

OBSERVATION POINT

Lansing Gets Another Chance

By Philip H. Power



Michigan legislators have an opportunity to do something more for the people who elected them than for themselves in the educational reform session starting in Lansing Oct. 6.

I'm afraid the odds against statesmanship are so high as to baffle credulity.

Let's take a quick look at some of the problems right here in this area:

Plymouth teachers are on strike.

Livonia is on half-days and the Board of Education is appealing a Circuit Court decision requiring full days.

School boards are caught in the middle — they must provide full days of classes for students, but face millage defeats and cannot run a deficit.

EDUCATIONAL REFORM, of course, is a misnomer. What the schools need is money, more than the now archaic property tax and a patchwork series of state levies can pay.

Gov. Milliken's special reform commission appears to be the only body — the legislature included — which is even vaguely aware that a problem exists and that some solution must be devised.

One report is that Milliken will propose a massive shifting of the

property tax burden to the new income tax, a long overdue move. Another is that his commission figures the schools need \$100 million NOW.

These and any other meaningful reform will take legislative action, at least. Perhaps a couple of constitutional amendments, which in a crisis must be put on the ballot by the Legislature.

SO NOW WE HEAR from Rep. Marvin R. Stempien (D-Livonia) addressing a group of parents last week:

"The legislature is just not going to come up with the money to bail out Livonia in the present fiscal year."

"The only thing left is to cut the program. I don't see that you have any other choice."

It is the view shared by other legislators. Lansing observers see a long fall session of the legislature, a lot of political jockeying, posing and primping for 1970's general election. The only result will be a flood of newsletters to voters touting themselves for reelection.

Rep. John Bennett (D-Redford)? Well, he feels it crucial to the commonwealth that he join Senator Gilbert L. Bersley (R-Ann Arbor) on his junket to the west coast to study rapid transit. The cost of a meaning-

less tour of San Francisco and other culture spots would pay a teacher's salary this year. Remember that, half-day parents.

SO LET US consider why there won't be action this year.

The Democrats want to control both the House and the Senate after 1970 so none of them will vote for a tax increase, no matter how rewarding it will be to those relieved of part of the property tax.

The Republicans, now holding the Senate by two votes, want to control not only that but also the House next year. The income tax is as naturally repugnant to Republicans as to Democrats — and for the same reasons.

It appears that the main goal of both parties is reelection. And by 1971, when the new legislature is sitting, the schools will be in

infinitely more desperate straits than they are now.

Democrats are, as much at fault for the inability to see beyond election day as the Republicans. There are no saints in Lansing, only people looking for payday.

THE ANSWER to the schools' dilemma, then, lies with pressure—the only language legislators understand.

It is up to the people to do their own legislating. Letters, marches on the State Capitol, threats of retaliation at the polls. All of these are effective. And here are the local legislators who have one vote, at least.

Reps. Marvin R. Stempien (D-Livonia), Raymond Baker (R-Farmington), John Bennett (D-Redford), James Tierney (D-Garden City), and Richard A.

Young (D-Dearborn Heights). Senators George W. Kuhn (R-Birmingham), N. Lorraine Beebe (R-Dearborn).

Historically, legislators never take action that might possibly injure their chances of reelection regardless of the needs of the people back home.

Without making a judgment whether the Livonia Board of Education is right in scheduling half-days, or whether teachers in Plymouth should have the money they demand, regardless of anything.

Parents should organize and make their own demands on the legislature. In reply to Stempien's gratuitous remarks to parents in Livonia, it is time NOW to ask him and all legislators — when they return from whatever junket that brings them joy:

"Tell us why?"

DISSENT

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Facts Support Virgin Birth, Pastor Argues

By REV. ELVIN L. CLARK, Pastor, Livonia Baptist Church

The column of Mr. Lester Kingsolving, decrying the virgin birth, calls for an answer, I believe —

I am not sure whether or not his statement that the virgin birth is mentioned only twice in the New Testament is meant to question its truth or value. However, the Lord's Prayer is only given twice, the prayer of Jesus that his disciples may all be one is recorded once, the Beatitudes in full form are recorded only once.

The Ten Commandments are recorded twice, the Jewish Shema once. How many times do we have to be told?

HE QUOTES a Dr. Hedley who says that the virgin birth was probably unknown to the Christians of the first generation, that is, it was not part of the kerigma. This means, or proves, nothing. There are many valid facts about the life of our Lord which are revealed in the four gospels which were not basic to the evangelistic thrust of the missionary church in its first expansion.

The birth stories of Matthew and Luke bear a "common-sense realism," says William Cannon, which is hard to deny. It is very likely that Mary reviewed the details of the birth of Jesus to Dr. Luke which she had pondered in her heart for many years.

As for the genealogies, two facts must be kept in mind. No Jewish genealogy could ever go through a mother. It just wasn't done. And, an adopted son had all the rights and inheritance privileges of a son by blood. Genealogies through a mother would have been disallowed by Jews of that day.

The adopted son Jesus called Joseph father. Joseph called him son. Any other conduct would have been artificial and unnatural. This fact answers another set of Mr. Kingsolving's objections.

The statement that in Greek religions heroes are sons of gods does not prove that Christianity borrowed from Greek thought here. J. Graham Machen pointed out very carefully that there are no true virgin births in Greek religion. The example of Guatama is an illustration of this. He was presumably conceived through an elephant. The note, not a virgin birth myth, but a bestiality myth.

DR. HEDLEY is noted as saying that logically Protestants should believe in the immaculate conception of Mary as well as the virgin birth of Jesus. But Hedley has revealed that he does not reason as Protestants. The Protestant believes in the virgin birth because it is taught in scripture. He refuses the immaculate conception of Mary because it is not taught in scripture. Is this a logic difficult for Mr. Hedley or Kingsolving to see?

May I present a personal confession — I believe in the virgin birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ first of all because it is clearly and specifically taught in the only documents we have which tell us about the life of Jesus of Nazareth, the New Testament.

I believe that this beginning is appropriate for one who is to be the Savior of the world and is to die for man's sin and to rise from the dead.

I do not find it difficult to believe that anyone who influenced history as much as Jesus was virgin born. I do not find it difficult to believe that he who was God incarnate was born of a virgin. In fact I find it appropriate, consistent, logical and in good taste. I believe the Christ I know in personal experience was, in his early life, born of a virgin.

Tim Richard writes

Half-Day Ruling Good Law, But...

Circuit Judge Charles E. Kaufman won a lot of cheers from the crowd when he ruled that the Livonia Board of Education had to put all students on full days, but he probably created more problems than he realized on the financial level.

His legal reasoning seems sound enough — he notes a constitutional requirement that the Legislature provide a system of free public education — but his economic reasoning has gaps.

CONSIDER the Livonia school board's predicament:

1. State law says the board must bargain over the price of labor (the salary schedule).

2. State law says it must bargain over work conditions, which includes the quantity of labor (through the pupil-teacher ratio).

3. The velocity of money, to use the economist's term, is fixed once a year. That is, the school board can collect state aid and property taxes only every 12 months and can't try to speed things up by collecting every 10 months.

THAT'S THE BOARD'S predicament stated in economic terms — that is, in terms of the real world, not in the terms of law. Unfortunately, Judge Kaufman leaps across those details to this incredible conclusion:

"The shortage of funds is no defense by the school board."

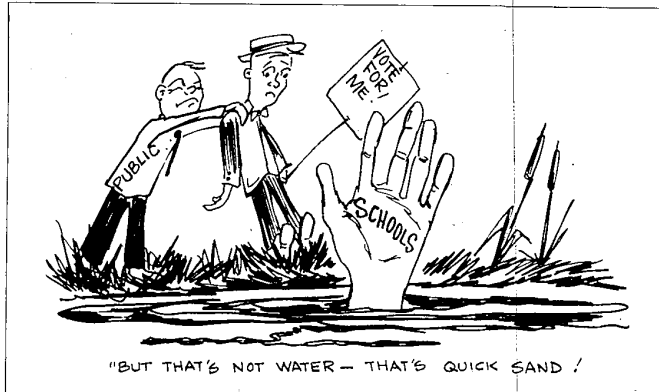
His solution is to toss this legalistic can of worms into the lap of Lansing: "The Legislature has the responsibility," he says. That's a great way to get cheers. Rule that it's Lansing's responsibility.

GOOD LAW, POSSIBLY, but again it's bad economics. Consider what the state has been doing with aid to public schools in recent years.

The average increase in state aid has been 12.1 per cent a year for the past seven years, according to the Citizens Research Council.

Before the education lobby gives its knee-jerk response that that's "highly inadequate" consider that in the same period of time personal income in Michigan has risen only 8.56 per cent a year.

What seems to have happened is that Judge Kaufman got so involved in the logic of the law that he forgot the logic of economic reality. We can pass laws that say water must run uphill or that the Legislature and a school board must provide 180 full days of classes, but writing that into a lawbook doesn't make it a factual possibility.



This Is The Week That...

Here Comes The Grooming Code

By Don Hoenshell

There was a time at the age of 17 when Leo the Barber thought it was stylish to leave a soupcon of sideburn and enough on top to comb, or not comb, as the spirit moved.

So my dad grasped my right ear and marched me back to Leo for a proper haircut.

That, friends, was the Rev. Hoenshell's grooming code.

THEN THERE was the Big Bloomer Debate. The parents thought it was improper for a high school girl to wear shorts in gym class. So that lady wore something like knickers.

Each student shall maintain a "reasonable standard" of apparel, wear shorts only when "designated," skirt lengths shall observe the "boundaries of feminine modesty," hair has to be neat, clean, combed and "out of the eyes," facial hair (if any) shall be "clean and neatly trimmed," standards of "personal hygiene" shall be maintained, and dress and grooming shall not be "disruptive of the educational process."

Two years ago or so the students devised their own code for the Livonia Public Schools. So a

Pat Murphy, of Westland, grew a mustache as part of his costume in a rock band. It was a frightful in a rock band. It was a frightful in a rock band. It was a frightful in a rock band.

"Nobody's going to stop my daughter" from wearing a mini skirt," was a complaint.

"The boy is only wearing sideburns because it's in," said another. "I can't make him shave 'em off."

So now comes a liberalized student dress and grooming code adopted by the Board of Education. Bless 'em. It has eight points, summarized thusly:

Each student shall maintain a "reasonable standard" of apparel, wear shorts only when "designated," skirt lengths shall observe the "boundaries of feminine modesty," hair has to be neat, clean, combed and "out of the eyes," facial hair (if any) shall be "clean and neatly trimmed," standards of "personal hygiene" shall be maintained, and dress and grooming shall not be "disruptive of the educational process."

Now a few parents are blasting the schools for shoving their responsibilities off on the parents. They want the principal to march Junior off to Leo the Barber for a haircut.

And another ho! Some of these parents are those who blasted the schools for trying to teach Junior sex education when the responsibility belongs at home.

A modern parable, that's what it is. We parents get emotional about the schools teaching what we're incompetent (or unwilling) to teach, then insist the schools force the kids to take baths and comb their hair.

The late Willard Maxey, then director of Social Services for the State used to say: "Give me complete custody of a child until he's four and he'll be mine the rest of his life."

Another Maxey-ism: "There are no delinquent kids — just delinquent parents."

And a word from my dad, about 1940: "Wear your hair any way you like, but you'll go through life with one ear longer than the other."

O'Neil Adds No Lustre To State Board

Gov. Milliken got another demonstration Wednesday night and Thursday morning when he needs to make vast and wholesale revisions in the structure of the State Board of Education.

For starters, he would do well to set an amendment to the state Constitution so he could throw the whole board out. Eight members, all elected on partisan ballots, spend their time these days quarreling and squabbling when they should, as one member said, "go about the public's business."

The leading bickerer in this partisan wrangle is James O'Neil, who has been trying to get Ira Polley, the appointed state superintendent of public

instruction, fired ever since O'Neil was elected to the board three years ago.

This year O'Neil thinks he's got an issue — sex education. O'Neil doesn't think kids should be taught about sex until after they've learned about it in the alley. Mr. Polley is trying to establish guidelines for local school boards.

In his corner O'Neil has the loyal support of the John Birch Society, whose campaign theme for 1968 was that sex education in the schools is a communist plot to turn American capitalistic kiddies into sex maniacs.

Gov. Milliken renewed his hint Thursday that he may

seek changes in the board structure so that it cannot be so all-powerful and capricious. As it is now, the board can fire Mr. Polley at any time by a simple 5-3 vote.

We can see no reason whatever why public education in Michigan should be subjected to the whims of political partisanship. We see no reason, in fact, why the board members should be elected

And with a superintendent also appointed, on his qualifications and for a specific term of contract, the state could indeed "go about the public's business" without the kind of dismal nonsense we now endure.

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