

The Franklin Press

and

The Highlands Maconian

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A Lucky Break for Franklin

FRANKLIN is jubilant this week over the announcement from Washington that its application for a federal building had been approved and funds provided for the purchase of a site and erection of a building designed to supply quarters for the forestry service as well as for the postoffice.

News dispatches state that the Franklin project is one of 626 approved by Postmaster General Farley and Secretary Morgenthau of the treasury, adding:

"An emergency appropriation of \$65,000,000 provided in the deficiency act will be used on 302 projects, and the remainder will get under way with funds already available from other sources."

Franklin's proposed federal building is included in the list of projects to be undertaken with funds from the emergency appropriation. We have been informed that the treasury already has made this money available. So it would seem that there is little doubt that Franklin will get the building and that there should be a minimum of delay in the actual beginning of its construction.

The \$71,000 allocated for this project should be adequate for the purchase of a well located, spacious site and the erection of a building which should be a credit to the community.

The benefits to be derived are obvious: Work will be supplied at good wages for many unemployed men, releasing more cash in the community. The appearance of the town will be greatly enhanced through the addition of a handsome new building, and the postoffice and forestry service will be supplied with better quarters.

What, perhaps, is the most important thing for Franklin, however, is that provision for forestry service offices in the new federal building is sound assurance that the headquarters of the Nantahala National Forest, eyed covetously from time to time by some of our neighboring towns, will remain here permanently.

Franklin is indeed fortunate and we should be grateful to Congressman Weaver and Senators Reynolds and Bailey, whose efforts are largely responsible for bringing our hopes for a federal building to materialization.

Teachers Justifiably Indignant

MACON COUNTY school teachers whose sensibilities have not been dulled through lack of appreciation of their efforts naturally are indignant over the pledge of personal behavior which they are required to sign this year in order to retain their positions.

No doubt the pledge idea was motivated by good intentions; but, nevertheless, the teachers are justified in feeling that the school personnel as a whole has been tried without benefit of hearing, summarily convicted and arbitrarily punished for the transgressions of a few individuals.

Pledges of personal behavior are distasteful, to say the least, especially when they are elicited through what amounts to coercion. What is more unfortunate, they usually prove ineffective and quite frequently achieve the opposite of their purpose. The latter effect would not be surprising in this instance, for the stringent regulations governing out-of-school hours are very likely to undermine the teachers' morale through dampening their enthusiasm and encouraging a callous attitude toward their duties.

Such extreme action is rather unnecessary. Viewing the school personnel as a whole, Macon County has been most fortunate in having men and women sincerely interested in their work, well qualified in their professional training and whose personal lives and habits have been above reproach. Most of them need no code of conduct; in fact, the regulations prescribed will affect very few of them in any other way than to make them feel that they are distrusted.

If any teacher oversteps the proprieties, becomes inefficient, or in any way fails to perform his or her duties, the school board has sufficient authority to

correct the situation without resorting to a pledge providing for automatic dismissal for violation of its provisions. It appears, however, that someone is afraid of assuming this responsibility.

To the parents of school children the pledge provisions give ground for grave concern, for if teachers are such an unmoral, unreliable lot that they cannot be depended upon to act as civilized ladies and gentlemen, then they are not qualified to be the preceptors of the rising generation.

School patrons, however, may rest their alarms in the assurance that this is far from the case. Macon county's teachers, like others throughout the state, have manifested a most praiseworthy devotion to their calling. It was through their sacrifices that the schools last session operated on an eight-months basis. Now, to be affronted with stringent regulations of their personal conduct, they justifiably feel that insult has been heaped upon injury.

It is not too late to correct the situation and prevent the ill effects likely to result. We sincerely hope the school authorities will reconsider their action and have the courage and good grace to retract the teachers' pledge. Unless they do, we fear that many of our best teachers will look around for other jobs and that it will be difficult to replace them with men and women of the proper caliber, training, self-respect and dignity.

We believe that unbiased, intelligent school patrons of Macon County will join in hearty concurrence with the following comment from The Charlotte News:

SCHOOL BOARD OVERSTEPS ITS AUTHORITY

Up in Macon county, where the lavish beauty of God's mountains ought to be overpowering enough to wean a man from his ways of littleness, it has been decreed that school teachers must not attend any dances, round or square, public or private, during the school year. Furthermore, they are to refrain from any social activities on the evening or night before a school day and otherwise to conduct themselves in a decorous manner befitting their positions if not the salaries attached thereto.

This typifies one of the major inconsistencies of North Carolina's school system. Great and extensive and costly preparations are made to educate the children, but absolutely nothing is done, nor does anybody ponder over it, toward spreading enlightenment among county school boards.

For a school board, simply because it possesses the right of hiring and firing, to take upon itself the added authority of outlining to what uses a teacher may or may not put her spare time is to misconstrue and abort the mainer purpose of education. Education—we desire it because it is supposed to develop individuals better able to conduct themselves intelligently, agreeably and with due regard for the rights of their fellows.

The Macon county school board has violated at least two of those rules of civilized living and letting live. What is more, if the teachers, who have been through the educational routine, cannot be trusted to bear themselves with due dignity both in and out of the classroom, why in heck bother with fitting the rising generation to teach?

Public Opinion

KING DAVID DANCED—WHY SHOULDN'T TEACHERS?

To the Editor of The Franklin Press:

Dear Sir:
As a citizen of Macon county I wish to protest against the school teachers having to sign a pledge not to attend any dance during the school year.

This takes away the right of personal liberty which is given to us by the constitution of the United States.

Teachers who are not fit to control themselves certainly are not fit to control children and should be dismissed.

What are the principals of schools for if not to watch their teachers and know what they are doing and how they are conducting themselves? This pledge relieves the principals of work and responsibility and takes away from the dignity of the teaching profession.

Dancing is mentioned twelve times in the Bible, and "David danced before the Lord with all his might."

Charlotte B. Elliott.

Highlands, N. C.
June 25, 1934

THINKS TEACHERS KNOW HOW TO BEHAVE

Editor of the Franklin Press—

The fact that North Carolina kept its schools open for eight months of the last year has received much favorable comment. This was made possible chiefly by drastic reductions in the teachers' salaries. In other words the schools were kept open at the expense of the teachers. In view of these sacrifices made by the teachers, is it fair to prohibit normal recreation during the school term, as contemplated by a letter recently sent to the newly-elected teachers?

A teacher should be capable of deciding for herself how much social activity she can enjoy without interfering with her efficiency. We are attributing a very low grade of intelligence to our teachers if they cannot decide this question for themselves. The danger is that every intelligent child entrusted to their guidance will make this deduction.

Could the county school board be persuaded to modify their requirements?

Very truly,
Rebecca C. Nall.

Highlands, N. C.
June 23, 1934.



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