

Scouts to Acquire New Camping Area

The Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts of the Cascade area can thank the MacDonald-Osmer Post 451 for their new camping area. The Legion, pioneers in many community projects, has made it possible for the Scouts to have a camping area on the property recently purchased by them.

A complete section of the proposed community park will be set aside for the exclusive use of the Scouting groups.

Ada Community Plans Project

A group of public spirited citizens in Ada are planning to organize an Athletic Club. Concerned about the lack of recreational facilities for the younger people, this group plans to hold a meeting in the Township Hall, next Wednesday, September 21 at 8 p.m.

Still in the discussion stage, the meeting will acquaint the public with their plans which include the purchase of lights for the ball field, more bleachers, possible organized recreation for Ada teen-agers, and other ideas which will be aired at this informal planning session.

Projects of this type were a topic of discussion in the past and it is expected that most of the villagers will attend.

Seek Zoning Change

Notice is hereby given that a public hearing will be held on the rezoning of the W 1/2 of the W 1/2 of the N 1/2 of the E 1/4, Section 4, Cascade Township, and known as the Thomas property, on Laraway Lake road, from Class B residential to Commercial purposes. At the Cascade Township Hall Saturday, Sept. 24, at 8:00 p.m. Use of the property is to be for the erection and use of an American Legion Hall and children's playground.

M. J. Vanderveen, Clerk
c-21-22 Cascade Township

Plan Museum Visit

Cascade Community Club 4-H Entomology and Wildflower group of 13 members plan a visit to the Grand Rapids Public Museum Saturday afternoon. Curator Frank L. DuMond will show them the museum's insect collection. Their leader, Mrs. Milo Patterson, Mrs. Herbert Flynn and Mrs. Orval Kilmer will accompany them.

FRACTURES LEG AT FOOTBALL PRACTICE

Roger Richards, Goodwood dr., broke his leg during football scrimmage at Lowell high school last week. Roger, a Cascade school graduate, was out for the Freshman team at Lowell, and it was his first day of practice.

This is the second affliction in the family in a few weeks. Roger's mother, Mrs. Robert Richards, had an operation late this summer.

Change Meeting Date

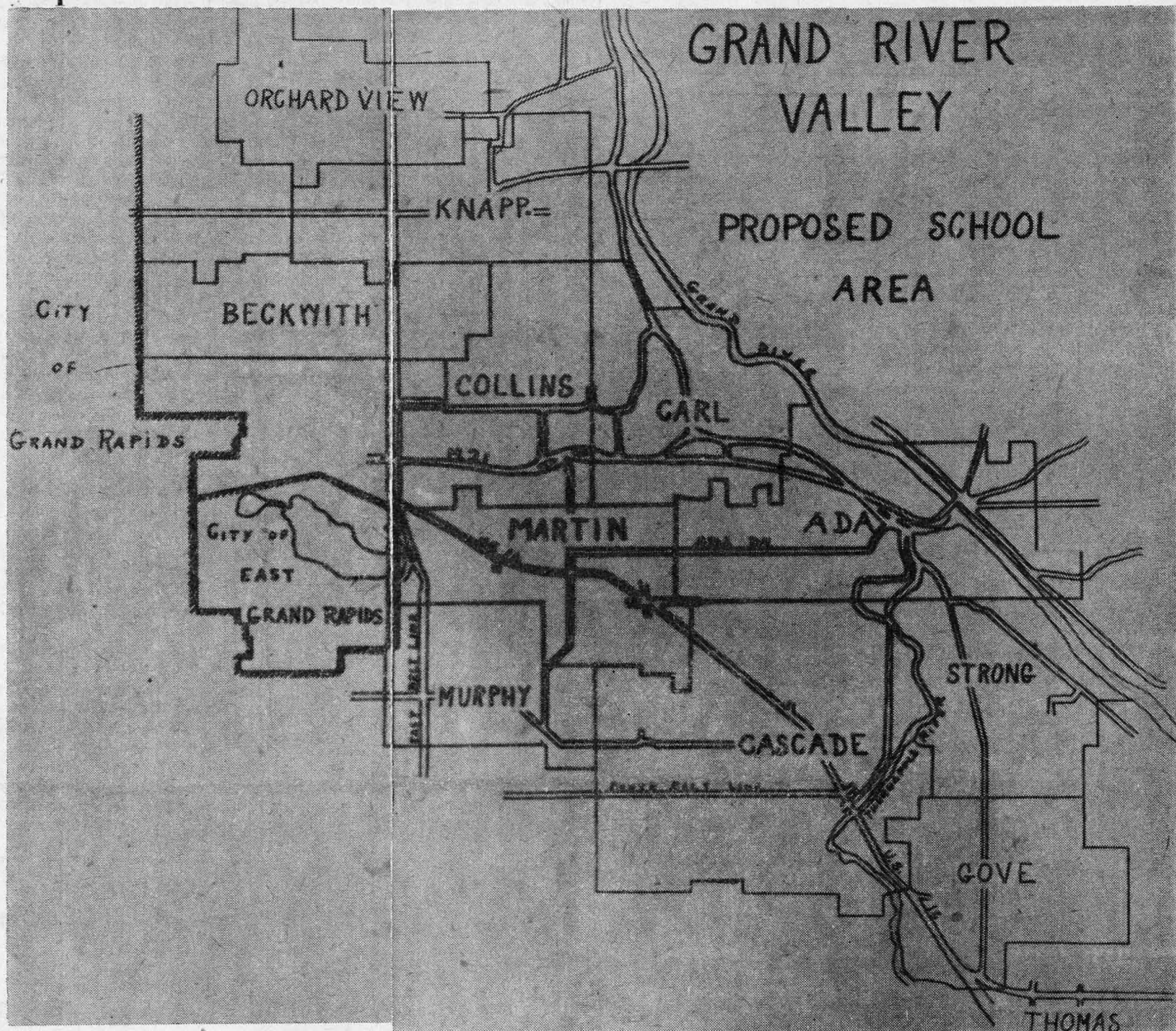
Cascade Home Demonstration group will meet Tuesday, Sept. 27, at 12 o'clock at the home of Mrs. Sol Wanrooy, Thornapple River dr. Mrs. Elmer Phillips and Mrs. Martin Vanderveen are luncheon hostesses. The lesson will be on "Making the Most of Storage Space".

The meeting has been postponed from September 20.

The PTA meeting of the Collins school will hold its regular meeting on Monday at 8 p.m. All parents are urged to attend.

Last week Mrs. A. VanPortfliet of Kirk Dr. returned to her home after undergoing major surgery at a city hospital.

Proposed Section For Consolidation of ACE Area Schools



The above map shows twelve school districts covered by the survey taken this past summer by Harold S. Chambers, principal of the Hudsonville High School. The proposed consolidation would provide a high school building for these districts. Site for the new school would be situated somewhere near the geographical center of the area. The elementary schools would retain their present status as "crossroad centers" for lower age groups.

Texas Family "Discovers" Ada

ACE area residents will be pleased to know that the fame of our beautiful countryside is widespread indeed. The latest family to join our community is that of Dr. and Mrs. Clinton Good, recently of Eagle Pass, Texas. Unable to find suitable housing in Grand Rapids, the Good's purchased the home just south of Strong school on Buttrick Road where there is plenty of room for their four youngsters, Clinton, 7, Bruce, 6, Warren, 5, and Janis, 14 months, to romp and play as city children can never do.

Dr. Good practiced in Eagle Pass for two and a half years, but after the disastrous floods in that area last year which caused many of the residents to settle elsewhere, they too decided to pull stakes.

Dr. Good took premedical courses at Ohio University and Yale. He also attended the Cincinnati University Medical School and served his internship and residency in internal medicine at Saginaw General Hospital in Saginaw. He served as a lieutenant in the Navy for two years.

At present he has offices at 2747 Clyde Park in Grand Rapids and is on the staff at St. Mary's hospital. Dr. Good also plans to receive patients at his home after office hours.

The Good children are attending the Ada school and have the rare distinction, in these parts at least, of being able to speak two languages fluently. Spanish, seldom heard in this area, is second nature to them and even Janis understands it perfectly.

"WET WATER" SUBDUES DENISON BARN BLAZE

A small barn fire September 7 at the home of Mrs. Perry Denison, Thornapple River dr., was the only work for the Cascade Fire Department this last week. The flames were started by a short-circuit in a wall outlet in the cellar, which is occupied by Nancy Charters' horse. Then ate upwards into the vacant furnished apartment above, firing a davenport.

The fire was caught early and promptly put out, thanks also to the use of the new "wet water". This is water plus a special detergent which penetrates substances and keeps them wet. Added to truck tanks at the scene of a fire, it is especially valuable on hay.

Two gallons will fix 2000 gallons of water. At the cost of \$3.25 per gallon, the savings in property, water damage and firemen's risk seemed a good bargain to the township board, which last month purchased fifty gallons for the department's use.

RECORD ATTENDANCE

Last Sunday's meeting at the Eastmont Reformed Chapel saw a record attendance. One hundred three persons were present Pastor J. Boerigter, who is continuing his studies in Holland, Mich., will now lead the congregation every other Sunday, instead of weekly, as he has done during the summer months.

The Rozema family reunion was held Sunday at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Milton Heaven, Denison dr. Twenty-five were present from Grand Rapids and Ionia.

Final Report on School Survey Harold S. Chambers Presents Recommendations for Consolidation

Legion Plans Turkey Shoot

ACE area residents will have a chance to get in a little pre-season hunting experience on Saturday, October 8. No license is required and you are assured of getting your game—IF you are a good shot.

The MacDonald Osmer Post 451 of the Cascade Legion plans to hold a Turkey Shoot on that date from 9 in the morning until dark. The Cascade gravel pits have been selected as the hunting grounds and marksmen and women can blaze away to their hearts content.

Rifles with open sights only will be used. Participants can bring their own weapons, or, if you don't own a rifle, the Legion will furnish the "shootin' iron."

The Women's Auxiliary will stand by with barbecue and hot dogs for those who are unsuccessful.

BAKED GOODS SALE

Mary Martha Guild of Eastmont Reformed Chapel is planning to hold a baked goods sale at the Meijers Super Market, corner of Michigan and Fuller on Friday, the 16th. Time of the sale is from 9 a. m. to 1 p.m. Chairman of the project is Mrs. Eleanor DeVries.

The Guild of St. Robert's Church Ada, Michigan is sponsoring a Harvest Buffet on Sunday, September 25, 1955.

At a meeting in the Ada School on Wednesday evening, Harold S. Chambers, technical advisor for the 12 district school consolidation survey gave his final report. The meeting was attended by members of the various school boards and members of citizens advisory committees which the boards had appointed to work with them. Lynn Clark, Kent County Supt. of Public Education was also present. The report, in book form, was presented to each school board included in the survey and will be studied and discussed by them before further steps are taken toward possible consolidation.

The complete report is printed on inside pages of this issue.

CUB SCOUT NEWS

Monday, September 26, is the date for the Cub Scout's committee to hold its meeting. The time will be 8 p. m. and Cascade school the place.

Next week Thursday at 8 p.m. there will be a pack meeting of the Cubs. This group will also meet in the Cascade school.

NOTICE

Due to the fact that the Cascade Township dump has been closed the township board would appreciate knowing of a place that could be put to this use. Contact Township Supervisor, Gerrit Baker.

c21-22

LOST something? Look for it in the Want Ads.

Presents School Consolidation Report

A survey of twelve School Districts in Kent County, Michigan. (Bounded on the West by the Cities of Grand Rapids and East Grand Rapids, on the south by 26th St. on the North by 4-mile Road, and on the East by Thornapple River and Grand River, all approximately.)

Temporary name of the area: Grand River Valley Schools.

Problem: Whether to consolidate for the purpose of building and operating a Secondary School, and if favorable to do so, what is the procedure?

Introduction.

The writer was engaged by the Boards of Education of about half of the Districts covered by the study to work for a period of one month, in the summer of 1955, to assemble and bring up to date the data already obtained by various volunteer committees which had been working on the problem for about two years prior to that time. He was asked, also to gather new data pertinent to the matter at hand.

Due to the limited time allotted for this survey, it could not be comprehensive. A minimum of facts, statistics, maps and other data were obtained and assembled, essential to the process of helping the people of the School Districts involved determine (1) whether it is desirable and feasible to effect some kind of consolidation for the purpose, primarily, of erecting and operating a Secondary school; and (2) should that be wise, what are the procedures to bring about a consolidation of the several Districts concerned.

It was admitted at the outset that only a small number of the Districts were relatively certain at the time the survey began that some type of consolidation was desired. However, individuals and Board members of all of the 12 Districts included in the survey had expressed themselves as interested and eager to cooperate in the effort to gather data. They also expressed themselves as having an open mind as to the possible outcome. It was well established that the consensus of opinion by the majority of the people in the area was that there was need for greatly improved facilities for the education of the boys and girls on the secondary level, beginning with the 7th grade. It was agreed, also, that the retention of the existing neighborhood Elementary schools was desirable and essential.

Until the present time, boys and girls in the 7th through 12th grade have been permitted to attend secondary schools in East Grand Rapids, Grand Rapids, Rockford, Lowell and Caledonia, the cost of tuition and transportation being paid by the sending Districts. Some of the young people attended parochial schools, the expense being borne by their families. But, due to the great distance of many of these high schools, the fact that the larger and wealthier high school districts indicated only a mild desire to continue accepting students from outside, plus the fact that it has been known for some time that educational and political leaders in the state were beginning to question the advisability of continuing the general policy of educating boys and girls on a secondary level by means of paying tuition to "foreign" districts, the patrons of the Elementary schools in the survey area began to think it might be well to consider building a high school at some convenient place nearer their homes.

From time to time meetings of persons representing the Districts in the area were held. Committees were appointed and much information gathered. When the writer began his duties, these committees were re-activated and some new ones set to work. One new Committee made a trip by bus to Whitehall, Grand Haven and Hudsonville

to see recently constructed high schools. A second group went to the Capital to make the first approach to the Department of Public Instruction on the matter to ascertain procedures for consolidation and to secure general counsel. A third committee spent one day at Michigan State University attending a conference on Modern High School Building Design. The work of these committees and that of the writer were pooled in a verbal and visual report to the people on July 21 in the Martin school. About 125 persons from the several districts attended the meeting and gave strong evidence of wanting to know more and expressed the opinion that the question whether to organize for the erection of a high school should be placed before the people as soon as possible.

The data submitted herewith is the result of these several steps mentioned above. It is hoped that it will help consummate the thinking and work of the past two years or more and make it possible to act on the problem soon.

Acknowledgement is hereby made of the work of the several committees which laid much of the ground work and the encouragement lent by Mr. Lynn Clark, Kent County Superintendent of Schools. The steering committee which had given much impetus to the movement toward solving the problem was as follows: Mr. Tommy Ray, Mr. George LeHew, Mrs. Glenn Marvin, Mrs. John Hamer, Mr. Louis DeLeuw and Mr. Russell Jensen.

The Existing Buildings

The twelve Districts are identified as follows:

Ada Township—Districts No. 1 and 3, Ada and Carl Schools. Cascade Township—Districts 2, 3, 4 and 6 fractional, Strong, Gove, Cascade and Thomas schools.

Grand Rapids Township—Districts 2, 5 fractional, 9, 10, 11, Collins, Martin, Knapp, Orchard View and Beckwith schools.

Paris Township—District No. 4, Murphy School.

Many of the small buildings (1 Room in most cases) were adequate until about the year 1945 following the close of the Second World War. At this time, the marked increase in the birth rate prevalent throughout the United States, began to be felt in these school districts. Also, there began to be a migration from the city to the rural areas where families desired to purchase large lots or small acreages and erect modern houses, mostly of the ranch type. Many of the schools soon outgrew their housing but some remained static or even declined as population shifted. However, the problem of providing satisfactory Secondary education became more serious everywhere. An ever increasing percentage of children wanted to attend high school. The following is a fairly accurate report of the changes which took place in each District:

Ada—At one time Ada considered seriously organizing a full 12-grade high school but abandoned it when it was observed that the increase, strong in many other districts did not occur and when it was realized that the wealth of the District was not great enough to support a high school. It was decided to maintain only a 9th grade school and pay tuition to other existing 12th grade schools. The building has 7 rooms, a gym and a lunch room.

Carl—This district constructed a one room addition in 1954 to take care of the increase.

Strong—Beginning with the fall of 1955, the building will be temporarily closed and the children transported to Ada school.

Cascade—Suddenly feeling the swell in enrollment, this district improved its buildings and successively built additions to ac-

comodate Elementary grades. Beginning with the fall of 1955, it will have a total of 9 classrooms.

Gove—The one room building was modernized as to heating and plumbing but no addition to the space was made.

Thomas—Located in a strictly farming area and not experiencing a noticeable increase, the District decided to close its building for 1955-56 and send its children to Cascade.

Collins—Having experienced a mild increase and wanting to improve its facilities, this district built a new 2 room building in 1955.

Martin—Because of a very marked increase in attendance with the prospects of indefinite growth the district built a modern 2-room building in 1951 and increased it to 6 rooms in 1954.

Knapp—In 1951 the old building was replaced by a steel structure having 3 rooms.

Orchard View—In 1951 this district built an addition to make a total of 4 classrooms and 1, all purpose room.

Beckwith—Having experienced almost phenomenal growth after 1945, this district first considered whether to divide the district with part annexing to Grand Rapids. This idea was given up and additions to the existing 4-room building were made in 1954 to reach a total of 8 rooms.

Murphy—Beginning to feel the pinch in 1954, Murphy abandoned its old building and built a new 2 room expandable building in the summer of 1955.

All of these buildings now being used can be said to be in satisfactory condition as to sanitation and general usefulness although the degree varies from fair to excellent.

The following schools continue to include in their enrollment the 7th and/or 8th grades. Ada, Carl, Cascade, Gove, Collins, Knapp and Beckwith. Ada extends through the 9th grade. Mention is made of this because if consolidation were affected and a high school built, these upper grades could immediately be taken out of these buildings and thereby relieve the pressure for a time, both as to numbers and type of program.

The prospects for growth are good in all schools except Thomas, at least for the present. Carl, Gove, Murphy and Strong have shown only mild growth but are located in such a manner as to expect continued growth if the present trend in the migration of city dwellers to rural and suburban areas persists. Ada, Collins, Orchard View, Martin, Cascade and Beckwith are likely to experience tremendous growth in the near future.

These 6 school districts could form the framework for consolidation into a high school district.

Socio-Economic Factors

While a large portion of this area was at one time given to farming, at the present time farming has declined to the point where it is not considered significant economically. It has been estimated by residents in the area that less than 13% of the people living there make their living by farming solely. About 70% earn their livelihood by working in industrial plants in and near Grand Rapids while about 17% are engaged in business and professions.

There are no large industries in the area and it has been predicted that there will be none for some time due to the rolling character of the land and due to the fact that industries, in recent years, seem to be locating definitely in that part of the County which lies south and west of Grand Rapids.

A visit to the community, noting every home, reveals the fact that a very high percentage of the people are comfortably situated. There exists almost no impoverished families but there are a great many middle class

families and a large number above middle class. There are many expensive ranch homes.

There are no large business or shopping centers but there are a number of small ones, Cascade and Ada being the oldest and largest. At various points groceries, garages and gasoline stations are to be found. The one post office in the area is located in Ada. Lumber, hardware, plumbing and heating equipment, appliances and drugs are sold in from one to three places each in the area. It is known that there are one or two doctors, a dentist, an attorney and several ministers. There is one Roman Catholic church and a few Protestant churches.

The population of the area encompassed by the 12 school districts is estimated to be about 10,000 persons from birth to old age. Once the educational program in the community is modernized and a high school is constructed, doubtless the number of new residents will markedly increase.

Government

The traditional township form of government prevails. The area included in this survey is situated in portions of four townships with the point common to all four located near the center and slightly west. All villages are unincorporated.

Roads

Three main highways pass through the area; namely, Michigan Highway 21, US Highway 16, and a bypass running east and west and one running north and south. US 131, M50, and M37 are routed over these. There are many excellent County and Township roads in the area, many miles of which are covered with blacktop.

Topography

Most of the area can be described as rolling with almost no large area that is flat and also, no extremely high hills. There are a few small lakes and several swamps. Two large rivers, the Thornapple coming from the south, and the Grand, passing by on the East side in a norwesterly direction, contribute greatly to the beauty and attractiveness of the area for the building of homes. An aerial map, taken in the summertime shows a very large portion of the area to be wooded. On the whole it may be described as picturesque.

Zoning

An examination of zoning laws of the four townships of which the surveyed area is a part, reveals the fact that restrictive zoning in the area with which this survey is concerned has not developed to a very definite stage. Maps of each township are available but these, too, testify that zoning is still very limited in scope thus far. It can accurately be said that, insofar as this area is concerned, at least 95% of it is considered residential by township ordinances. It must be realized that much of the land is divided into farmsteads and is not as yet platted for residential purposes. Full scale farming is carried on in very few sections of the territory. Part time farming is much more prevalent. Many of the owners of farm land are looking forward to platting them for sale to city people who want space and the open country side.

Future Land Use

All of the facts about the topography of the area, its present use, the trend toward residential development as opposed to commerce and industry, its proximity to a large metropolitan center, its availability in large lots or small acreages, and its desirability for comfortable living in modern times, make it possible to predict with confidence that within the next few years (if the present economic conditions continue) there will be a steady increase in the number of new homes built. Should there be constructed a modern high school building with all its prospects for meeting the cultural, social, and recreational needs of the adults as well as providing a satisfactory ed-

ucation for young people, this growth could accelerate greatly. (It will be noted that by the number of places where private builders have purchased large acreages and laid out streets, some even during the summer of 1955 as this survey is being made, that much new residential development is taking place).

The Need for a High School

Until recently, the school patrons of the area accepted the fact that their children would of necessity receive their high school education at one of the several "foreign" high schools outside the immediate area. Many children simply ceased their educational pursuits upon completion of the 8th grade or upon reaching the age of 16. However, with the ever-increasing emphasis on the need for high school education together with an increase in the number of families residing in the area, there has been a growing discontent with the lack of high school facilities nearby. There has been a growing dissatisfaction with the increasing cost of tuition and transportation, especially when it is realized that patrons exercised no legal control over the schools in which their boys and girls were being educated. There was, also, the feeling on the part of many that it is better to have a high school in which the cultural life of the community comes nearer to being perpetuated than it can be in high schools of far away communities in which the influence is noticeably different from the home community.

Distance has been a factor to reckon with. Not only was it true that boys and girls had to spend long periods of time on a not-too-comfortable school bus but it was true that parents found themselves having to drive, many miles at night to take their children to evening activities, sometimes making two trips—one to convey them to the activity and one to bring them home. The distance factor meant, also, that seldom did the parents of high school children take the trouble to attend parent meetings or other activities such as athletic contests, plays, concerts, etc., which might have been beneficial in many ways.

The census and enrollment figures show that there are already more than enough boys and girls of all age levels to justify a high school in the area. While as recent as the year 1945 there were but 1,186 children from birth to 19 years of age, living in the 12 districts studied, by May of 1955 there were 3,040—an increase of 156%. Breaking these figures down, we find that there are at present 1,004 pre-school age children, 1,175 elementary age children and about 800 of secondary age (grades 7 through 12).

If the present rate of growth continues through 1965, there will be 2,000 pre-school age children, 2,200 of elementary age and 1,300 of secondary age. At that time schools for 3,500 boys and girls from Kindergarten through the 12th grade will have to be provided in some way.

Possible Solutions

In its effort to provide a Secondary Education for the students in the given area, the following possibilities exist:

1. Continue as now so long as the "foreign" high schools will accept the pupils and so long as the "tuition" system is possible. (This plan is proving itself unsatisfactory to the people and its future continuance is definitely in doubt.)

2. Various sections of the area could join up with existing high school districts outside the area. (This does not appear practical since no existing school district having a high school has proposed that this be done. Furthermore, it is known that a majority of the patrons of this area do not want to annex with these districts and no overtures have been made to them to date.)

3. Certain districts of this area might consider consolidation

apart from the rest of the area and begin building a high school (This plan would mean that, present conditions, prevailing, only very inadequate buildings and curriculum would be possible. Also, the weaker districts would be left and their children stranded as to high school attendance. The new small high school might not be willing to accept them as tuition paying students, or if they did, the per capita cost would of necessity be so high as to make tuition very expensive.)

4. Consolidate the entire 12 districts and use the resulting combined valuation to provide for the total educational needs of all the children in the area (See recommendations.)

Financial Considerations

No governmental authority in Michigan has ever decreed how much taxable wealth is required for the building and operation of a high school but is well established that it takes considerable money to build and operate a high school which is to satisfy the demands of modern society.

It is an accepted fact that there are many communities in Michigan which cannot afford a high school but are, nevertheless, trying to do so, failing only because local tax valuation is insufficient. In deciding whether or not to recommend that a given community, which does not have a good high school but would like to have one, should build and operate a good high school calls for careful consideration of the financial factors involved.

The history of education in Michigan indicates that there has been a steady increase in the share of the financial burden for education being borne by the State as against local sources. However, there is no indication at present that the responsibility for providing education both on an elementary and a secondary level will be removed from the local taxing units. As a matter of fact, there are many who think the State has gone too far and that there should be a change in the proportion of responsibility, forcing the local units to bear a greater share. Hence, it is essential to make sure that the local potential is great enough to bear the load before undertaking a new enterprise such as is the underlying proposal before this study.

Taking the entire 12 districts into account, one finds that the total valuation of all of them as equalized by the State for taxing purpose in the year 1955, is \$12,441,076.00. It is a matter of record that there are a large number of communities in Michigan which have built and are maintaining and operating a complete education system from the Kindergarten through the 12th grade on valuations much less, some as low as \$5,000,000. However, the quality of their programs and the extent of their curriculum is of necessity inadequate.

In order to determine whether a high school can be built by these 12 districts, were they combined, it is necessary to take into consideration, not only their total valuation but also their present and probable future obligations. At 10% of the valuation, the bonding capacity of this combined area would be \$1,244,107. There is at present a total net debt in all of these districts of \$387,173. This would leave \$856,934 with which to build and equip a new high school and to make such additions, remodelings, etc., of the existing elementary buildings as are necessary. Of course, as the demand for elementary classrooms become necessary, the taxable wealth will increase also in the erection of new homes which are responsible for the increased enrollment. A new high school should be built to meet the present needs and in such a way as to be expanded with a minimum of cost to meet probable future needs. A good basic building could be built for \$480,000, including the cost of equipment.

(800 children, 25 to a classroom, would require 32 room. Classrooms can be constructed and equipped for \$15,000 each, making a total of \$480,000.) Proof of this can be found in "Costs and Trends of Current Buildings" by F. W. Dodge, noted architect. Available in the offices of architects. (A gymnasium would cost an additional \$75,000. Add \$50,000 for a site, architect fees, attorney fees, etc., and the total cost would reach about \$605,000 which is about \$200,000 less than the net present bonding capacity of the 12 districts.) Thus it is seen that it would be possible to provide a new high school in this area to accommodate 800 young people grades 7 through 12. (In the year 1954-55 a total of 520 were enrolled in grades 7-12 inclusive, in the local schools and the several secondary schools outside the area.) This building could be expanded if advisable. However, by that time it might be wiser to erect a Junior High building in the northeast or southeast part of the area or both. (See recommendations.)

Operation costs must be computed next. A budget for the operation of existing elementary schools plus the new high school would likely total \$275,000 next year, for example. This amount could be realized in State Aid, all sources, plus local tax revenue at 7 mills. It is important to point out however, that an enriched program somewhat beyond the minimum would require additional income from some source. It is conceivable, furthermore, that the per capita cost of education generally may rise in the next few years for various reasons, such as better pay for teachers, and thus make greater demand on local communities for operating revenues.

Conclusion

A. Reorganization Trends In Michigan.

The State of Michigan, like many other states, faces the problem of reorganizing its local school districts to provide equality of educational opportunity for rural as well as urban youth and to operate the instructional program efficiently and economically. It is impossible to maintain the vast number of primary districts that still exist only at great cost too much for efficiency.

Recognition of the need for structural reorganization is not new but was started in Michigan as early as the "Nineties" with the authorization of township districts (now made illegal in Michigan). Reconstruction of school districts during the first third of the twentieth century followed the theory of artificial consolidation with much emphasis upon the single central school in an artificial collection of old rural districts. In many of the States these consolidations during the booming "twenties" were based upon the assumption of the need for bringing all children to a central building without much consideration for the possibility of using reorganized one and two room buildings located at natural crossroad centers for limited age groups. Without adequate State direction or provision for financing consolidated building, these new central schools were built out of the proceeds of local loans and the debt spread upon a land area that could ill afford the additional burden. When the farmers discovered to their dismay that they were now supporting the equivalent of a second mortgage, they conceived a violent distaste for consolidation. The reactions to these high pressure artificial consolidations were discussed at length in Grange and Farm Bureau meetings and a gradual prejudice grew against the consolidation movement. Although condoned on the basis of improvement, many of these hasty consolidations were ill-advised and frequently of dubious value.

This concept has pretty well run its course and increasing emphasis is being placed on the COMMUNITY SCHOOL. Natural community districts of the future will undoubtedly require

a single central secondary school to secure a sufficiently large membership to make a diversified program economically feasible, but there is no reason to assume that all elementary school children should also be sent to a central building by long and expensive transportation. It is probable more nearly true that small, even one-room buildings will be maintained within these community areas to provide more easily and naturally for the education of small children close to their homes.

The weakness of the existing one room school is not that such schools cannot be conducted efficiently but rather that inflexible current district organization makes it impossible, except at great cost, to furnish the same quality of instruction that urban children receive. The creation of larger and more flexible community districts will make possible the planning of crossroads attendance centers with a sufficiently concentrated pupil-load to warrant a good teaching program.

B. The Community School.

Extended study by educationists, sociologists, and political scientists has been devoted to the reorganization and improvement of local school government since 1930. The current approach to the problem is interims of the function of the school district. Opinion is rapidly crystalizing that the objective in terms of local school administration is the creation of a socially coherent area in terms of sound interests.

The concept of the American public school as a cultural clearing house, and impartial, non-partisan, non-sectarian, and classless social agency, operative not only during the periods of childhood and youth but essential also during the period of maturity for the continued development, guidance, and retraining of the adult for individual and social efficiency, makes it doubly essential that the independent school districts grow out a natural area for social relationships. The public school should serve as a forum for the political as well as social education of the adult population, a neutral area where all problems affecting the interests, needs and desires of the people may be normally satisfied in freedom from the emotions of partisanship or other conflict producing interests.

This adult social function of the school district in American life, so vital and once so widespread, has slowly fallen into insignificance through neglect. One of the serious problems in the future of the nation is the recreation of discussion and educational centers where the individual may, in terms of natural interests, improve his self governing efficiency. The degree to which the United States can remain truly democratic against the terrific trend toward centralization in governmental activity is dependant upon the development of self-sufficiency and competency in the administration of local government. The school is one institution through which this problem may be possible of solution. The dominant future school district in Michigan will probably be the natural community which may be defined as a land area in which the urban, suburban, and rural inhabitants are mutually interdependant for the satisfaction of their normal wants.

While the basic factors determining the community unit are relatively constant, its size may be variable. School attendance areas within the community administrative district will also vary with density of population and topographical conditions.

The reorganization of the local school district into natural communities has definite and unescapable values. Strong social and economic interests already have been established in these areas. They offer a means for the gradual harmonization of the traditional suburban and rural conflicts and thus make for greater social unity through mutual understanding growing out of the inter-dependance of these individual interests. It is more easily possible for the schools to develop adult programs of edu-

cation around interests already established through social and economic relationships. These natural communities furnish the most logical means of securing actual equality of educational programs for the rural children and are sufficiently large to permit enriched instructional programs at a relatively low economic outlay.

In view of these considerations **the community organization should be developed around natural concentrations of population, social and other common interests, large enough to enable the local district to bear a proper share of the burden of current expense and to permit the development of an adequate program for child and adult educational, avocational and recreational needs.**

C. Recommendations for the Local Survey Area.

The area composed of the 12 districts (plus one or two more that are contiguous to them) compose a natural community having many common interests among which are social, economic, governmental, and cultural. While at first it may seem that the economic interests are not common to all, it will be observed on second thought that even this aspect of living is common to all in that nearly every family looks to the metropolitan city of Grand Rapids to provide employment. Good roads, the automobile, and telephone have made it easily possible—yes even desirable—for a group of families to reside in a suburban territory which may therein provide for almost every need except employment, this to be supplied in a place nearby set aside for it where industry, commerce, and business exist in abundance and are stable.

The area covered in this survey appears to be a good example of this sort of community. The only important essential to good living not found in the area is a secondary school building and program. This can be supplied easily because the resources are adequate.

It Is, Therefore, Recommended:

1. That all of the 12 districts merge into one district either by annexation or consolidation (using procedures found in Act No. 269 of the Public Acts of the 1955 Legislature, Michigan).

2. That this consolidation be made into a school district of the Third Class, if legally possible, to allow for a seven member board to insure a wide spread of interest in the problems of even the smallest local group.

3. That in the proposal to the people concerning this merger into one district, certain pledges be made which will give assurance of retaining all the good aspects of the present primary districts plus those of the new larger district and to insure efficient and democratic administration of the schools. These pledges should include at least the following:

a) That the neighborhood schools for the education of Elementary children from the Kindergarten through the 6th grade be retained wherever practical with whatever improvements can be affected.

b) That the Board members shall be elected in such a manner as to cause each part of the area to be represented insofar as this can be accomplished by common agreement, fairness and thoughtfulness.

c) That a committee of citizens of at least 30 persons representing every existing primary and graded district, as of now, and each attendance district after consolidation, be appointed by the Board of Education and in such a manner as to provide for a turnover about every three years.

This committee shall be advisory and its recommendations received by the Board for consideration, but in full knowledge of the fact that only a Board of Education, as legally constituted, may make decisions, set policies, and act for the people.

d) That the buildings of the district shall be made available to the public for social, educational, and recreational purposes

and that in planning any new buildings special thought shall be given to provisions for adult use insofar as financially practical.

e) That transportation of children within the district shall be carried on to the fullest extent for the safety and convenience of children insofar as State and local finances will permit.

f) That all regular Board meetings shall be open to the public and held in such a place and manner as to cause the patrons to feel welcome.

g) That the Board of Education provide written policies as to the objectives of the school, and the means of securing them and, further, as an aid to the employed personnel of the schools.

h) That the Board of Education shall each year adopt an operating budget showing how the funds are to be used and shall also indicate the total amount of revenue expected for each year and its sources.

i) That the Board of Education shall see to it that the financial records of the school are audited annually by a certified public accountant.

j) That teacher standards shall be high to insure the best education possible with the funds available.

4. That as soon as possible after the merger of districts is affected, a secondary school building be constructed as near the center of the newly formed district as practical.

5. That a site for the secondary school consist of a minimum of 40 acres and located where advantage can be taken of the rolling contour of the land for beauty and economy in construction.

6. That the new high school building be planned for a maximum of 800 to 1200 students for good administration and that as soon as the agreed maximum appears to be near to attainment that one or two junior high school buildings be built, one in the southeast part of the area and one in the northwest part of the area. That these latter two buildings be so constructed that they may readily be converted into senior high schools if and when necessary and that the central high school building be so planned that the 13th and 14th grades may be included when and if advisable.

7. That the present elementary buildings be operated to their full efficiency including, as soon as possible, only grades Kindergarten through 6. Once the districts have been consolidated into one, advantage should be taken of the flexibility of attendance areas, then possible.

8. That all buildings to be constructed shall be constructed within the limits of finances available at the time and according to the need, but each capable of being expanded without requiring major changes in its structure.

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