a frequent consultant. Advice also was offered by Governor Earl Snell of Oregon and Governor Arthur Langlie of Washington (during the summer of 1944) and subsequently by Governor Mon C. Wallgren of Washington.

Whereas it had been planned to call an organization meeting of the proposed Board in the latter part of November, 1944, this was postponed because of illness of a key adviser. Upon his recovery a statement of principles of organization was agreed upon by the committee, with the advice of Governor Warren and of Frank Bane, Executive Secretary of the Council of State Governments. At this time it was agreed that the Board should be set up initially to include only the three Pacific Coast States. It was further agreed that membership would be a personal responsibility of the three Governors, the three Chairmen of the State Commissions on Interstate Cooperation, three representatives of the cities, three representatives of the counties and representatives of the Federal Regional Council in lesser number than the total of other members, or 11. There was an attempt to call the organization meeting for December 29, 1944, but this was abandoned because of the nearness of convening of the three State legislatures. It was then decided the meeting should be held as soon as possible after the adjournment of all three State legislatures.

An organization exploratory meeting was held on June 20, 1945, at Portland, Oregon. Governor Wallgren of Washington could not attend because of the presence in Olympia of President Truman. Governor Warren and Governor Snell, the Chairmen of the Washington, Oregon and California Commissions on Interstate Cooperation, and a liberal representation of cities, counties and Federal agencies were present. The only agenda item was the question: Is it desirable to organize a permanent conference on intergovernmental relations on the Pacific Coast?

The question was answered in the affirmative almost unanimously, and as the meeting progressed 22 specific topical suggestions for discussion by such a conference were made spontaneously by the various persons present. A resolution was adopted authorizing formation of an Intercoastal Conference of the States of Washington, Oregon and California on Intergovernmental Relations, and empowering the Chairman to appoint a committee of nine to work out a state-

ment of Principles of Organization. The first regular meeting was set for September 21, 1945, at San Francisco. This meeting was attended by all three Governors and representatives of the other levels of government in all three states. A statement of Principles of Organization submitted by the committee of nine was adopted unanimously.

The Board has held nine regular meetings to date in addition to the organization exploratory meeting in June, 1945. During its first two years of operation all staff services were provided by the Bureau of the Budget's San Francisco Field Office and other Federal, state and local government agencies. In 1946, the Board authorized the Chairman of the Agenda Committee to petition the Rockefeller Foundation for a grant to finance a small full-time staff and incidental expenses of the Board. The Foundation approved a grant of \$10,000 a year for three years which became effective October 1, 1947. Mr. Stanley Crook has been employed as Staff Assistant and Miss Sara Axelrod as Jr. Staff Assistant-Stenographer. The Board expects to become self-supporting at the end of the period of the grant.

The Principles of Organization were amended in June, 1947, to provide for five representatives from each of the three Leagues of Cities and Associations of Counties in order to add greater emphasis to the "grass roots" representation on the Board. Thus there now are 36 members representing state and local government, and 35 representing Federal agencies.

Meetings confined to a single day only to make fullest use of the time of the officials involved are held quarterly, alternating between Washington or Oregon and California. The host governor presides. Programs based on suggestions from the members are built and the affairs of the Board conducted by an Agenda Committee of four, representing each level of government. This is the only standing committee. Special committees are appointed to present studies to the Board for full discussion. Other agenda items are presented for discussion by selected specialists. Committee members or topical specialists are drawn from the ranks of government, including the National Capital, and from Pacific Coast colleges and universities. The Agenda Committee currently is composed of J. W. Rupley, Chairman; Lieutenant Governor Goodwin J. Knight, Chairman of the California Commission on Interstate Cooperation; Mayor Earl Riley of Portland, Oregon, and County Commissioner Wiley M. Brown of Spokane, Washington.

Perhaps the two most important aspects of the Board's operation are that no alternates are permitted to attend on behalf of members although members may send observers in their absence or bring consultants when attending, and that no resolutions may be passed. Conclusions of the Board are purely advisory and do not bind the members or the member jurisdictions. Each member thus leaves the meetings completely free to take such steps as may be at his command on any side of any question. A Governor has as means of action his own administrative avenues, recommendations to his legislature or Congressional delegation and direct action. City and county officials have similar opportunities.

Federal members have access to their own administrative channels or opportunity to seek regional unanimity through unofficial expressions by the Pacific Coast Federal Regional Council. All have been used at one time or another.

Observers at Board sessions frequently are puzzled "because nothing is done," yet that is the essence of the operation. Nothing ever has been done at any meeting, yet much has happened later as a result of Board discussions. The first war housing in the nation to be made available at no charge to colleges and universities was allotted to the Oregon institutions of higher learning as a result of almost overnight cooperation among Federal, State and city governments following a Board discussion of "Educational Needs - Human and physical - for Veterans and Non-Veterans". Passage of the Mead Amendment which provided for panelizing and transporting such housing to campuses came many weeks later. The Board has made an important contribution to the timing of state and local public works and to a wider understanding of problems of developmental Federal civil works. It has regularly heard factual reports of trends in employment and unemployment on the Pacific Coast and discussed these in relation to the National as well as the regional picture. Surplus disposal programs and procedures, especially as related to construction materials, were materially affected following Board deliberations. Welfare costs and their distribution among levels of government, taxation, forest development and conservation, ocean fishing, administrative problems in the return of the employment offices to the states, inflationary trends, the Federal airport program, minorities problems, veterans affairs, maritime programs and policies in peace, population trends, and economic status and outlook are among the topics which have been formally discussed. Each session has had its share of informal topical discussions as well, providing officials of the several levels an opportunity for private discussions.

Mayors and county officials have come to know their governors with few exceptions as they never did before. Federal officials have profited materially by close contacts with officials at all other levels. Too, they have had the opportunity to practice closer interagency cooperation within the Federal structure through joint participation in scheduled discussions involving the activities of various agencies, such as Federal civil works, welfare, housing and so on. Governors have welcomed the opportunity to test the views of local and Federal government on important questions.

A new tool of governmental cooperation outside the arena of pressure groups has been sharpened and is in use.