

CATHOLICS ACCUSE BOARD OF DISCRIMINATING.

This is Emphatically Denied by the Members of the School Board.

Sections Two, Three and Four. Article one of the Bill of Rights in the Constitution of Oregon are respectively as follows:

"All men shall be secured in their natural right to worship Almighty God according to the dictates of their own consciences."

"No law shall in any case whatever control the free exercise and enjoyment of religious opinions or interfere with the rights of conscience."

"No religious test shall be required as a qualification for trust or profit."

I publicly charge the school board of District No. 9 with a violation of the spirit of the above, with a violation of the spirit of our national institutions and with having set up in our midst a Despotism which is operating against efficiency and the best interests of our school, which attempts to crush the natural rights of school teachers and interested parents and which has resulted in an attitude of mind on the part of the Board little short of Omnipotence, an attitude which treats with effrontery the petitions of a substantial body of taxpayers, and so lacking in fairness that it dare not open its proceedings to the inspection of interested citizens.

This is the task before me and I proceed reluctantly for it is always a tragedy when one must needs sacrifice friendship in order that he may perform his duty as he conceives it, and yet, there is one thing more, and that is to renounce your convictions and cling, out of policy, to those who have disappointed you in a manner vital to real friendship.

A year ago Mrs. V. Stockham came to Tillamook at the earnest solicitation and on the recommendation of Mr. Onthank. She was hired to teach the eighth grade. Her recommendations were of the highest order, her reputation and character beyond the shadow of suspicion. She is a woman that possesses that great qualification for teaching—love for it. She has worked as no other teacher. She has brought with her the necessary knowledge and an inspiration and enthusiasm that is contagious. Mr. Onthank, principal of the school, has said that she did the work of two teachers and Mr. W. S. Buel, County Superintendent, who has had her work under observation, says that she is one of the best teachers in the County and that the eighth grade has shown improvement under her—has in fact advanced one-half school year.

A petition signed by every interested parent with the exception of one, has been submitted to the Board asking that she be hired for another year. Everything is favorable to her and I defy the Board to name one thing of consequence that isn't and yet in the face of the facts they have dared to drop her from the list. WHY? Frankly I cannot tell you. I have interviewed all the members of the Board and honestly tried to learn their reasons. They have not refused to talk about the matter, when cross-examined, but they are individually and collectively unable to give a consistent and reasonable explanation of their action. The situation seems to be something like Topsy "it just grew" and no one is responsible for it. Mrs. Everson told Mrs. Stockham that Mr. Geo. B. Lamb was responsible for it but Mr. Lamb refuses to accept the "great honor" and continually talks about "We". One who was present at a meeting when Mr. Onthank pleaded for Mrs. Stockham's retention, says that the Directors didn't appear to have any clear reasons for not hiring her but seemed to think that she shouldn't be hired because each thought that the other members knew something that he or she didn't know. If this sounds involved you must blame your School Board, for it is their method of reasoning not mine. Now Mrs. Stockham went to Mrs. Everson for the purpose of learning in what way her services were not satisfactory but Mrs. Everson either didn't dare to tell her or else she didn't know. When the writer asked Mr. Botts in the presence of Mr. Lamb why Mrs. Everson had refused to inform her he said that Mrs. Everson is not the chairman of the Board and when I then asked if he, as chairman of the Board, would inform her, he beat around the bush and finally said he didn't care to make a definite answer. The Board has been open to all manner of reports bearing on Mrs. Stockham but they have never given her an opportunity to say one word in her behalf. When I called Mr. Botts attention to this in the presence of Mr. Lamb he stated she could have come to meetings. It is as though one said: "We are not particularly interested in hearing your side, but if you insist upon forcing yourself into meetings where we are discussing some other matters, why come ahead?"

I call that chivalry and a square deal don't you,—NOT? As a matter of fact if any teacher attended to her school duties as Mr. Botts has attended to his school duties as a director, they would have been out of a job a long time ago. But of course one is only a teacher—the other a director. (Who does not direct.)

I and a number of my friends became interested in this case when we saw what a rank deal they were trying to put across and I determined on the spot that if the least evidence were adduced to justify their course, I would not object to their action realizing that a Board must be given some latitude,—but I would not accept tyranny as a justification or substitute of Justice. I called on Mr. Botts first. After considerable questioning I learned that she had been in a way indiscreet with Mr. Jesse Crenshaw. It seems that she and Mr. Crenshaw had taken a number of hikes together. Not that there was anything in their conduct on such occasions that was subject to serious objection, Oh no! Nothing of that

kind. But, . . . But what? Why they hiked, that's what, and can you conceive of anything worse? Teachers ought to go straight home from school drink a cup of tea crawl into bed and let their nerves snap so they can be in a cheery mood the next day. Then again, he actually went to her home on a number of occasions and "it is said" stayed quite late. "Not that there is anything in that of course, But, . . . But what? Did they spend their time cooing and making goo-goo eyes or did they concern themselves with school matters, in Dairying? With all its mountain of rumors coming to the Board did any of its members ever say anything to Mr. Crenshaw? Did they ever say anything to her? Mr. Crenshaw is in the good grace of the Board, let him tell them about it. And then let them tell us, who acted indiscreetly (as they say) with her AND WHY HE HAS BEEN RETAINED BY THE SCHOOL BOARD! I asked Mr. Botts this question and he couldn't answer it except to say that he wasn't exactly satisfied with Mr. Crenshaw's retention. No one member of the Board seems to be exactly satisfied all around. It appears to be a question of give and take,—so many to you and so many to me. Who formed the majority that voted him in and WHY? I wish here to express my regret that it is necessary to mention Mr. Crenshaw's name and I wish to assure this gentleman that I believe in his integrity and manhood, and that I know he associates, in common with all others of his type, with only those who promote the best things in life. Mr. Botts said, further, that some members complained to the Board or members of the Board because as a result the Board issued something or did something for the life of me I couldn't tell you) so that the teachers wouldn't do such things any more. As near as I can get at it, it was rose-scented hint handed to Mr. Onthank with the request that he pass it around to the teachers. It is an open secret that Mr. Onthank was not in sympathy with the request, or suggestion or whatever it was, and, therefore, when he had occasions to mention it to the teachers he did so in a light vein. And it is reported by Mr. Botts that he had no sooner done so when Mrs. Stockham arose and it is supposed to have said: "Well I'm going to a dance." and attended public dances after that request. Mrs. Stockham stoutly denies it, but on the other hand we are reliably informed that several of the teachers who have since been hired for another year actually did go to public dances thereafter. Why did her failure to attend them and their failure to stay away get her another dismissal and them a job for another year? Perhaps she made the fatal mistake of understanding the request. It seems impossible sometimes to understand the Board and at other times you are not supposed to understand it. Well, I declare I don't understand how the Board ever came to any concerted action in her case because no two offer the same excuse for their action. Every time they offer a 'reason' and it is shot full of holes they grab for another straw. Mr. Lamb assured me in the presence of Mr. Botts that he was 'some' teacher himself and his principal reason for not wanting Mrs. Stockham was because he had had her class room work under observation and concluded she wasn't the best teacher they could get for the job. Mr. Lamb must observe with some kind of an absent treatment observation. He was in her rooms during January and May conducting eighth grade examinations BUT HE NEVER OBSERVED A CLASS under her charge and we challenge him to swear under oath that he ever has. For that matter none of the others have. And they all call themselves DIRECTORS!

Compare their lack of observation with the scientific method of the principal and the County School Superintendent and note that those who don't know what they are talking about say one thing and those who do not know what they are talking about say something entirely different. And then there is Mrs. Everson who offered one of the cutest "reasons" you ever heard. It's a double jointed affair that compliments you and slaps you at one and the same time. She says Mrs. Stockham's personality is too strong. I would like to tell her what her husband said about this, but it is not permissible. Well Onthank admits she attended strictly to her own business and there was no friction. However, it MUST be that she interfered with the Board's conception of DISCIPLINE,—a conception we had a taste of about one year ago when classes were expelled because some girl lost an undergarment. At times the Board makes everyone suffer for the act of one and then again reverses its policy and makes one suffer for the acts of all. You get the point don't you?

I went to the Board as a representative of a number of interested citizens and asked that she be given a SQUARE DEAL but I have been refused. She has been refused. Every one has been ignored who has her interests at heart. By innuendo and sly comments her reputation has been clouded in the eyes of those who are not really acquainted with her. We have demanded a public hearing in the name of Justice and Decency, we have requested that she be permitted to have her day in court, and the Board make an explanation of a number of matters that we cannot conveniently include in this circular but again I say, we have been refused.

I'll tell you what's wrong,—its bigotry. It's in the marrow of their bones and it crops out so strongly once in a while that in an unguarded moment we are presented with the fine 'AMERICAN' example of a Board of a free, public school discussing the religion of a teacher,—Mrs. Stockham's religion. Mr. Botts admits it with the qualification that it "was after meeting". Mrs. Everson denies it. It was mentioned to Mr. Lamb and he did not deny and there

are other who know about it. It has been intimated by Mrs. Everson that the Board cannot be forced to give a public meeting. I think she is legally right in the premises. But my friends neither can a man, under due process of law be estopped from foreclosing the mortgage of a widow and taking the bread of children but the point is, there are men who wouldn't do it. To be legally good is not good enough and to do only those things one is forced to do is not doing enough.

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT IT? Respectfully submitted, F. E. Shaw, Speaker of the Foresters Committee. J. B. Deslman, Henry Plasker, M. Melchior.

Reply of the School Board. To the Editor and to the public:—Our attention has been called to a circular issued by the Speaker of the Foresters and a committee regarding the action of the school board in not retaining Mrs. Stockham as a teacher in the public school for the next year.

In view of the fact that the school board is misrepresented, we think it proper to make this statement in reference to the affair. Mrs. Stockham was employed to teach during the present school year. Nothing was said about her being employed for any longer time. No charges were made against her by the board, because none were called for. Mrs. Stockham was not re-employed for next year. The board thought it better otherwise, and knew of no reason why Mrs. Stockham or any other teacher should consider that they had any claim to be re-employed in the school. The board has cast no reflections upon Mrs. Stockham, and any reflections which may have arisen came out of the publicity which has been given to the matter by Mrs. Stockham's friends.

The claim that Mrs. Stockham was not retained for religious reasons is absolutely untrue. There were other reasons sufficient to justify its action in the matter, and at the time it was decided not to re-employ Mrs. Stockham, the board did not know of her religious connection. Mr. Shaw was so informed.

Mr. Shaw interviewed the members of the board, stating that he came as a representative of the Foresters. He was informed that the board considered it had sufficient reasons for not re-employing Mrs. Stockham, but that no religious reason entered into the matter. Some matters were mentioned to Mr. Shaw which the board had considered, but he was informed that these were not the only things considered, and he was also informed that as he came avowedly representing a religious or church organization, the board did not feel called upon to discuss school matters with him as such representative in any way. He was told that in the opinion of the board church and school matters should be kept entirely separate. This was the attitude of the board, and is still the attitude of the board. We think that public matters should not be governed or interfered with by any church organization; that churches and the public schools should not be mixed together. Having that view we declined to discuss the subject fully with Mr. Shaw's organization, and so told him. Mr. Shaw seemed to think it entirely proper for his organization as an organization, to take the matter up as it did, but we can't agree with him.

As to the petition in behalf of Mrs. Stockham: A petition was presented in this matter, but a considerable number of the signers took the trouble to inform the board that they wished to have their signatures disregarded and did not want the board to be influenced by that petition in any way.

Now we do not want to discuss these matters with Mr. Shaw and his organization, but we do not want to have the attitude of the board misrepresented. There are numerous misrepresentations in the circular, whether intentional or not, but the version given of the various interviews Mr. Shaw had with the board is distorted and unfair to the board. The board's principal concern is that the public shall understand that it was not influenced by religion in this matter whatever. The charge is made that the board entered into a discussion of Mrs. Stockham's religion, and that Mr. Botts admitted this to be the fact. The facts are as to that, that Mr. Shaw was told by Mr. Botts that at the time the board made up its mind not to re-employ Mrs. Stockham he did not know that she was a member of the church with which Mr. Shaw is affiliated; that after the board had made up its mind not to re-employ her he for the first time learned of her church membership. So that it was impossible that his action should have been influenced by that in any manner whatever.

The statement in the circular would have people believe that this question entered into the discussion as to whether or not she should be re-employed, when it was made clear to Mr. Shaw that it was not entered into at all, nor heard of by Mr. Botts until after the board's mind was made up. The school board is not asking that these matters be given publicity. It had no intention of injuring Mrs. Stockham, and does not have at this time, but it does not want to be misrepresented by this organization headed by Mr. Shaw, and we fully believe that the reasons we have given for not discussing this matter any more than we have with Mr. Shaw are entirely sufficient, and that the same will be satisfactory to the people of the district as a whole.

H. T. Botts, Canada Everson, G. B. Lamb, Members of the School Board.

(The editor has given both sides an opportunity to be heard, and as we consider this sufficient, nothing will

be accomplished by prolonging a discussion, so we have decided not to publish any other communication on this subject, for when religious matters are brought into controversy they generally cause bitter feeling and religious strife.—Ed.)

Waymire Visits Old Home. Winterset, Iowa, May 12.—Dear Old Headlight—Here I was born. I am here after 40 years absence, and really I am quite a sight to these people, at least, I am quite an attraction. They seem to think it a wonder a fellow could live 40 years out side of Iowa. Well, I have visited the old homestead, got a picture of the house where I was born, drank from the old spring, visited the old swimming-hole—its filled up and the river is so muddy no one cares to bathe in it any more.

We have a variety of weather, cool then real hot. It can thunder as loud as ever it did and my nerves are so unused to such heavy shocks it makes me homesick. I have visited the old school house where I graduated the first term of school I attended (public school) and it only took me three months to graduate. The foundation for great learning was large, but I failed to finish it. I saw some of the girls I used to sleigh ride with. I remember how cold my feet got and my frost bit ear, but the kiss at the gate was ample remuneration for all these troubles. But I reckon you know of some such experience your self. There are a few, just a few, living that were here then, but I really am having a good time. I visited the cemetery where my dead loved ones sleep, and it seems I could see their dear faces and hear the voices of long ago—sacred memories these. I have preached to the people here in a United Brethren Church, built by the cemetery where my little brother was buried 55 years ago, where uncles, aunts, cousins and acquaintances lie, and it was a time of living over again and a time of expressions of hope as these all come so fresh before me. In ten more days if I live, I shall start home, via North Carolina, a little out of the way, I guess, but I am planning to be home in Oregon June 25 at the latest and take up my labor where conference sees fit to send me. I am coming home a better Oregonian than ever, ready to do my best for a greater and better Oregon. I am inviting Iowa people to come to the land where its always warm enough to bathe in the ocean, and cold enough to always play snowball on Mt. Hood.

C. H. Waymire.

That we miss the Indians is made clear by the fact that we persistently name hotels, towns, skyscrapers and summer resorts after them.

Edison is now working twenty hours a day. Why can't more of us learn his secret of having a good time.

There may be good trusts and bad trusts, and there may be good bosses and bad bosses, Col. T. R., but some kind of a boss is imperative. A party or an army without a boss is a mob.

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