

Blame Lack of Finances, Not School Boards, for Inadequate Schools in County, Mrs. Booth Advises

By Conrad Frange
Staff Writer, The Statesman

The current critical state of affairs in Marion county schools can be blamed on inadequate financing, and should not be laid at the doorsteps of the county's 333 school board members, Mrs. Agnes Booth, county school superintendent, declared Monday.

A population rapidly increasing by births and in-migration, has far outstripped school facilities here, she said. Overcrowded schools throughout the county have led to other evils — improper lighting, heating and ventilation, unsafe and unsanitary conditions, poor classroom supervision and inadequate supplies and equipment.

In many parts of the county, classes are jammed into churches, fire houses, basement rooms and auditoriums. Some schools are taking care of more than twice the normal load of students. "The public," Mrs. Booth said, "is at last becoming aware of a notable educational battle cry — equal educational opportunities must be made available to every child."

General Increase Noted

Although the county school census is not completed yet, records indicate a general increase over last year's 21,000 students. In some communities the general increase has been 50 per cent and primary pupils alone have more than doubled in many schools.

Mrs. Booth praised two 1947 legislative laws as "steps in the right direction." She referred to the basic school support bill and the new county rural school district boards, which, she said, would help equalize school financing loads on local and state levels. "There has been some misunderstanding on the part of some, as to the reasons or causes for the conditions of our schools or the crisis we are now facing. Many people have been pointing accusing fingers at local school boards."

Full of Headaches

It's a tough job, this business of being a school board member, Mrs. Booth said. It is poorly paid and full of headaches. The only things board members get, she said, are those which come from satisfied patrons (and these are few) and the votes of those (and these also are few) who vote at school elections.

"Board members are required to know much, to deliberate with patience and judgment, and to act with courage and decision — and to keep everybody happy," the school superintendent stated. In Marion county 299 of the 333 school board members (in 111 districts) are men. The average board member age is 45, the youngest serving is 28 and the oldest 76.

Their nationality and backgrounds are varied. Nine were born in foreign countries — Russia, Sweden, Switzerland, England and Canada. A total of 234 are from out of state, while 90 are born-and-reared Oregonians.

Well-Established Citizens

Members serving on school boards are not "drifters." The average number of years they have lived in their communities is 23, with the shortest length of residence in a community at two years and the longest 67. The average number of years served on a school board by the 333 members is six, while one member has served 30 years.

Most of them are leaders in their communities and range from state executives to laborers. Of the total, 182 are farmers, 27 are housewives, 24 businessmen and merchants, 27 laborers, 15 carpenters, three each are doctors, attorneys, bankers, engineers and livestock buyers. Only six are teachers and seven are executives.

The majority of the board members have had a good formal education "backed up with much practical experience." Only 25 did not complete elementary school while 126 graduated from the eighth grade and 131 from high school. Forty-one of them have had one or more years of college work and six have degrees.

Only Five Unmarried

"They must know the problems of family life," Mrs. Booth said, "as only five are single." All are taxpayers with the exception of six.

With the exception of a very few, they are all church-goers. Ninety per cent are protestant with Lutheran, Presbyterian, Methodist and Christian denominations most prominent. Ten per cent are of the Roman Catholic faith.

School board members serve without pay, Mrs. Booth said. "We forgot to give them credit for jobs well done. Critical programs might be laid aside for helpful ones designed to provide better school systems. It takes community pride, interest and elbow grease to make good community schools."

School Board Members in All Walks of Life



These are representative of 333 members of school boards throughout Marion county who come from all walks of life. At upper left is Deane Bishoprick, chairman of the Woodburn school board. He owns a variety store and has two children, one in the second grade and one in the fifth. Clair F. Nibler, chairman of the Belle Pass district board near Woodburn, (upper right) raises filberts, fruits and berries on his farm and his children attend the Belle Pass school. Karl B. Wipper, Turner, (lower left), passes in his work of unloading sheep from his 400-acre farm. He is chairman of the non-high school board and has a boy in the eighth grade. Fifteen years of service on Salem school boards is the record of Mrs. David Wright, 785 Stewart st., pictured at lower right. Mrs. Wright finished her term as Salem school board chairman last year and then was elected to the board again. One problem facing Mrs. Wright and all school board members is how to provide more and adequate space to house the expanding school population of Salem and Marion county. (Photos by Don Dill, Statesman staff photographer.)

Valley Obituaries

Robert Lee Thomas — STAYTON, Nov. 20 — Robert Lee (General) Thomas, 83, member of a pioneer Thomas Creek family, died after suffering a re-lapse following an operation at a hospital in Eugene early Tuesday morning. He had been in poor health for the past several years. Funeral services will be held today at 2 p.m. from the Saddle Funeral home in Stayton with the Rev. Willard Buckner of Stayton Baptist church officiating. Burial will be in Lone Oak cemetery.

Familiarly known as General, Thomas was born on the Thomas Creek donation land claim of his parents, John and Charlotia Shelton Thomas, February 16, 1864. There were eight boys and three girls in the family. His father and mother had each crossed the plains by ox team from Missouri with their parents.

He resided the greater part of his life in the Jordan section, attending the public school there. He spent a few years in Roseburg and Medford where he ran popcorn stands. He also spent some months herding sheep in the John Day country.

The deceased married Elizabeth Irons of Lyons who died less than a year ago. For the last three years he had been living in Stayton with his brother, Thurston Thomas. He is also survived by a sister, Mrs. Rebecca Kinsey of Stayton; five grandchildren, and 13 nieces and nephews.

His grandfather built the first store building in Portland in 1845, from materials brought from the Columbia river to the site. It was the first boat to bring a cargo up the Willamette and was loved by a rope man by the name of...

Funeral services at the funeral home to be William Crabtree, S. K. Ely, Willis Cox, J. F. Richards, Frank Galloway and Mr. Shepherd.

Planting Indian fashion means dropping seeds in heaped-up mounds of earth among tree stumps.

2 Aerialists Injured in Fall

MIAMI, Fla., Nov. 20.—(AP)—Two performers fell from the high wire at the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey circus here last night and reports were that they were injured critically.

Before an estimated 16,000 horrified spectators who jammed the big top for its final performance in Miami, Harold Alzanas, 31, and...

his sister, Hilda, 16, toppled from the bicycle they were riding on the wire 33 feet above the ground. There was no net. The father, Charles Alzanas, 65, working in the ring below, ran beneath them as they lost balance and their bodies struck him as they fell. Doctors on the scene said his action may have saved their lives.

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HEINZ Strained Baby Foods Tin 8¢

S.O.S. Soap Pads Pkg. 10 pads 22¢

BORAXO Hand Cleaner 10-oz. tin 16¢

BELMONT Paper Towels 150 sheet roll 14¢

MJB COFFEE

1-lb. tin 49¢

2-lb. tin 97¢

Oscar Mayer WEINERS

In Brine or Sauce

14-oz. tin 49¢

Tree Top APPLE JUICE

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Birdseye Wax Beans 10-oz. pkg. 27¢

Griswold May Return Home

ATHENS, Nov. 20.—(AP)—A high political authority said this week that differences between Dwight P. Griswold, chief of the U. S. aid mission, and U. S. Ambassador Lincoln Macveagh had come to the attention of Washington and it was "not unlikely" Griswold would return home.

(Charles G. Ross, White House press secretary, said in Washington he had heard of no differences and knew nothing to indicate Griswold would be recalled.)

Griswold told a news conference Tuesday that henceforth American officers here will "be observers and advisors on all military matters of the Greek army." He said he had recommended broadened authority for them to help win "the civil war."

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