

**The Cottage Grove Sentinel**  
A WEEKLY NEWSPAPER WITH PLENTY OF BACKBONE  
BEDE & GRANT Publishers ELBERT BEDE Editor

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**IT'S BETTER** to have a little sense all the time than to have so much in chunks that you can't use  
—J. Adam Bede

**THE SCHOOL HOUSE MUDDLE.**

THE MIXUP over the selection of an architect for the proposed new school building is a regrettable affair. It is always regrettable when men of high standing in the community, and who have been associated with one another for years on a friendly basis, become aroused to such a pitch of feeling that they doubt the veracity of one another, and when one expresses doubt of the honesty of three of his associates.

It is always regrettable when men who have served the public faithfully and well in positions of trust do things which make them objects of bitter criticism and cause to be forgotten in the heat of the moment all they have done deserving of commendation.

In the movement for a new school building A. H. King and J. I. Jones, members of the school board, have been objects of the most bitter criticism and the veracity of statements made by them has been attacked. Not only that, but freely circulated reports that they were out for graft nearly defeated the bond issue for a new school house. Reports circulated about Mr. Jones did not stop even there, but The Sentinel is pleased that he has been able to refute most of them.

Director King has said that Mr. Chambers of the advisory board is after a little graft, and that the truth is not in him. Mr. King also impugns the motives of Committeeman DeLong and Director Woodard. The Sentinel does not believe Mr. Jones or Mr. King had any intention of taking graft. The editor of The Sentinel has repeatedly defended these gentlemen against that charge. Neither do we believe that any such intention ever existed in the minds of Messrs. Chambers, DeLong, Woodard or Shinn. It has the most explicit confidence in the integrity of these gentlemen. As far as we know the personal life of these gentlemen is above reproach. A more exemplary set of men could hardly be found. The Sentinel also appreciates to the utmost the services rendered by Directors Jones and King in the conduct of the schools of the city. We appreciate the many sacrifices they have made to render such service. Mr. Jones in particular has rendered service to the city for which he will never be suitably rewarded. For these reasons it is painful to offer adverse criticism. For these reasons we have not before offered such criticism.

But we can't help but feel that the present situation has been brought about through the support by Mr. Jones of one for whom the job of architect was demanded in repayment of a political obligation and in the face of an unfavorable report of the advisory board, members of which had gone to considerable personal expense in investigation.

We have at times admired Director King; perhaps we shall again some time in the future, but when he charges Messrs. Chambers, DeLong and Woodard with dishonesty, untruthfulness and intentions of graft, he exhibits a quality of judgment which compels us to place our confidence in the very men whom he accuses. When he attempts to show that the advisory committee would force the sale of the bonds regardless of interest rate, it looks as if he were seeking some excuse to delay their sale, especially when a tentative offer for their purchase at 5% less \$200 bonus has been made.

We also believe Mr. King mistakes public sentiment when he says it is with him as against Messrs. Woodard, Chambers, Shinn and DeLong. He may pit his judgment against the four if he wishes, and the law may be on his side, but that is not convincing evidence as to the wishes of a majority of the taxpayers. We believe he is mistaken when he says the members of the advisory committee are relieved of all responsibility to the taxpayers if the school board ratifies their action. We believe that the resolution passed at the annual school meeting was the expression of the voters that they would not hold the school board responsible for such action except as members of the building committee.

We are perfectly willing, however, to submit the matter to another vote of the taxpayers—we welcome such a vote—and would abide by the majority. In a case like this, where public feeling runs so high, it is highly important to sense public sentiment aright before action is taken.

With The Sentinel there is no question of the honesty or motives of any member of the building committee. It is simply a question of whether or not the voters wish the school board to ratify the action of a majority of the building committee, of which it is a part. We believe they do, and are willing to abide by such action, whether it is to our liking or not. If they do not wish the school board to be so guided, the taxpayers should be given an opportunity to say so. The advisory board will abide by the decision. The advisory board should assume responsibility for the actions of those utterly out of harmony with it.

The Sentinel had wished that when Mr. Jones dropped his architect the advisory board could do the same, but they didn't, and because they didn't they have been accused of a dictatorial attitude. They said they couldn't recommend the architect suggested by the board, and if they were honest in that opinion, as we have no reason to doubt, it is up to Directors King and Jones to show why they can't accept the architect selected by a majority of the building committee, and whom it appears they have agreed to accept if a suitable contract can be made.

The columns of The Sentinel are always open to those who wish to take issue against it.

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**THE SCHOOL BUILDING MUDDLE**

Editorial Review of the Incidents That Have Led Up to Present Strained Situation

(Continued from first page.)

voters also gained this same opinion and voted for the bonds upon this assumption. It is certain that the taxpayers who voted for the bonds upon this assumption will lay considerable blame upon this advisory board if any fault is found with the building.

If the advisory committee is to have any say in the matter whatever, it certainly should have a voice in the all important matter of the selection of an architect, a fundamental matter in the erection of a building. Yet it became plain immediately after the bonds were voted that Directors Jones and King had not intended the advisory committee to have a voice in the selection of an architect. This point is not disputed by anyone. But for strenuous objection on the part of members of the advisory board, an architect would probably have been selected by the school board without assistance from the advisory board. Directors Jones and King at this time took the position that the entire responsibility for the school building rested upon them and that the advisory board was purely for consultation. The advisory board had a somewhat different idea and proceeded to investigate architects. Chairman Job supported the side of the advisory board and Directors Jones and King then succeeded in getting action postponed until after the recent annual school meeting, indefinitely postponing upon motion of Director King a report from the advisory board recommending Ford & Ragsdale, the Eugene architects. These points are not disputed by anyone, except that Mr. King claims his motion to indefinitely postpone the report of the advisory board did not mean that the report would not be acted upon later.

The difficulty over the selection of an architect needs a little explanation at this point. Directors Jones and King recommended to the voters of the district (before any election was held) a certain high school building, reserving, of course, the right of making necessary alterations. Because the taxpayers voted the bonds upon this recommendation, Mr. Jones has stated that he felt bound to this building and its architect. Mr. King has stated that he felt bound to no one and that he never at any time previous to becoming chairman, committed himself to anyone. It was quite generally thought, however, that he too favored Jones' selection. That opinion may have prevailed because he seconded the nomination made by Jones at the first meeting after the bonds were voted. He states, however, that because of there being only two members besides the chairman there was a ruling that all motions made by one director were seconded by the other and that he had no intention at that time of voting for the motion. The motion did not come to a vote.

Now we are getting to where all the trouble started. When it came time to select architects, representatives of the architect favored by Mr. Jones claimed the job by right of a political obligation. Right there the trouble started. Every member of the advisory board recognizes the value of the services rendered, but refused to have anything to do with paying a political debt in any such manner. The advisory board investigated the records of all architects

who had submitted plans and recommended Ford & Ragsdale. Outside of the break already referred to, other reasons were found why they couldn't recommend the architect presumably wished by the school board. When the advisory board's report was not even given consideration matters came to a standstill until the annual school election.

Director Jones and King professed to believe that the advisory board was trying to force something upon them, while the advisory board held the same opinion of the two directors. These opinions still prevail. Certain it is that Jones stood solid for his man, while King stood ready to vote for Jones' selection in preference to the selection of the advisory board, while the advisory board stood solid against the selection made by Director Jones. From this time Directors Jones and King and the advisory board have been at loggerheads, and things have come to such a pass that it is no longer probable that they will ever be able to work in harmony.

The stand Jones made for his architect confirmed the members of the advisory board in the belief that his selection was a cut and dried affair long before the bonds were voted, especially as it was Jones who made the very motion by which he later said he felt bound. There are other things in connection with this part of the fight which it is just as well not to make public.

Suspicion aroused by this action was the inception of all the rest of the trouble that has followed. But for it a harsh word might never have been spoken.

At the annual school election Chairman Job asked for an expression of opinion from the taxpayers defining the position of the advisory board. Director Jones also, according to a pre-arranged plan, also defined his position and asked for an expression of the voters.

In order to clarify the situation and to give the voters an opportunity to say whether or not they were backing the combined board, the editor of The Sentinel, at the request of several of the heaviest taxpayers, not members of the advisory board, and A. L. Woodard, then a candidate for director, introduced a resolution at the annual school meeting.

Following is the text of the motion: "Resolved, That the advisory building board be retained; that the members of this board be Mayor J. H. Chambers, C. M. Shinn, representing the Commercial Club, and T. W. DeLong, representing Cottage Grove Grange:

"That it be the sense of this meeting that any members of the board of directors who may be in any way obligated to any architect or contractor be relieved from such obligation, and that it is the sense of this meeting that the board of school directors be guided by a majority vote of the combined building board, composed of three directors and three members of the advisory board."

The last paragraph of that resolution seems to The Sentinel to plainly mean that when the members of the school board are acting as members of the building committee they are to forget that they are directors; that their sole responsibility to the district

(Continued on page 8.)

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