



DROPS BORATE—An old B-17 Flying Fortress now used as a borate bomber drops borate on a grass, brush and timber fire near Redding, Calif., early Tuesday. The fire that was hampered by rising north winds covered over 800 acres before being brought under control. (UPI)

Parochial Schools Face Major Educational Problems

(Editor's note: What are the hard facts behind the much discussed "crisis in Catholic education"? In the following dispatch, UPI correspondent Louis Casels examines in depth the problems of too few teachers, too many students in the Catholic educational system.)

By LOUIS CASSELS
United Press International
Washington—UPI—St. Leo's Catholic school in suburban Fairfax, Va., is typical of the thousands of parochial schools in the United States.

It has a shortage of teachers and a surplus of students. In the past, St. Leo's has offered a complete elementary school program, from kindergarten through the eighth grade. This fall, however, it is dropping its kindergarten and first grade.

"We feel it is more necessary to have the upper grades than the lower grades if we can't have them all," explained Father Walter F. Malloy, **More Difficult**

Throughout the nation, parochial schools are finding it increasingly difficult, if not impossible, to expand their teaching staffs and classroom space to accommodate an ever-growing body of applicants. More and more of them are solving the problem, or at least easing it somewhat, by dropping their lower grades.

Some parochial schools in Cincinnati, Ohio, have already curtailed their lower grades, and Bishop Paul F. Leibold announced recently that it may be necessary to drop the first four grades of all church-operated schools in the archdiocese.

According to the National Catholic Welfare Conference, curtailment of lower grades has also begun in Kansas City; St. Louis; Cleveland; Columbus, Ohio; Green Bay, Wis.; Spokane, Wash.; Fargo, N.D.; Clinton, Iowa; St. Paul, Minn., and Richmond, Va. It is under consideration in many other dioceses.

Whenever a parochial school drops one or more grades, the public schools serving the same community experience a sudden spurt in enrollment.

Proposed Closing
Some Catholic educators have seriously proposed closing down all the elementary grades in parochial schools, in order to concentrate the church's educational effort on the high school years.

If this were done, U.S. public schools would have to find classrooms and teachers for 4.5 million children more than they are now educating. It also would mean a corresponding increase in the local tax load.

Such a drastic shifting of the educational burden is not likely to take place in the foreseeable future. Most Catholic authorities are still committed to the ideal of providing a religiously-oriented education for Catholic children throughout their formative years.

But even the most ardent advocates of this ideal are being compelled to admit the necessity of making some compromise with the goal of "every Catholic child in a Catholic school."

At present, fewer than half of the nation's Catholic youngsters are enrolled in Catholic schools. About 54 per cent are going to public schools, some by choice, many because there is simply no room for them in parochial schools.

Despite the millions of children who are perforce turned away each fall, the Catholic schools in many cities are severely overcrowded. Where public schools are trying to limit class size to a maximum of 25 to 30 students, many parochial schools have classes of 60 to 70 students.

This kind of overcrowding makes it difficult to do an effective job of teaching, and protests from Catholic parents have induced a number of major dioceses, including those of St. Louis, Richmond and Baltimore, to take steps to limit parochial school classes to 50 students or less.

Enforcement of this ceiling will mean turning many additional applicants away to the public schools.

Why don't Catholics expand their school system to handle all the children seeking admission?

Enrollment Doubled

The answer is that they have tried to do just that, but have been overwhelmed by the sheer magnitude of the task. Enrollment in Catholic schools has almost doubled since 1950. The frantic pace of expansion is illustrated by the archdiocese of Chicago, which has invested more than \$80 million in new schools during the past 5 years. Nationwide, the total investment in Catholic school buildings is now estimated at \$5 billion. There are more than 13,000 Catholic schools of all types. Their annual operating costs exceed \$225 million.

And the costs are rising

sharply. In the past, Catholic schools have been able to provide education at a far lower cost per child than public schools because most of their teachers were unsalaried nuns. In 1950, only 7 per cent of all elementary teachers in Catholic schools were laymen.

Salaried Teachers
But the number of nuns available for teaching duty has not grown as fast as the number of children to be taught. As a result, Catholic schools have increasingly had

to hire lay teachers—and pay them salaries. This fall, about 30 per cent of the elementary teaching staff in parochial schools will be composed of laymen.

To finance the rising cost of the world's largest private school system, the Catholic church relies heavily on voluntary contributions from its members, or the proceeds of fund-raising activities such as bake sales, bazaars or bingo games. Tuition payments have traditionally been kept low

for the sake of poor families and large families. At the elementary school level, they rarely exceed \$90 to \$100 per year, compared to the \$600 to \$1,000 tuition charge which a parent would encounter at a private day school.

These are the hard facts behind the much-discussed "crisis in Catholic education." They explain why Catholics feel so strongly about having parochial schools included in any general program of federal aid to education... why they are ready to experiment with "shared time" arrangements under which Catholic school children take some of their courses in public schools... and why Catholic parents in a growing number of parishes are being told that they will have to start their children in a public school, even though they prefer a parochial education.

New York—UPI—The lowest temperature reported to the U. S. Weather Bureau this morning, excluding Alaska and Hawaii, was 38 degrees at Redmond, Ore., and Mullan, Idaho. The highest temperature reported Wednesday was 106 degrees at Laredo and Cotulla, Tex.

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Quotes From the News

Belgrade, Yugoslavia—Russian Premier Nikita Khrushchev, outlining the Communist stand on world peace:

"We are struggling for peace, but we shall not tremble if the most aggressive forces of imperialism — those we call the wild ones — unleash war."

Mobile, Ala. — A 10-year-old boy, who admitted setting dozens of fires, as quoted by Sheriff Ray Bridges:

"Something inside of me talks to me and tells me to do it, and I do it."

Washington — Rep. John W. Byrnes (R-Wis.), top GOP member of the House Ways & Means committee, on promises President Kennedy to hold down federal spending:

"We heard those platitudes and fine intentions from the White House before we got a budget with an \$11.9 billion deficit."

Washington — Dr. N. E. Bradbury, director of the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory, recommending ratification of the limited nuclear test ban treaty:

"I myself, with considerable knowledge of nuclear things, with some knowledge of their military use, but with only a plain citizen's feelings about people and nations and fears, would prefer to try to follow the path of hope."



SHARE TOAST—Playing a role in a different kind of performance, television comedian Johnny Carson, 37, and his bride, the former Joanne Copeland, of Palo Alto, Calif., beam as they share toast following their marriage in New York Saturday. It is the second marriage for both. (UPI)

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