

## Largely Political

The decision to cut Las Vegas off from any increase in apportionment of state school funds, rendered last week, is probably largely political. The state superintendent of public instruction has been paving the way for this decision for several weeks by pointing out to other school districts that their apportionment might have to be reduced to meet the demands of Las Vegas. Politically that is rather an excellent gesture, for in turning down Las Vegas' request the superintendent will be hailed by other school districts as a "wise and upright judge."

Of course there's the opinion of the attorney-general that the apportionment must be based on the average daily attendance for the previous school year, whereas Las Vegas asked that this school be given the benefit of the unusual increase during the first semester of the present year, which created a distinct emergency, financially. But that decision like hundreds of others made even by supreme courts, could be either way.

As a matter of fact the school law decrees that this money shall be apportioned on the basis of average daily attendance, leaving it to the judgment of the superintendent of public instruction to choose the most equitable year upon which to base it. Custom has established that period as the previous school year. This custom HAS been broken in the past, however to meet emergency conditions, and was broken once to aid the Tonopah schools in just such an emergency as Las Vegas now finds itself. The school official making that request was none other than Walter W. Anderson, then superintendent of Tonopah schools and now state superintendent of public instruction. He advanced the same arguments that were advanced on behalf of Las Vegas, and since there was a practical school man in office instead of a politician, the claim was allowed.

That this is a matter of extreme importance to Las Vegas school system, is indicated by the fact that the sum of \$19,000 is involved. Las Vegas is entitled to those funds under the theory of the statute itself and previous practice. The attorney-general in rendering his opinion is in much the same position as the comptroller-general of the United States with respect to the Boulder City question. The comptroller-general at one time ruled that no Boulder Canyon project funds could be used for school purposes. Later, under pressure, he modified that to rule that funds could be used to build school buildings but not maintain and operate them. If pressure were sufficiently strong he probably could be persuaded to go the whole distance.