

TEACHER DEFENDS MURZEY'S HISTORY Criticisms by Judge Wallace McCamant Answered by Professor Augur. TEXT IS HELD ACCURATE Lack of Patriotism of Writer Is Denied, and Partisanship Is Said to Be on Part of Judge Rather Than Author.



A sharp reply to criticisms by Judge Wallace McCamant, of the State Supreme Court, against the use of Muzzeys History of the United States as a textbook in the Portland high schools on the ground that it is partisan, unpatriotic and full of inaccuracies, is made by Professor Herbert B. Augur, B. A., M. A., Yale, head of the department of history at the Jefferson High School.

Professor Augur, who is also a member of the Sons of the American Revolution, was one of those mainly responsible for the selection of Muzzeys history for the Portland public schools. He comes to a spirited defense of the book.

In his reply, in which he discusses in detail various of the charges made by Judge McCamant, Professor Augur refers to "the superficial incursion into our educational system" made by the Judge.

He declares that it is Judge McCamant himself, not Muzzeys history, that is partisan, and asserts that the charge of being historically inaccurate "was dragged in purely and simply to bolster up the other charges."

"I have never yet seen a high school history text that did not contain some slight inaccuracies," he adds. "The one used formerly in our high schools contained many such inaccuracies, but the patriotic Judge lifted up his voice in condemnation."

As to the charge that the history is unpatriotic, Professor Augur replies: "Of course it is on this ground that Judge McCamant expects to win his case. Hence, he has endeavored to launch his attack and, knowing that his charges under this head must perforce be more or less nebulous, has bolstered them up with his other charges."

He then proceeds to discuss the charges of unpatriotism in considerable detail. In view of the fact that Muzzeys history is in use in several states as a high school textbook, the controversy is of particular interest during the session here of the National Education Association.

Muzzeys Text Defended. Professor Augurs discussion of Judge McCamants charges against Muzzeys history and his defense of the history, which he gave in a recent address in a signed statement, follows in full.

As one of the committee appointed some four years ago to recommend to the School Board a textbook in our high schools, I have naturally been somewhat interested in the attack made by Judge McCamant upon the book in whose selection I was largely instrumental.

At the time established for the periodical choice of textbooks for our local schools the committee appointed to recommend suitable textbooks in history and civics and economic geography, consisted of principals of the three high schools then existing and the heads of the departments of history in each of them.

All Texts Examined. We examined very carefully all of the textbooks on the market at that time and agreed unanimously that Muzzeys text was the best. The School Board, in accordance with our recommendation, entered into a contract with the publishers for its use in Portland for four years, which period will expire at the end of another year. I take it that the contract for the use of the book in question cannot be abrogated before the expiration of another year, although the Judge appointed to review our laws does hint that it may be "evaded," but since the attack has been made at this time, and since it seems to me that my judgment as one instrumental in securing this text for our schools, I feel that it is not out of place for me to come to the defense of a book which I still greatly admire.

Three Charges Made. The Judge's charges against Muzzeys text resolve themselves under three heads: First, that it is inaccurate; second, that it is partisan; and third, that it is unpatriotic. It is very plain that the Judge is not primarily peeved with Muzzey on account of what he considers his partisanship and lack of patriotism, and that the charge of inaccuracy was dragged in purely and simply to bolster up the other charges. I have never yet seen a high school history text that did not contain some slight inaccuracies. The one used formerly in our high schools contained many of them, and yet no patriotic Judge lifted up his voice in condemnation. Surely the statement that the Battle of Antietam occurred on September 10, which actually it ended on September 17, or that George Rogers Clark had a dash of Cavalier blood in his veins when in real life he was a brief, unheroic Irish extraction—like Judge McCamant—ought not to be sufficient to make the Judge indignant and to lead him to found entrance to the public schools.

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Next, as to the plea of partisanship. The fact that Judge McCamant praises Thad Stevens and Rowse Combs and several times quotes Thomas C. Platt as his authority in political matters is prima facie evidence that the partisanship is largely on his side. I shall take up in detail a few of the Judge's charges under this head:

(1) The statement that General Grant "as a statesman was suitable" is absolutely true. We all acknowledge that Grant was a great General, perhaps one of the greatest in history, and that he was a fine, big-hearted man; but that is no reason why history should be distorted, and that he should be endowed with qualities which all historians do him no justice.

(2) As to the statement of the clique of Wall-street bankers practically managed the country during the war, the Judge's text says in reply, "I believe it to be untrue." Later on he says, "do not think that David H. Hill, the best of the few unscrupulous politicians." Again he says about McKinley, "The man who made history being 'the advance agent of prosperity.'"

(3) The Judge quotes Muzzeys statement: "For a solid quarter of a century (after 1880) the Solid South was found in the Democratic column," and says, "This statement is untrue, because at different times Delaware, Maryland, West Virginia and Kentucky have been found in the Republican column. The Judge's statement is untrue. These states have never been considered parts of the 'Solid South,' but border states.

(4) The Judge quotes Muzzeys statement: "The lumbermen, the whiskey distillers, the oil, lead and sugar refiners, the pulp makers, the iron smelters, with many other 'captains of industry' were consolidated into great trusts. Their wants gave them great influence in Congress, and their influence was steadily exerted against the reduction of tariff duties, which would have meant ruin to them." His intention in quoting this is probably to show the author's inaccuracy or partisanship, and yet he must consider his jury sympathetic not to recognize the absolute truth of Muzzeys statement.

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