

Good Morning

WCCO

I wish to thank Radio Station ~~WCCO~~ <sup>KSTP</sup> for the opportunity which has been given me to speak about some of the factors involved in the present school teachers' strike in the City of Minneapolis.

*this* [ The people of this city have endured with patience and understanding the closing of their schools for almost three weeks. The situation is nothing short of tragic -- not only has the reputation of our city suffered because of this action, but the future of public education in this community is hanging in the balance. ] ~~The Board of Education,~~

~~which is elected by our people, and the union teachers who are on strike, have both been in the forefront of the battle for cleaning up our school~~

~~system. Yet today these two groups -- one public and one private -- are without a settlement.~~ ) I have repeatedly said that it is almost

unbelievable that a public body and a teachers' organization, both of which are pledged to the highest principles of education, should be unable to settle their difficulties. It is because of this belief in the desire of our School Board and our teachers for a better school system in Minneapolis that I have repeatedly appealed to them to negotiate their differences and to get on with the business of opening the schools.

[ Hundreds of letters have come to my desk asking me what is the Mayor doing in this situation. Not only have people in our own city called me and written to me, but a flood of letters has come from other parts of the state asking for an explanation of why this strike has not been settled. Frankly, some of them state in no uncertain terms that this is my responsibility.

It is not the purpose of this broadcast to evade responsibility. It is my purpose in these few moments to tell you the facts of the case. First of all, the Mayor of the City of Minneapolis does not have jurisdiction or authority over the schools. Our School Board is an independently elected body of officials, chosen by the people in regular elections. The School Board elects its own superintendent. ~~It has always been my judgment that the schools should be removed and separated from the normal politics of local government.~~ Public education is a community responsibility outlined under the terms of our state constitution and our city charter. The governing body of our schools -- the responsible officials -- are known as the Board of Public Education. There is no way that an outsider, such as a mayor, can compel a settlement. Yet I want it clearly understood that this problem has weighed heavily upon me, and that every effort has been made to secure a fair and just settlement of the differences and to get the schools open. I recognize that there are those who look for a scapegoat, and there are those who are misinformed. The purpose of this broadcast is to bring accurate information to those who may not have the facts. There is nothing that I can say that will in any way alter the opinions or attitudes of those who wish to make this school strike a political issue. I for one am not at all concerned about the politics involved. I am concerned, however, about the <sup>actions</sup> techniques of some people who would distort the issues and mislead the people by unfounded statements. > Read

I have read, for example, where certain CIO union officials have accused me as ~~Mayor~~ Mayor of this city, of prolonging this strike, selling out the teachers, and making this an issue for the proposed city charter. On the same day I read in one of our leading newspapers

an editorial which indicated that I had sided in with the teachers and was joining ranks with them in an effort to dominate the policies of the School Board. In other words, the attack comes from both sides. Well, here are the facts. ~~read~~

I start on the premise that the school strike must be settled.

I have urged upon both parties that their respective positions be altered, and that a fair and reasonable compromise be arrived at. I have stated to the School Board, and to the teachers, that the parents and the children of our city are not basically concerned as to the argument determining which party -- the School Board or the teachers -- ~~caused this deplorable situation.~~ <sup>are at fault</sup> As Mayor of this city I have worked unceasingly to ~~gain~~ <sup>gain</sup> a settlement. Before this strike was called, in conjunction with the Superintendent of Schools and the chairman of the teachers' negotiating committee, I attempted to promote a reconciliation. Every day and every night I have worked with the interested parties in the school strike, seeking answers and making proposals for ~~the~~ <sup>its</sup> solution ~~of the strike.~~ When negotiations have broken down, I have appealed to the School Board and the teachers to get back into their discussions. On several occasions I have met with the Superintendent and representatives of the teachers' negotiating committee to talk out their difficulties. Letters and telegrams have been sent to the responsible officials and to the leaders of the teachers. Every conceivable means at my command has been used to gain a settlement. But I repeat -- this is not a situation where an order can be given by the Mayor, and action will take place. As Mayor I cannot open the schools -- they are within the jurisdiction of the School Board. As Mayor I cannot order the teachers back to work -- they are free agents. My time and effort has been dedicated to seeking a compromise which would in no way jeopardize the ~~independent status~~ of

administrative authority & responsibility

the School Board and the Superintendent, and at the same time would bring the teachers back into the classrooms. Frankly, this strike can only be settled by a compromise. We can't operate schools without teachers, and we can't operate the schools in this city without the teachers who are now on strike. There is a teacher shortage not only here, but in all parts of the country. Likewise, there is an ever increasing demand for adjustments in the salary schedule elsewhere, as in Minneapolis.

Everyone seems to agree that entrance salaries for teachers in Minneapolis must be raised.—The Superintendent of Schools has made this recommendation—or we will be unable to recruit new teachers who will be needed. The School Board has rescinded its action on cutting or curtailing the school year. There is agreement on the part of the Board of Education that the full year's schedule will be re-established. There is agreement that entrance salaries will be elevated. The issue which prevents settlement is none other than one of adjustment in the salary schedule for all teachers, and not just the lower third group, or those who are entering the teaching service. No one denies that there needs to be some adjustment in salaries. The question is when should this adjustment be made. The teachers say that the adjustment must be made now — at least a token adjustment must be made now. The teachers say this because they have had approximately 18 years of sad experience concerning the cutting of teachers' salaries in the past. The Board of Education makes its answer on the basis that money is not now available — that is, current revenues are not available. For those persons out beyond the city limits of Minneapolis it should be clearly understood that our present city charter prohibits the raising of the tax rate for school purposes beyond 25 mills. Our schools in Minneapolis are being financed on the basis of 1930 standards in a period of 1948

high prices. This just isn't possible, and everyone knows it. Until we can adopt some new charter proposal for increasing the tax revenues ~~available~~ for school purposes, we have but one of two things to do -- either curtail our program of education, or borrow the money to keep the schools open.

To me it is literally unthinkable that a city as prosperous as Minneapolis should deny its young people the benefits of a full school year. The teachers look upon any shortening of the school year as a cut in their salary, and that is exactly what it would be. So the only immediate answer to guaranteeing a full year of education to our students and a full salary schedule to our teachers is the borrowing of money through municipal bonds. No one will deny that borrowing to pay current expenses is a bad financial practice. Yet because of charter limitations, we have been doing this for years to care for our relief clients and our dependent people. We have never paid ~~the costs~~ the costs of public assistance to the needy on a current revenue basis, and I have heard very few people complain about that. I state quite frankly that we better make up our mind to borrow for public education in this year of 1948, and to do it, recognizing that it is a bad practice and one that should compel us to meet the costs of education by increasing our revenues for school purposes. I stated to the School Board my feelings on this matter. I have stated that such borrowing should be at a basic minimum, and I have called upon the teachers to recognize their responsibilities to this community and to the educational system.

We have a new ~~tax~~ city charter which will be voted upon March 24. Some of the people who are today opposed to borrowing to keep our schools open are supporting that charter. Yet, even if the new charter

passes, we must borrow approximately \$2,000,000 for the balance of 1948. If the charter does not pass, we will still have to borrow the same amount of money if the school year is to be maintained. So, quite frankly, no principle is being sacrificed here, because the necessity of borrowing for 1948 school purposes is clear and unmistakable. There is no other way out, so why kid ourselves.

~~All of this has been stated repeatedly to the members of the School Board and the teachers who are on strike. I have said that what we need is a sense of fair play. I have stated that the issues involved in this dispute can and must be resolved. I have called upon the Board of Education and the negotiating committee of the teachers to enter into a spirit of compromise. I have reason to believe that that spirit now prevails. I am convinced that this weekend will see the settlement of our present difficulties. I am given to understand that our Superintendent of Schools, Mr. Goslin, and the teachers will meet tomorrow, Saturday, and that both parties are prepared to negotiate a settlement which will reopen the schools.~~

Out of every tragedy it is possible to find sources of strength and elements of good. The people of this city have either been misinformed as to the needs of our school system, or they have been indifferent to the requirements of public education. Our population is growing. The number of children and young people in our schools is increasing every year. The costs of maintenance of school buildings, of supplies for school purposes, the salaries for teachers and other employees, have increased. These increased costs are evident in any man's business, and in any person's home. I ask a plain and simple question — can you as an individual operate your business — can you as a housewife maintain your home on the amount of income which you had available in 1938 or 1940?

Frankly, the school system of Minneapolis has been getting along on just such a basis. School costs have gone up much more rapidly than school revenue. It is high time that the people of this city recognize that Minneapolis cannot afford the waste and the extravagance of failing to support its institutions of public education. Our school buildings need repair -- the lighting is terrible -- the walls need painting -- many of the sanitation facilities are in state of disrepair and in need of replacement. Modern equipment is needed. More teachers are needed. All of this requires money, and all of it is of the utmost importance to our city. If there is anyone to blame for the present situation, I think it can be honestly said that we are all at fault. Surely we need more state aid. All cities need that. The National Education Association points out the necessity for federal aid to education, but let's not put our problems in other peoples' laps. The fundamental answer to the needs of public ~~educ~~ education in Minneapolis rests with the people of Minneapolis. You can scold the teachers -- you can blame the Superintendent -- you can condemn the Mayor of this city -- but when it's all said and done, the teachers, the Superintendent of Schools, the School Board, and the Mayor have repeatedly pointed out to this community that public education in Minneapolis ~~xxx~~ is starving to death for lack of proper nourishment, which is just another term for lack of adequate revenue. If we want good teachers, trained and skilled in their work -- if we want modern education for our children -- then we must pay the bill. I see enough money wasted in this city for what some people call ~~xxxx~~ entertainment and pleasure to finance these schools again and again. Any community which can pack the auditorium night after night for prize fights and wrestling matches, and can fill the baseball park to overflowing, and the hockey arena to capacity -- any community

which can support 200 liquor establishments and a host of night clubs -- any community which has a backlog of thousands of orders for new ~~automobiles for~~ automobiles -- is a community which can afford to pay the costs of public education.

The only kind of politics which should be injected into this present school crisis is the politics of shame that it should ever have happened. I trust that each and every one of us will resolve that this shall not happen again. I trust that we will recognize that the strike

which was called on February 24, and the action of the School Board *shortening the school term which gave cause for calling* which precipitated that strike -- namely the ~~shortening of the school schedule or school term~~ -- was the end product, the net result of our ~~fat~~ failure to meet the needs of public education over the past generation.

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