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**Legislator bills state
for his research work**

By **Steven Dornfeld**
Staff Writer

Rep. **Harvey B. Sathre**, chairman of the Minnesota House Education Committee, has more than doubled his state income by collecting daily expense payments for doing education research.

Sathre, an Adams Conservative first elected in 1962, has been working at the State Capitol almost daily since the Legislature adjourned last October and has been claiming the \$25-a-day legislative expense payment.

According to House records, Sathre has collected

about \$3,550 for doing research work from Oct. 31, 1971, to June 30, 1972. He has received another \$1,733 for mileage and other expenses, most of which are not related to his research.

The payments for Sathre's research exceed his normal legislative salary — \$400 a month, or a total of \$3,200 for the eight-month period.

State law provides that a legislator who is "required to attend meetings of standing committees, commissions, or is engaged in

Sathre
Continued on page 10A



Rep. Harvey Sathre

Sathre

Continued from page 1A

other legislative activity" during the interim may collect up to \$25 a day "as a per diem expense allowance."

In practice, about the only time the payment is given is when a legislator attends a committee meeting. Occasionally a rural committee chairman collects it when he must travel to the Capitol to review staff work.

Sathre, an acknowledged expert in state aid to public education, said Friday that he has been investigating such issues as the varying amounts of property-tax relief given across the state by the 1971 Omnibus Tax Law.

He produced copies of two extensive tables he assembled that attempt to analyze the impact of the school-aid formula contained in the new tax law.

Sathre said some of the information he has compiled has not been available from the State Department of Education, which is required by the tax law to furnish such statistics.

However, an informant close to Sathre's committee said yesterday: "He's just making work for himself. There's no question he's working, but it isn't necessary."

The informant said most of the statistics collected by Sathre are contained in easily obtainable reports from the state tax and education departments.

Ron Ruud, acting director of the House Research Department, said yesterday in response to a reporter's questions that he is not familiar with the work being done by Sathre.

"We have nine full-time professional staff members and three college interns who are available and could do work for Sathre," Ruud said. "I don't know how much he's doing or whether we could handle all of it, though."

Sathre, a farmer with a diploma from Austin High School, said: "I lose money every time I'm here (at the Capitol). I'd be better off if I were home. But we've got a job to do and it's got to be done."

His dairy farm, which is about 500 acres in size, is operated by two sons.

Asked about Sathre's actions, Rep. L. J. Lee of Bagley, assistant leader of the House DFL minority, said: "I wondered about him. Every time I come down to the Capitol I see him here."

Lee said Sathre is "misusing his privileges as a committee chairman" if he is collecting expense payments for doing research. "We have a paid staff to do that," he said.

House Speaker Aubrey Dirlam, Redwood Falls Conservative, said in a telephone interview, "Frankly, I wasn't aware how often he's been there (at the Capitol) or how much he's been drawing in per diems."

Dirlam said the Legislative expense law "was broadened" to permit members to conduct business at the Capitol and be reimbursed, but "I don't check on each committee chairman or member."