

McCosh's Column

On Strike Psyche

One can't help thinking the Farmington School District is entering the post-1969 era of collective bargaining with school employees, following the recent strike by teachers.

The issues on the table seemed clear enough: money and class size.

"Cost of Living" signs were about equally mixed with "Smaller Class Loads" on the picket lines.

But issues do not explain a walkout.

In years past, the teachers have been content to negotiate well into the school year, accepting the terms of a contract retroactive to the beginning of the fall term.

There was nothing too remarkable about the contract finally signed. The across-the-board 3% increase was exactly the U.S. Dept. of Labor's cost of living increase - 5.6 percent.

The cap on class size negotiated was approximately what exists in the district anyway.

Even more enlightening is the indication from sources close to the negotiations that the teachers and administration were only about 0.2 percent apart on wages, and were only arguing about the actual limit, not the principle, of class size limits when the walkout occurred.

One can't help but feel two things contributed to the overwhelming decision by the teachers to not work without a contract this year.

• The negotiation schedule was not seriously aimed at the opening of the school year.

• Despite their claims of economic hardship, teachers were in the psychological frame of mind to delay the opening of school.

The negotiation schedule is a tricky thing to grasp, with both sides generally accusing the other of delaying tactics.

But after an agreement was reached the announcement said it would be several weeks before ratification.

Serious bargaining only took place long after a contract would have been completed before the opening of school.

While one should be careful in interpreting the real motives of either side in cases like this, one strong element, impossible to document, still seems very real.

That is, the acceptance of a strike as a routine thing by teachers.

The effectiveness of teacher unions over the past few years has created within their ranks a kind of "esprit de union" that has the veterans of the early battles held in esteem by the majority of teachers.

Your first strike seems as significant a personal experience as your first day in class.

One can't help but feel this is part and parcel of the generation gap, a general feeling of new members of a new organization flexing their muscles.

For the future, two remedies might be effective.

One is the serious adoption of an early bargaining schedule by both sides. Plymouth School District managed this, and settled its contract in the spring.

The other is the elimination of the 182-day requirement for a school year.

There doesn't seem to be any reason to merely delay a pay check for employees on strike.

Elimination of the 182-day requirement would put the union and employer in a more reasonable relationship.



SCHOOL'S OPEN, drive carefully, is the message from AAA and the Farmington Police Department. The warning to motorists comes from (from left) C. A. Spencer, manager of AAA Farmington office; David Shief-siek, safety patrol boy at Bond Elementary; Cpl. Norman Stainbrook, Farmington police, and Bond School Principal Mel Blackman.

ager of AAA Farmington office; David Shief-siek, safety patrol boy at Bond Elementary; Cpl. Norman Stainbrook, Farmington police, and Bond School Principal Mel Blackman.

Hearings Slated On Northwestern

Representatives from three local organizations will testify at a public hearing on Northwestern Highway's proposed extension Wednesday, Sept. 26, at 10 a.m. in Oakland County Courthouse auditorium.

co-chairmen of the legislative committee, said they are conducting public hearings to determine the need for the extension, its impact on the environment and its legal status.

(R-Ann Arbor) is a member of the committee.

Results of a computer analysis of costs and alternate routes may be available for the hearings. The study was done by the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments.

An environmental impact study - assessing the need for the highway as well as its social, economic and environmental effects - has been started, but results won't be ready in time for the hearings.

Rep. Raymond Smit

The West Bloomfield-Farmington League of Women Voters, Franklin Village Homeowners Assn. and Franklin Knolls subdivision will send representatives to discuss the effect of the extension on local areas.

A special legislative committee is conducting the hearings Tuesday through Thursday as part of its investigation of the State Highway Department's decision to construct a 9.6 mile extension in 1974.

The hearing on Tuesday begins at 2 p.m. and Thursday's hearing is at 10 a.m.

The proposed extension runs from the highway's terminus at Orchard Lake Road northwesterly to the planned M-275 freeway which will run north and south through Oakland County.

The Highway Department says it will begin construction in 1974. It maintains the state has an obligation to build the extension because a \$25 million bond issue was sold in 1967 to finance the freeway.

The state is obligated to build the extension under terms of the bond issue despite the fact that the \$25 million was spent on completion of Northwestern between Eight Mile and Telegraph, according to the highway department.

Reps. Philip O. Mastin (D-Hazel Park) and Michael Novak (D-Detroit),

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FARC Will Study Recreation Needs

The Farmington Area Recreation Commission is planning a comprehensive study of the recreation available in the Farmington area, according to Chairman John Richardson.

The FARC currently sponsors several youth-oriented (ages five to 13) programs with the support of two school districts and the two city governments.

Richardson suggested at a recent city council meeting the group begin looking at the idea of an area-wide program supported with a separate tax, similar to the area library.

The FARC is now looking into financing a study which could eventually support the idea of a separate millage, or kill it according to Richardson.

"We really don't know the needs of the Farmington area," Richardson said.

FARC hopes to hire professionals to do the study, possibly with state money from the recreation bond issue, he added.

Road Money Is Borrowed

Bids are now being accepted for the sale of \$2 million in 10 year notes to be repaid from future gasoline and weight tax receipts in Oakland County.

Extra funding is needed, according to the board of commissioners, because of emergency repair of gravel roads amounting to \$500,000, projects amounting to \$250,000 that were unbudgeted, \$215,000 in inflation and \$500,000 less revenue than expected.

The board plans to take bids as quickly as possible. An additional \$2 million is authorized to be borrowed as needed. The board may have to borrow the money as early as the beginning of 1974.

Additional funds would be used for improving existing paved roads and traffic safety improvements.

Letter To The Editor

Alsac Thanks Its Supporters

EDITOR:

The young Alsac marchers of Farmington want to thank the Farmington residents for their kind response.

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