

Private-club licenses

Liquor chairman backs anti-bigotry bill

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OLYMPIA — Jack Hood, chairman of the State Liquor Control Board, pleaded with a Senate committee yesterday for legislation to take state liquor licenses away from private clubs which practice discrimination.

In a surprise statement, Hood told members of the Commerce and Regulatory Agencies Committee:

"It is difficult for me as a human being and an individual to administer liquor laws which subsidize bigotry."

Hood said that as long as he is a board member he will carry out such laws, but added:

"I would be so grateful if you would change them."

HOOD'S appearance on behalf of Senate Bill 138 and other legislation aimed at discriminating clubs came during a 3½ hour hearing called to consider several pieces of liquor legislation.

But the hottest issue was the anti-discrimination question.



Jack Hood

Committee members heard about 12 witnesses, almost evenly divided.

Generally, proponents of the legislation urged immediate passage. Opponents recommended waiting the outcome of relevant cases before the United States Supreme Court.

Philip Hayasaka, chairman of the Seattle Human Rights Commission, said that when private organizations have practices "contrary to democratic principles . . . this condition should not be tolerated let alone sanctioned by law."

Nat Jackson, president of the Thurston County Urban League, said he was not there to oppose the Elks or

Moose or the many activities they sponsor.

"I simply oppose issuance of liquor licenses to organizations that discriminate," Jackson said.

"It's hard to explain to my kids that the state to which I pay my taxes condones such practices," he added.

SPEAKING FOR Gov. Dan Evans, who has called for the legislation, James Dolliver, the governor's administrative assistant, said that the argument that the legislation hits at the right of freedom of association "is a red herring, a straw man."

"It is another thing to say that when they gather they should receive special privileges from the state," Dolliver said.

Strongest opponent of the anti-discrimination proposal was the Washington Federated Clubs.

Floyd Buchanan, executive director, contended that there is a "head-on collision between the concepts of right and wrong and some fundamental principles of

constitutional rights."

Buchanan said the specific legislation was defective. It would require the Liquor Control Board to decide which organizations discriminate and how without giving the board adequate guidelines on which to base decisions, he argued.

Buchanan and Duncan McPherson, past president of the State Elks Association, argued that fraternal organizations actually make major contributions to the state and the community.

Buchanan said a recent study showed that the organizations paid \$3.4 million in taxes to state and local government in one year.

McPherson emphasized Elks charitable programs and said that changes have been and will continue to be made in the lodge's procedures.

"But we believe the changes should not be made under pressure," he said. "We believe it is our right to make the changes."

Senator August P. Mardesich, chairman of the committee, said if it appeared nec-

essary he would schedule further hearings to gather more testimony on both sides.

A PROPOSAL to turn the state liquor monopoly over to private enterprise ran into solid opposition from the three Liquor Board members.

Hood said that if the Legislature should decide to take the state out of the liquor business it would have to find some way to make up the loss of profit.

Leroy Hittle estimated the state's profit is about \$32 million a year.

Don Eldridge, the third member, said such a move would throw 1,200 state employees out of work and not add any appreciable number of jobs in private industry. Eldridge guessed that newspaper operators were behind the move in an effort to make more advertising revenue.

Senator John Stender, Seattle Republican and sponsor of the bill, said a poll taken in his district showed 80 per cent of the voters fa-

vored the private-enterprise approach.

Only Tony Passanante, vice president of the State Culinary Workers Union, opposed a bill to allow 18-, 19- and 20-year-olds to work in cocktail bars and restaurants serving liquor.

This legislation was supported strongly by the Washington Restaurant Association.

No opposition was voiced to a proposal to allow 18-, 19 and 20-year-olds to buy and consume liquor.

HOWEVER, there was heavy opposition from the Restaurant Association, private clubs and individual restaurant operators to a move to reduce the minimum 15 per cent liquor-price that class H licensees receive to 7.5 per cent.

Robert Seeber, attorney for the association, said his organization had no chance to have a say when the legislation was being drafted.

Seeber said the industry has been "in a state of distress" and loss of part of the discount would hurt it.

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