

standards of the supervisors writing the reports vary; different types of faculties and students have influence on the sort of record that may be obtained by an applicant in a given school situation. Considering all the variables, the investigator is moved to suggest that a more reliable appraisal would involve a visit by the same rating committee to each candidate on his job, so that the variable factors might be observed and duly considered.

Exemptions from Selection Process

In all but two of the cities where clearly defined procedures are utilized in the selection of elementary school principals, no individual is exempt from any part of the selection process. However, it should be pointed out that ten of the 31 cities in this study report that there are no clearly defined examination procedures.

Listing of Successful Applicants

An eligible list of successful applicants is promulgated in about 55 percent of the cities in this study. In these cities, appointments are made in some relation to placement on the list. Different weighting schemes are used in various cities for arriving at an over-all rating for each applicant. In the remaining 45 percent of the cities, appointments are made either with no formal selection procedure, or from a pool of candidates declared to be meritorious for the position.

It seemed to this investigator that the advantages of a clearly defined policy of appointment based upon a promulgated list outweigh the disadvantages. A particularly significant advantage lies in the reduction of outside pressures for the selection of a favored individual. In cities where lists are promulgated, the life of the list generally extends from three to eight years.

A Teacher's Personal Experience

I Mauled a Pupil

By Romeo P. Canias

WHEN I entered the service in 1950, I was cognizant of the standing injunction against corporal punishment in our public schools. Yet there arose an occasion when, in a fit of temper, I threw this particular ruling overboard and allowed myself to be carried away by my emotions. That the act,

Appeals

An appeal against an adverse judgment is permitted in approximately 65 percent of the cities in this study. The procedure and reviewing authorities differ from city to city. In one city, a procedure was devised, after discussion with representatives of teachers' organizations, whereby there would be a review by an independent committee under the auspices of the original examining body.

Probationary Period

In about 60 percent of the cities, a probationary period is required on the grounds that the selection process is not without possibility of error and the position is of such importance as to warrant the probationary experience. A three-year period is required in most cities that have probationary period.

For Better Leadership

The role of the principal is undeniably great in determining the success of a modern elementary school program. Unless the possibilities of this position are intelligently utilized, a school system can make only limited progress in the development of its elementary education. Thus, the careful selection of an elementary school principal is fundamental to the effective functioning of the school program.

The results of this study reveal a wide variance of approach to the selection of elementary school principals in the large cities of this country. Thru an awareness of the technics that are being used in other cities, public school administrators can improve their own methods of choosing supervisory personnel. Such a development should serve to strengthen both elementary education and the elementary principalship.

per se, was inadvisable need not be debated. Under the circumstances in which it occurred, however, I wonder if someone in my stead could have done otherwise.

It happened sometime at the start of the school year in 1951. The preceding long vacation has trans-

formed our school playground into a virtual wilderness of grass, talahib, and prickly touch-me-nots. To make it fit once more for playing, I employed the boys in the Physical Education class under me to clear the field. The class was, for this purpose, organized into groups, each allotted a portion of the field to work on. Leaving the group leaders to take charge, I busied myself working on papers in my room.

I was yet to learn of the unsoundness of leaving a group of irresponsible youth at work wholly unsupervised. While the practice may inculcate in children the attitude of responsibility, it has its concomitant hazards, as this particular case proved. Nothing was accomplished in that half hour period spent for clearing up the field. A couple of boys, not heeding the protestations of their companions, decided to "escape," a term which has come to mean leaving the class, especially to evade work. A few others followed suit, starting a chain reaction among the rest. No one saw any reason in working while the others were enjoying their leisure.

Smarting from the flop, I set my self to correct matters, determined to obviate its repetition. I convened the boys in my room the following afternoon, eager to give the culprits a dressing down. The class turned into a gripe session. Those accused sought justice by implicating everybody else involved.

I decided to penalize the culprits, namely the "escapees" (I felt that they were mainly responsible for the situation), by giving them "special assignments." The trouble would have been settled to everyone's satisfaction had not someone called my attention to another boy who was apparently overlooked.

"Rudy,* too, sir," he said.

Rudy remonstrated, claiming he stayed at school like the rest.

"No, sir," a number of boys chorused. "He went home as soon as the others turned their backs."

Rudy stood and belligerently faced the informers. He was a relatively big boy, and was conscious of the advantages of his size. He did not even attempt to conceal the threat from me. "You'll see as soon as we leave the school premises," he spoke in the dialect.

I resented his attitude. "Nobody's going to threaten anybody here," I said. "Not while I'm around. Understand?"

Rudy eyed me sullenly. "Why should they tell on me?"

"Why shouldn't they? You escaped, didn't you?"

"No, sir."

I faced the class questioningly. I picked out a boy who I knew I could rely on for truthfulness. "Yes, sir," he answered meekly, "he escaped."

A barrage of inventives and direct threats issued forth from the direction of Rudy.

"What's the matter with you?" I was conscious of the raised pitch in my voice.

The boy did not answer. He appeared sullen and rebellious, a chip on his shoulder.

I wanted to reassure the complainants. So I threw a warning at Rudy: "Don't try carrying out any of your threats."

"They'll see. After this class."

I felt my temper rise suddenly. "By gosh!" I exclaimed. "Don't you have any respect for me? I could sock you."

The boy reacted violently. "Just try it," he exclaimed back. "Try it."

I grabbed him by the collar and forced him to his feet. "What did you say?" I said. "Say that again."

"You're a teacher. You cannot hit me."

Was he referring to the prohibition against corporal punishment? Or was he simply trying to point out the disparity between our positions, aware that he could not possibly hit back?

To hell with regulations, I thought. I slapped the boy. He backed away, crying, "My father should hear of this. Watch out, you teacher."

That reference to his father, known for his bullying attitude (which the boy no doubt inherited) only served to heighten my anger. I reached for his hair and banged his head against the wall.

"Now tell your father," I shouted, releasing him.

He ambled out of the room, muttering, "I'll report this to my father. Mark my word."

"Go ahead," I shouted, checking the desire to go after him again. I dismissed the class.

Fortunately that period was the last in the afternoon. The other classes have already been dismissed. The incident did not immediately come to the attention of my fellow teachers. If they did hear about it, they must have chosen to keep mum about it.

I tarried in my room, physically and mentally enervated. I took stock of the situation, anticipated the consequences of my act. What if the boy carried out his threat? I did not relish the thought of being accosted and challenged by his father. And what if the matter was brought to the attention of the school authorities?

I fell to rationalizing my actuations. I tried to invoke the principle of *loco parentis*—I did only what a father would have done under similar circumstances; I had to teach him a lesson on respect. Nevertheless, I did not find those arguments convincing. They seemed inadequate to make up for the tremendous

* The name used here is fictitious, for obvious reasons.

damage I have done to the boy's personality. The mauling, public as it was, could adversely affect his social attitudes. It could make him hate school forever. I tried to console myself, saying that it served him right for his arrogance. Anyhow, what has been done could not be undone.

I braced myself to face the music.

The day following, I found myself unable to keep my mind on the class activities. I expected the boy's parent to appear anytime. When the school janitor hurried inside to make me read a note, I thought at first that it was a call to the principal's office. But the school hours passed and ended uneventfully. When the class was finally dismissed, I breathed a sigh of relief. I was inclined to forget the incident, when a figure suddenly appeared at the doorway. My nerves jumped. I looked in the direction of the door and instantly recognized the visitor as Rudy's elder brother. His greeting was a little too cordial, I thought. I invited him in, trying to appear casual, in spite of myself.

"My father sent me," the visitor said, "on account of what happened, affecting Rudy."

Now this is it, I thought, preparing for the worst.

"We would like to apologize for Rudy's behavior," he added. "If he commits an offense again, please don't hesitate to 'discipline' him." There was sincerity in his voice.

This abrupt reversal of events was against my wildest expectations. I felt the tension that has gripped me since morning beginning to wear off. We

conversed cordially for a while. Finally he asked to leave.

"Please take my apologies, too, to your father," I called after him. "And tell Rudy to come to school tomorrow."

Rudy came the next day. He was obviously still under the effects of that unfortunate incident. He avoided my eyes, and was silent almost all the time. But the chip was off his shoulders.

I tackled the job of rehabilitating the boy. I owed it to myself, to the boy, and to the profession, to regain his confidence. I did not wish, however, to appear apologetic. I considered that unethical. I decided to approach the matter from another angle. I reorganized the groups and managed to have Rudy elected a group leader. In the ensuing days, we held brief sessions in the room to hear reports on absences, pupil behavior, and others. I granted the leaders the privilege of rating individual group members on the basis of their contribution to the group's work. The responsibility began to take effect on Rudy. Soon he was again talking to me. Slowly but surely, the wall of antagonism and insolence about him broke down, giving way to a new personality—that of an active, energetic leader, willing to assume responsibilities.

Nowadays, when I chance to think of that mauling incident, I cannot help wondering at the quirks that life allows to happen. Corporal punishment may be inadvisable, but it did not prove so in this particular case. It even, I might say, helped straighten out things. Yet I would not advise corporal punishment. Time may not be so benevolent as it was in that case.

The Past Is Prologue¹

By William G. Carr^{*}

ALL this week we have paid homage to the achievements of a hundred years. Now, in this closing session, let us turn our thoughts to the future. What is past is prologue.

To look back is relatively easy. There is safety in the visible record of history. But prophesy is risky. Indeed, the late Christopher Morley remarked that the prophets were twice stoned, — once in anger; then by means of handsome granite slabs in the graveyard.

¹Closing address; NEA Centennial Convention, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, U.S.A., July 5, 1957.

^{*} Executive Secretary, National Education Association

How far ahead shall we look tonight? A century? That is a good round figure. The only trouble is that after such an interval none of us will be on hand to offer or to endure reproach for the inaccuracies of our forecasts. Besides, in today's fast-changing world, to look ahead a hundred years is an exercise more of fancy than of reason. Let us then be content with a shorter view, — say twenty years. This is long enough to give us perspective and short enough to allow most of us (with good fortune) to be on hand for the check-up.

What kind of a world will the 120th annual Delegate Assembly of the NEA encounter? In 1857 the