

# SCHOOL ISSUES DOMINATE MEET AT HIGHLANDS

discussed the matter with the authorities in Franklin, and was told that the state has found that a specially-built tire is safer than tires equipped with chains, and that the state has spent considerable money for these special tires. It is felt, he added, that when it is not safe to operate the buses with these tires, the children should remain at home.

**Driver Sought Chains**  
Mr. Westbrook commented that only one of the before the driver of one of the school buses had sought to borrow chains for his bus. What should be done, he asked, if the children are at school when the in question, Highlands had about six inches of snow, which start-roads become slick? (On the day after the buses had arrived at the school.)

The Rev. W. T. Medlin, former pastor of the Highlands Methodist church and an invited guest at the meeting, commenting that he still considers himself a Highlands-er, even if he does live at Robbinsville, raised the next question. Remarking that school buses in Graham county are equipped with chains, he asked why the state should make a distinction between two mountain counties.

**Left To Superintendent**  
"I can answer that", Mr. Hays replied. "The question of chains or no chains is left to the discretion of the county superintendents."

O. F. Summer, Highlands school principal, pointing out that Wednesday's snowfall could not have been foretold, said he had examined the tires on the school buses. The tread is completely gone, he said, from one set of tires; the tires on another bus are the mud-grip type, but their treads are badly worn; and the ordinary tires on the little bus also are worn. The drivers had difficulty Wednesday, he said, with slight skidding by all three buses.

Declaring that "the hauling of these children is the most serious thing we do around this school", he commented: "In my opinion, we need chains."

**Committee Named**  
The chain issue arose again,

later in the meeting, and, on motion of Edward Potts, a committee was named and was introduced to take the matter up with the county board of education. Elected to the committee were Mr. Hays, Mr. Summer, Alvin Crow, and Dewey Hopkins. In this connection, it was pointed out by Mrs. Thomas C. Harbison that the P. T. A. had offered to pay for chains for the Highlands buses, "and you heard what the result was".

The county superintendent's office was brought up for discussion when the county remarked that "the county superintendent's job should be full-time, and the pay should be enough to make it possible for the superintendent to give his full time to the work."

**\$5,000 Under New Rate**  
The Rev. A. Rufus Morgan, rector of Highlands' Episcopal Church of the Incarnation, his voice indicating surprise, replied with the question:

"How much do the members of the Legion think the county superintendent ought to receive in order to justify him in giving the job his full time?"

Mr. Westbrook commented that he'd be glad to devote 24 hours a day to a job that paid approximately \$4,200 a year. Someone else interjected the information that, under the new state salary schedule, the salary will be about \$5,000 a year.

Mr. Morgan also asked for information on just what Highlands needs and hopes to obtain in the way of a clinic.

**Suggestions For Clinic**  
Explaining that he spent years in medical administration work in the navy, Mr. Westbrook suggested that what is needed is a three or four-bed dispensary for emergencies and deliveries; a delivery room and an operating room, or possibly a combination of the two; an eye, ear, nose, and throat set-up; a general dressing room; doctor's and nurse's offices; a laboratory; and an X-ray department.

**X-ray Cost At \$50,000**  
He estimated the cost roughly at \$50,000, though, he added, far more could easily and profitably be invested.

At this point, H. A. Cleaveland, seeing Bob S. Sloan, prospective member of the new county board of education, in the audience, asked that he be called to the platform. Mr. Sloan explained that he was present as a guest, and had not come prepared to participate in the discussion. He was asked, however, a number of questions.

Mr. Hays asked him if he knew "if it is the intent of the authorities to make the superintendent's position a full-time

job". Mr. Sloan replied that the law provides a county superintendent may not be regularly employed in other work.

"Does the county board have the authority on this matter?" Mr. Hays asked.

**Cites Law**  
"The law says the county board has all powers not invested in the state board", Mr. Sloan replied; "the board hires the superintendent. It seems to me it could be put in the contract that the superintendent should devote his full time to the job. I don't think he should attempt to do two jobs at once."

**Other Compensation**  
At this juncture, it was brought out by Mr. Morgan that the superintendent, in addition to his salary, receives an allowance for travel, is furnished an office by the county, and is provided with clerical assistance by the state.

Mr. Sloan next was asked what he would do about the Highlands school building, if he were on the board now.

He replied that he would first recommend that it be provided with fire escapes. He added that he had been told by the superintendent last winter that it was planned to build two fire escapes.

Mr. Summer remarked that state authorities had said one fire escape was sufficient, and that it has been installed.

**Asks About Building**  
What about a new school building at Highlands? Mrs. Harbison asked the prospective board member.

The \$400,000 county school bond issue has been validated, Mr. Sloan pointed out, but added that "as to when a new building should be put up in Highlands is a matter that requires a lot of consideration", and he cited the difficulties and costs of building now. Highlands people would not like it, he remarked, if the board should build a structure in Highlands now, and if the floors should buckle in five years, because the lumber was green.

Louis Potts commented: "Concrete doesn't buckle. We want a fire-proof building."

**Expresses Surprise**  
Mr. Sloan had said that a number of Highlands people had expressed to him the belief that this is not the time to build, and someone wanted to know: "Do any of these have children in school?" The reply was in the affirmative.

Mrs. C. H. Zoellner expressed surprise that anyone would oppose new school buildings, no matter what the difficulties, as

badly as buildings are needed. At this point the question was raised if it was true that the Highlands building had been condemned every year for a long time.

**Building "A Hazard"**  
Mr. Summer replied that it was not true; that about 10 years ago the building was declared "a hazard".

Mr. Sloan commented that he believed the local school committees should be revived as an integral part of the school system, and that he would be inclined to follow the advice of the Highlands committeemen on the question of building now. Frank Potts, Walter Bryson, and Sidney McCarty are the members of that committee.

Mr. Westbrook asked for a show of hands of those who favored building now. Many hands were raised. No one raised a hand on the proposition of delay in building. Apparently a number of persons, however, did not vote on the question.

**Wants Physical Education**  
The next question raised was: Do plans for the proposed new building at Highlands provide facilities for physical education? Someone commented that, if they do not, the money to provide such facilities should be raised by public subscription.

Mr. Hays suggested that the Highlands mayor should be on a full-time basis, and paid accordingly.

Called on for an expression, Mayor W. H. Cobb said the town could not afford to pay a full-time mayor. Members of the board, he added, have devoted more time to the town's business than they could afford for their salaries of \$100 a year. At

the end of his present term, Mr. Cobb added, he will no longer hold the office of mayor.

**Should Be Full Time**  
Turning to the school issue, Mayor Cobb commented that "Mr. Houk is my friend, but he should be made to devote every moment of his time to the job, if he wants that job; if he doesn't, he should step down and let someone else have it who will give it full time."

"We ought to start at home", he continued, "and pay Mr. Summer enough to permit him to devote his full time to his job as principal and Mr. Newton (W. C. Newton, teacher in the Highlands school) enough so that he won't have to drive a school bus".

**Fears "Regimentation"**  
Mr. Summer promptly replied that "the test is not how much time a man devotes to the work, but whether he does an effective job." Warning of the danger of "regimentation", he asked: "Should a teacher be prohibited from tutoring after school?"

To which Mr. Sloan asked: "But if the people find a man is not adequately filling a position, and is performing other work, do you think it regimentation or illogical to ask him to drop the other work, and give him a chance to correct the situation?"

Mr. Newton explained that he is driving a bus because it is difficult to obtain drivers, because there is the problem of keeping order on the bus, and because he likes it.

Near the close of the meeting, Commander Burgess expressed regret that the county superintendent, who was given a special invitation, was absent.



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