

Others' Opinions

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move the schools from its position in the community leaves a gap that is hard to fill.

But the demands of modern education have widened until two or three teachers are hardly able to bring to the students all the teaching of various subjects that are necessary in the



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modern high school. The high school that is to discharge all its obligations to the boys and girls must meet many requirements far beyond those of former years and must at the same time teach boys and girls who will not go to college the practical things they will need in daily life, while offering "college preparatory courses" to those who want to pursue higher education in any of its numerous branches.

It is probable that the rural high school has greater obligations to conduct a board of curriculum than might be the case in a city school. At least, it has definite responsibilities toward the community's boys and girls who will make their living on the farm, to give them practical and usable courses that will make them better farmers.

Towns and communities which are losing their high schools should consider whether they are being altogether fair to the boys and girls themselves. By insisting on having small schools, with few teachers, they may well be depriving their own boys and girls of the opportunities for a broadened curriculum that would make much difference to these students themselves in later years.

STRICTLY

PERSONAL

By WEIMAR JONES

Continued From Editorial Page education all that is necessary is to recall the attitude here a few years ago, when there was such a widespread feeling of hopeless futility that a meeting like last week's just couldn't have happened.

There was nothing hopeless about the 1952 crowd that gathered at the board of education office. They were quite sure that constantly improving opportunities are possible for their children, and were determined to provide them.

That is progress.

There were other healthy signs.

First of all, the generally high

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plane on which the discussion was kept. There was anger, to be sure; and there were some words, especially in the hall outside the meeting room, that betrayed personal prejudice that was childish. But the meeting itself, on the whole, was marked by reasonableness and a discussion of problems rather than personalities.

Highlighting that was a remark by Mrs. John D. Wells, spokesman for the Patton delegation:

"If people can't get together and work out things, without putting the blame on one person, it is a sad situation."

And one by Board Chairman Bob Sloan:

"Franklin children are no better than the children out in the county. I hope we won't have to have any split grades in the Franklin school, but we do have split grades in most of the county schools, and I am not willing to do anything that is unfair to the schools out in the county just to avoid splitting a grade in Franklin."

A later development also is healthy.

Both the school officials and the Patton protesters could have been stubborn, but neither was; they accepted a compromise worked out by Supt. Holland McSwain.

The hearing also left the observer with the feeling that the trouble, basically, grows out of two problems that should be faced by all of us—for the responsibilities, as well as the rights, belong to all of us. Those problems are:

1. Consolidation, particularly of elementary schools, always brings its own problems—sometimes, perhaps, more problems than it solves. Consolidation quite possibly has been overdone, in Macon County and in

the state as a whole. But—and this is the point to remember—we can't turn the clock back. We've made our consolidation bed, and we'll have to lie in it. We've got the consolidated schools now, and it's up to all of us to make them work.

2. When we voted bonds and launched our building program, we all thought we were building for the future—certainly for at least 10 years ahead. The facts are plain for all to see: We are not ahead, but barely up with the blow—in some cases, not even that.

These two factors will make solutions of the problems that will arise from time to time difficult indeed. But it is the thought of this observer that district lines for the various schools should be laid out to the best possible advantage, all things considered, and then that they should remain reasonably PERMANENT.

It is the conviction of this observer—and undoubtedly he is not alone—that it is bad for the child and bad for the community for children to be shifted from one school to another, year after year. A lot of our school progress is the result of personal and community loyalty to a particular school; that loyalty needs to be encouraged, not discouraged. It is my guess that it is even more important than an exact distribution of teacher load and similar considerations.

After all, we need to remember something that I think the folks in Raleigh sometimes forget: **THE SCHOOL IS MADE UP OF INDIVIDUALS.** And it is up to us to run the schools with the thought of the individual child in mind.

Finally, the hearing left this observer with the definite impression that, complicated as consolidation certainly must be, there had not been enough careful planning before the opening of school. There was the contrasting and equally definite impression that a good many of the protesters had not been careful enough, before the hearing, to learn and weigh all the facts.

This, however, is not the first time public officials have made mistakes—if the school officials did make mistakes. Nor is it the first time that citizens have failed properly to inform themselves; nor will it be the last time. Those things go along with a democracy.

What, it seems to me, is much more serious is the suggestion, repeated in and outside the hearing, that the controversy had been promoted, if not actually inaugurated, by some teachers.

That is a kind of disloyalty that should not be tolerated. It cannot be tolerated if our school system is not to be destroyed.

The charge that this happened should be thoroughly investigated. If it is untrue, fairness to the teachers demands that it be labeled as untrue. If it is true, fairness to the public demands that any teachers guilty be dropped.

News Making

Continued From Editorial Page senator, representative and county surveyor on the local ticket. It would be fine to see all the civic clubs unite a drive to get the vote out as they have in many other communities throughout the nation. We are sometimes very critical of Democracy and the principal of rule of the majority. It certainly isn't being given a fair test until we can find some way to get more people to take part in our elections. With a population of 160 million people, Mr. Truman was elected president with a vote of little more than 24 million votes. Hardly an expression of the majority of the voters even.

The local economic picture looks fairly steady with there being about the same number of jobs available year around. Prices will soon drop a little and that will help some.

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