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# A Conscientious Principal Learning His Way in Administration

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# A CONSCIENTIOUS PRINCIPAL LEARNING HIS WAY IN ADMINISTRATION

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**Ernest L. Muzzall**

**FOR THE GRADUATE FACULTY**

# FOREWORD

This paper is not a conventional research paper. The case history approach to the study of administration in education is a way of learning by experience. The writer's twelve years of teaching in the Seattle Schools may give a ring of authenticity to the account; but no verification of specific facts, incidents, or people is intended.

My gratitude is extended to Dr. Muzzall who guided me in this study; to Dr. Clifford Erickson who served on the committee; and to Dr. Bullard who helped me express myself.

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION TO THE CASE HISTORY

This is a fictitious case study. It represents only a part of a total situation, for Roanoke School is but one segment of The Big City school system.

The incidents herein related, lifted out of their milieu, were chosen to illustrate certain administrative concepts. Many day-by-day issues were resolved amicably, diplomatically, democratically, even admirably.

Louis Brando is a composite of administrators, typical of the present-day, young, energetic type coming to be in charge of public schools. The two large situations in which he is involved will be (1) establishing himself with a school and its staff and (2) his activities during a school levy campaign.

Emphasis in this account of two of the many facets of the administrator's work will be on the human relations factor in human situations and events.

> School life, in reality, is a large network of interpersonal relationships threading back and forth between and among everybody in and about the school, and extending out to the homes and the community. If this intricate web of relationships

> is woven into patterns of trust, confidence, respect, fair play, and a spirit of mutual helpfulness, children enjoy their school life. It is a good climate for teaching and learning (1:105).

No controversy on curriculum or closely related instructional problems developed. Most of these first year situations concerned habits and procedures whose effects on the educational processes might be debated. If there were changes in teaching, classroom methods, and matters relating to the teacher's techniques with children, these were taken up with the individual concerned; the group was not made aware of them. Several of the teachers were receiving special supervisory attention from Mr. Brando. There was no appreciable dissatisfaction with teacher load or with responsibilities in connection with the instructional program on the part of the teachers.

> Load is, in the eyes of teachers, to a large extent a function of the satisfaction one derives from teaching. Where morale is high, responsibilities do not seem onerous (5:423).

These are some of the questions we might bear in mind regarding Mr. Brando's administrative relationships with his teachers.

1. Are the teachers in some way responsible for the type of leadership that develops?

2. What evidence of good rapport or lack of it are seen? Do signs of incomplete accord mean a failure of the group to

collaborate in common goals?

3. Are there signs that too great security or unthinking or apathetic satisfaction with the way things were under the previous administration may have hampered change?

4. Is it an ability of a leader to use the informal structure in an organization so that some matters that need correction do not become matters of official record?

5. Was the approach used and the emphasis given on instructional problems appropriate to the conditions?

The 60-40 Law. This statute, such a hurdle for the school district's special levy in this account, was enacted by the state's legislature in the thirties as a guard by the economy-minded folk of the depression years. It became a Constitutional Amendment in 1944. It represents an extremely cautious attitude toward public school financing. In essence it limits school bond and levy elections by prescribing:

1. The measure must have a sixty per cent majority vote to pass.

2. The number of votes cast must be forty per cent of the last general election.

3. The levy can be for only one year's duration.

4. The voters can be asked only twice in a year (3:215-216).

Efforts are being made to allow the terms to be more liberal, extending the provisions of the levy up to a four-year period at the option of the local district.

# CHAPTER II

## BACKGROUND FOR THE CASE STUDY

### I. CITY AND DISTRICT

The Big City is large, growing larger, and it is progressive. It has not always been so. The post-war doldrums found it run down in every way, and, as its one basic industry was defense, the future had not been bright. That was more than fifteen years ago. The opposite is true now. The glisten of new buildings is seen and the construction of more is heard on every side, giving assurance of a bright future. For many miles in three directions are the homes of the suburbanites, most of whom find their livelihood in The Big City. And in the west, harbor activity shows that the city's assets are diverse and prosperous.

Some of the schools still used in The Big City were built before 1890. In the outlying townships these buildings might have been condemned and replaced with the help of generous state matching funds, especially in some places where rapid growth had qualified districts for emergency appropriations (3:146). None of the several large city districts in this state were eligible for this kind of aid. It is a source of some contention among rural and urban habitants that the tax money is not spent where it is largely collected. But equalization is effective

here, and the cities are left more to their own resources.

These resources are not inconsiderable, and where some communities are taxing themselves over the 40-mill obligation by another 20 mills and more, The Big City School District manages on three, four, six, and seven mill levies. Also, in years past, it floated huge twenty-five million dollar bond issues for buildings. Not without difficulty.

The outlines of the district and the city limits are one, which makes the district one of the largest in the country. It is a tremendous enterprise, with over 4000 certified personnel: the second largest payroll in the city. Its school population is more than that of the whole citizenry of any other town in the state, excepting three.

The former administration had a reputation for conservatism which still taints the present one. There was also a rigidly supervised staff back in the thirties and part of the forties. Though no longer a policy, its effects linger on to frighten new teachers away from The Big City.

Competition for the teacher market is further complicated because there are the "desirable" and "undesirable" parts of the city. Since a new teacher often starts out in a school with a large turnover rate, the chances of beginning in one of the less favorable districts are

good. In fact, these teachers may sign a contract in May and not receive their school assignment until August. This element of uncertainty is enough to make up the new teacher's mind. She signs with a lovely outlying residential community, to be in their newly finished school, to have the grade she has prepared to teach, and to have a name plate on her desk.

Despite these competitive handicaps, the leadership of the new superintendent is helping The Big City play a leading role in many ways. There is certainly opportunity for initiative and independence by its teachers, in varying degrees, depending upon the immediate administrator, but encouraged by district policy. The placement policy for teachers of several races who teach in this cosmopolitan city is very forward looking. Colored and Asiatic Americans teach in all-Caucasian schools, and vice versa. Besides this freedom, there is great opportunity for participation, and a largely favorable rapport with the citizens aimed toward increasing the school libraries, increasing school services, enriching the reading program, enlarging able learner horizons, and in other ways providing the training Big City people want. All this while new facilities are being provided and the old updated, lagging behind only a few years from current needs. Many signs show that this is an eager, youthful, growing district.

## II. BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

In his native California town of San Bruno, Louis Brando had been raised and educated without any of the advantages regarded today as necessities in The Big City. Beans were often the main dish. Shoes were worn only a part of the year. Provincial? Yes. He had never been out of the county until the government made a sailor out of him and sent him across the seas in World War II.

During his stateside training he had first in his young and not eventful life forcefully encountered the idea that his dark skin set him apart. This was when he was asked to leave a restaurant near the Naval Training Station in Virginia. It was not that his ideas of equality were offended. He had always regarded himself as a Spanish-American, of whom there were plenty at home. They had farmed land there before the Yanqui gringos had arrived a hundred years ago. Negroes were a race apart, about whom he had hardly thought, as there had been none of them at home. After this and other episodes, he became more cautious. He also stayed out of the sun as much as possible. His richly pigmented skin would darken further by exposure.

His ambition, before the war, had been to work in the vineyards as had many of his family and neighbors. That was really not much of an ambition, he decided after seeing part of the world.

The greater scope of his ideas was aided by the G. I. Bill. After the war he completed college training (6:63). He had begun rather aimlessly in Business Administration and switched to Teacher Training because of Grace Snider, who had become his wife in their junior year. They had both come to The Big City to teach in 1952.

He was a good teacher. In 1957 he became a vice-principal in an elementary school of 1200. It was a big job for a beginner, but he did it well. In 1958 he was made principal of Learned Hand Elementary. Louis Brando became the new principal of Roanoke Elementary School just after Christmas, 1960, taking the place of a Mr. Housman who had moved on to a larger school.

This kind of assignment, while an administrative promotion, is not always an improvement. For Louis Brando it was. His two years just completed was in one of the city's oldest schools, located in a deteriorated neighborhood, only partly residential, where delinquency was high and income low.

Ten years ago he could not have dreamed of such an exalted position. Number one in a school of his own. A school of six hundred fifty enrollment. His mother was proud when she heard. His brothers were, too, and a little envious.

Quite bitter were some of the men who "also ran" during this time and had been passed over, but most of these rivalries were unspoken

and to be expected. There were many worries involving people if one wanted to anticipate or dwell on them. Louis Brando, principal, only thirty-two, had an ulcer to show that such considerations did not show on him, only in him. The promotional procedure was the district's, not his. By the year following, in response to an undercurrent of dissatisfaction, a step-by-step procedure had crystalized. Qualifications were in black and white. In the meanwhile some good men had gone to other places.

## III. BECOMING AN INSIDER

He knew it was not going to be an easy task to replace the man who had been with Roanoke School since its very beginning in 1953. Mr. Houseman, then a vice-principal of six portables, had seen his little country school amidst a pastoral setting become, two years later, a modern low-slung, shiny, city school with landscaping and an overflow of enrollment to fill up its own progeny of portables. Such was the background. In the foreground, Louis Brando wondered what reception parents and staff would make.

He was determined not to rock the boat. The staff, the custodian, the cook and kitchen help, much as they will miss their accustomed leader, are consolable. In their own discussions they are

pretty much agreed that the new principal will not make any drastic changes, for everything is and had been proceeding pretty smoothly. Any change and accompanying turmoil would only reflect upon the new principal. Recognizing this, too, Mr. Brando resolves to follow as nearly as possible in the footsteps of his mentor.

They all are disconcerted. It is difficult when first introduced not to betray some surprise. Later on it was possible to be a little funny and say about his nationality that he must be a Scotsman the way he doles out supplies. For now it will take some getting used to. Everyone is courteous. Everyone goes on with their jobs as always.

Is it a test? One of the first duties of the new position turns out to be on discipline, a case Mrs. Hurd refers to him. She teaches Grade Five and always sets a strict standard that even the teachers do not all quite measure up to. The boy she has in hand has just been insolent to her on the playground. She has the noon duty this week, which does little for her disposition. Mr. Brando quizzes the boy as Mrs. Hurd observes. He reinforces what Mrs. Hurd had already presented pretty strongly, and in the process, satisfies her dignity. By this time in his career he had formulated a concept about boys. They do not easily fit into the pattern set for them by society or the schools. He could not always apply this understanding, even to his own

sons, who are four and six. "This boy," he thinks, "is either brave or foolhardy." To Mrs. Hurd he says, "I'll have this young man sit in the office for a while." She accepts it and returns to her patrol.

Experience has taught him that most teachers think the reflection is on themselves if they cannot handle their own discipline. "Perhaps not Mrs. Hurd. Problems do arise which seem to call for some outside, objective authority . . . some authority more omniscient, more absolute, and more majestic for impressionable young minds. Who is to say that some of the teachers themselves are not a little impressed and feel that the principal is more able to cope with some of the situations that have tried all their skills and found them wanting? At any rate, it must be comforting to have someone to turn to, someone who has confidence--a contagious quality--and it is part of the man's job to handle these problems. This rationalization might be the teacher's or the principal's," he thought.

"If I prove myself on this score to the satisfaction of the teachers, business may increase. I wonder. If my job is educating the young, am I going to concentrate on this particular aspect of it? Some I know do, however unwillingly or unwittingly, and they must find end-of-school reminiscence not marked by a sense of achievement. The children's faces they know best must be acquaintances made under adverse circumstances." He excused the subdued little boy to go to

his room. "Well," he said, half to himself, "we'll have to prevent that from happening here."

Days and weeks have passed since Christmas. Mr. Brando believes things are coming along. These teachers are showing a most satisfying self-reliance. He does not find himself swamped with discipline cases. He makes it a point to say several times at staff meetings, and often at coffee time, that he is glad to help in this area, and that he will contact parents whenever necessary to refresh children laggard in their studies or to brush up those who are fuzzy on school rules. He does not hesitate to talk with parents on any school matters, for he feels firmly based on matters pertaining to the school and education generally. This earns him considerable respect from his teachers and the parents. They are impressed that his motives are always sincerely "For the good of the child." Even when they do not agree with his decisions, they accept them more easily.

Mr. Houseman did not require faculty meetings with any regularity. This is one of the changes first effected by Louis Brando. It is not initially well received. He has the authority of the teachers' handbook which stipulates that "Staff meetings will be held every other Wednesday for purposes of business and communication." Furthermore, he states these meetings are important and does not go far out of his way to make this decision palatable to the teachers. In this and several

decisions to follow, he makes such explanation as he deems necessary, but he does not encourage discussion. "These are not matters open for group decisions" (5:411).

The resentment of a few individuals is apparently short-lived. However, their reaction surprises him. The teachers at Learned Hand were mostly two groups: a minority of new young teachers and a majority of teachers who had been in the school upwards of fifteen years. The old ones were well indoctrinated from years past. The new ones followed the rules. These Roanoke teachers were more of a middle group both in age and experience. In fact, a third of them were somewhat older than he, and with as much experience or more. They tend to kick over the traces. This would take some getting used to.

## IV. TEACHERS' LUNCHROOM CONTROVERSY

Where it concerns their own affairs, he tries to give them free rein. At the same time, Mr. Brando considers it his duty to point out to teachers any situations deleterious to school relationships. They do not notably demonstrate their ability to cope with their own problems in the Teachers' Lunchroom Incident. Some teachers eat in the lounge where smoking is also permitted. Not all have an appetite for smoke with their food. Some are sensitive about spills and

carelessness that is soiling the furniture and giving the lounge a slovenly appearance. He detects that some feel uncomfortable and unwelcome here because a few upper grade teachers are possessive about certain pieces of the furniture and prefer particular places. This was the state of affairs, a divisive situation, that had aggravated some individuals but had not before been brought to the group attention. Mr. Brando takes it on himself to remedy this.

The Wednesday afternoon staff meeting is the place to decide for themselves where they all should eat. They will establish what kind of lounge and lunchroom they want. After the business of the meeting is through, the problem is posed for them. He is taken aback by what happens. Squabbling breaks out in several quarters. The pent-up feelings of Mrs. Hurd and Mrs. Johnson seem waiting for a break like this. Mrs. Hurd feels that the obscene talk as well as the other conditions in the lounge make it an unfit place for a decent person. Mrs. Johnson says she will give up eating if need be. "I gave up smoking to avoid ash-tray cleaning controversy before I transferred to this school," she asserts. Some of the statements contain surprising rancor. At the end of the meeting a vote is taken indicating that the majority want no meals eaten in the lounge room. After several days this issue is still not settled to judge by remarks among the faculty. All teachers except Mrs. Johnson are eating together when scheduling

and duties permit.

The lounge takes on the appearance of being better cared for, but there remains some grumbling about clean-up, though the teachers themselves arrange responsibility. Mrs. Brando often sends cookies, and other teachers voluntarily bring their baking results for the morning break. Mrs. Turnbull does flower arrangements and in other ways makes the atmosphere pleasing. The efforts of the majority do not make the room completely acceptable to all, but it does not become important enough to be a group topic again the remainder of the year.

"The main purpose of the school and everything about it is to educate the young," is an expression Mr. Brando is fond of saying aloud. He also believes it. "It is at times difficult to understand the educational value of some of the established practices which now and again come to my attention," he declares after some deliberation. The sale of ice cream in the lunchroom, for instance.

He thinks of a dozen good reasons for not selling ice cream. The only one for selling ice cream is that the children want it. "If we are to operate our school on the basis of what the children want we couldn't keep school," he tells Mrs. Groznik, lunchroom matron. After that, a notice goes home explaining that because the children lose their money, the lunchroom is already crowded, and the dental hygiene

of the pupils is endangered, ice cream will no longer be sold separately from hot lunches starting next week. This plan had been informally talked over with the teachers and has met with some support. "Papers and sticks on the playground. Ice cream on clothing and on the floor. Yes. It is a bother." Some teachers feel that way. Mrs. Groznik is not convinced. She and her aides think on this state of affairs many days.

The children have questions about it. They ask their teachers. It is probable that Miss Wilson answers her children's "Whys" with: "Because Mr. Brando thinks it is best." She doesn't think classtime should be used to discuss such details. She hates interruptions of any kind. Non-essential papers to go home, which is practically all of them in her view, are an abomination about which she will declaim at the least provocation.

## V. LEFT OUT IN THE RAIN

There are many children in the music program. Miss Thompson conducts orchestra at this school once a week. Also the glee club, mostly girls, meets with Mrs. Stone twice weekly in the auditorium. The pupils who arrive early wait outside, even on rainy days, until their teacher arrives. Experience shows that it is not possible for them to wait inside with any order or observance of safety

unless they are supervised. Formerly, Mr. Houseman had kept watch, but Mr. Brando had perceived soon after his arrival that a laxness existed in this area. Unsupervised children in the classroom, at noon or at recesses, is a practice to which Mr. Brando objects, stating in a February meeting that the teacher is legally responsible. "I cannot defend the teacher who permits this to occur." He states this again in the regular bulletin to the teachers. The bulletin is a holdover from the days of Mr. Houseman. Having these matters in print is a good thing in his opinion.

"But what if the teacher is out of the room on necessary business and there is an accident?" He answers with the statement that if the children are instructed to remain in their places and understand that the teacher will be out for a few minutes, then any injury would have to be as a result of play or not following the rules. This absolves the teacher, in Mr. Brando's view. He calls later and confirms this with his superintendent.

Other children also arrive early for patrol duties. Now and then for other special reasons. There is also a group of non-authorized early arrivals who are conveniently deposited by a parent on the way to work at eight in the morning. These are not, somehow, the most scholarly of the pupils. Boys comprise the bulk of this group, and their eagerness to stand in the rain and cold of the most inclement weather is

not very sensible. It is one of those things that develop unless checked. Mr. Brando calls this to the attention of the teachers, most of whom agree that it should be discouraged, although one says that it had never been any particular problem, except perhaps in the spring. Several teachers express nothing on the subject.

The teachers are instructed to campaign against children coming to school before 8:30. The principal will start the next Monday to bring early arrivals into the office and to call their parents about it, which he soon has to do, despite the bulletin home that carried advance information about this policy.

Mr. Brando has several telephone conversations with parents the next Monday. He clears up the point with a few more on Tuesday. By Thursday he does not have to bring any boys to the office or call home about early arrivals. If there are some special cases, they will be allowed for; but since it turns out there are none compelling enough to warrant arrival at 8:00 a.m., the problem is settled. It has to be settled twice again before the school year ends. The fact that no playground supervision is provided before 8:30 helps the enforcement of this decision, but children whose parents are gone at that time of day gravitate toward the playground in search of their companions, observing the letter of the rule by grouping at the entrance to the playground but not actually on it. There is a tendency to overlook this by

the administration as winter becomes spring and other problems come to the fore.

## VI. TEMPEST ABOUT COFFEE CUPS

The first inkling of the difficulty, as he looked back on it, was when Mrs. Groznik had asked in her very determined way if she might talk to him. "After speaking with my superior at the main office, it seems," she said, "that the kitchen force can no longer wash the teachers' morning coffee dishes." Mrs. Groznik, a business-like and efficient manager of the school kitchen, with her two helpers turns out upwards of 250 pupil lunches that are as appetizing and pleasingly prepared as they can be made and still follow the well-balanced plan that issues from the dietician's desk.

"Perhaps there is a way this can be continued as it has in the past," he answers with deliberation. "Perhaps we can make some kind of arrangement." Though he is reluctant to use more student help, the thought enters briefly (5:368).

"The point is," says Mrs. Groznik, coming right to it, "that our time allotment, as you know, is based on the number of lunches we sell. As it now stands we are not getting as much time as we were." She blames the loss of ice cream sales for this. "We are very pressed to do what must be done on payroll time," she continues. "In fact, each

of us has been putting in more time than is allowable, and for that we are not paid. We simply do not have the time any longer to handle two dozen cups, silverware, remove lipstick, and the other fuss and bother of cleaning up after the teachers." Her manner as well as her words are quite definite. "We will not be able to handle the coffee dishes in the fall."

He takes his stand. It is good to be on the right side of 22 teachers. It is a part of his policy to stand both with them and behind them on all occasions. This is one of them, though it might be the better part of valor not to make such a decision now. "You know that the teachers help the lunchroom situation in many ways, and if it were not for this, you would have much more to do than you do now." He decided to mention the student help--five girls received free lunches for collecting money, selling separate milk, dispensing food, and washing dishes. "The teachers select dependable help for the lunchroom duties."

"Well, Mr. Brando, this is something that you and the teachers are going to have to settle. This is not part of our job, and we can not do our job and this, too, which would call for unpaid time that I am unwilling to ask of Mrs. Stearns or Mrs. Frieshiem." Having finished what she was there for, she turns to leave.

Mr. Brando's face seldom shows anything but a serious countenance, particularly when on business. He thinks this is best. Then too, it is part of his heritage. Even in repose his visage is solemn and otherwise inexpressive. "Stolid," some said. There is no reason for it to be any other way now, as he says, "Are you sure that there is not some other reason that these dishes are all of a sudden too much for your help to handle?" Being forthright is the way to bring this out in the open. There might be some brooding, smoldering thing that had helped her to this decision. What brings this on? he wonders, searching her face for a reason, but finding none, for she is leaving.

"I really have said all there is to say about this, and if you'll excuse me I have some important things to do." Mrs. Groznik feels she is through and leaves.

This is a fine thing to come up on almost the last day of school. On top of the hurry and worry of end-of-the-year reports, checking out the teachers on their last chores and obligations, to have to tell the teachers about this little niggling thing is a real annoyance. And he had actually felt just a few moments ago that, all things considered, this final week was a pretty smooth way to go.

Mr. Brando's habit is to see his teachers during the morning coffee period. It is there that he can broach the latest. He could see

and hear how they would take this. Mrs. Johnson would give up drinking coffee for sure. He knew that the primary group would be outspoken about this violation of their creature comforts. He knew there would be quite a hub-bub (5:378).

"And, if I don't mention it, by next fall it might take care of itself." Though Mr. Brando usually faces up to problems, he decides to forget about this one for the time, and if in the fall Mrs. Groznik remains adamant, then he might appeal to her to do the task as a personal favor to him. No sense in arousing the teachers and making for bad relationships. This will have to be carried over and maybe with prudence and Providence everything will be all right.

He remains gazing toward the door Mrs. Groznik has just vacated. Next year his response to the same situations might be another avenue, as more experience, more security, a different outlook directs. After all, no two situations are the same, only similar. Decisions are sometimes never known to be right or wrong, or sometimes so long afterwards that it no longer matters. In any position of responsibility, these crises, large and small, are to be met and dealt with in what seems the most satisfactory way.

These moments of introspection never solve problems. He swings away from his desk to tend some interrupted work.

Being a man of strong convictions, still an outsider in some of the patrons' and his own faculty's view, and realizing his responsibilities--for he is a "letter of the law" man--does not make the established course he has chosen to follow at Roanoke Elementary at all easy to maintain. The year coming up will be more of his own making.

Roanoke Elementary had twenty-two teachers that year, 1960. The next year there were a few changes. Two young teachers had taken maternity leave. One teacher who had been with the school from the first, Mrs. Hurd, felt that all in all she and some of the newer teachers were not compatible. The number and the reasons given for the transfers at the end of Louis Brando's first half year were routine and were less than the average turnover in a school of this size.

## CHAPTER III

## THE LEVY: AN ANNUAL CAMPAIGN

Back in 1952 the little school, Roanoke Elementary, had run three shifts of kindergarten largely because of transportation difficulties. Three years later there had been no kindergarten at all in the entire district because the school levy had failed. The Apartment House Owners' Association had publicly, boastfully, taken credit for the defeat. It had been by default, really, for a large majority had voted "yes," and it was those who had not voted at all who kept the numbers below the necessary 40 per cent of the last general election requirement (2:119; 9:158).

A few failures had been the exception. In the post-war years The Big City has passed twenty-five million dollar bond issues and successive 4 and 6 and even a 7.8 mill levy. The public has been convinced of the necessity of these expenditures, or at least has come to expect the annual request for them.

The first heralds of spring are often the winter stirrings of committee heads and researchers and publicity people rustling about among clippings and papers and making plaintive calls. These harbingers will hopefully prepare for a vast flocking to the polls. Spring

time is voting time.

The feeling in The Big City is that citizen committees--hard-working, unpaid, civic-minded people--should bear the brunt of the levy campaign. It is against the nature of things and worst of all unsuccessful when done by the school people. While they can marshall the facts and help with the strategy, it should be what is sometimes called "the school forces" as distinguished from "school employees" who will carry the banner to the front (1:123).

The accomplishment of the past successes has come to pass through a lot of hour and money contributions and much organizational effort as well as a continued high degree of public support. To what degree this is due to dedicated P-TA leaders, what part is played by conscientious citizens, and how much the School Administration does would be hard to determine, but it takes all of them together to accomplish these feats (1:138).

In the fifties The Big City began to use the special levy as a way to keep up with inflation, increased enrollment, special services, and all the other factors that contributed to rising expenditure. Even the taxed wealth of a large, prosperous industrial area did not bring in enough funds to operate at the level the leaders thought necessary to maintain in its schools.

There is no active large group against the levy, a term which has come to be synonymous with public education. A few small vociferous groups do make themselves heard, objecting largely to high taxes, wasteful and extravagant buildings, and frills in the public schools. It is never certain to what extent they account for any lack of turn-out at the voting places. Enthusiasm has to be worked to a fairly high pitch in The Big City in order to carry the special levy. It is in the main to defeat a negative turnout rather than a negative vote that the efforts of the pro-school forces concentrate (9:157).

As usual, the school board does a lot of agonized thinking in deciding what amount to ask from the voters. The teachers' organization talks to them. They request more than any of the figures that the school board has in mind. They are assured that teacher salaries will not be an issue. The levy will stand or not on the basis of "a quality education for our children."

The district can use more than it can ask for. If too much is asked for, it may get nothing. It has to narrow down to just what items are important, and then convince the electorate of them. Furthermore, time will not wait. Notice of the special school levy has to be filed 30 days ahead of the election date.

On the second Monday in January at a special meeting of the board, the agreed upon figure of 6.3 mills is given to the audience and

the press. The deciding factor is that a 6.7 mill levy had barely passed last year, and as this new proposal is in effect a reduction, it therefore stands that much better prospect. Another very crucial decision is whether to run the election in February when it does not have so many other items competing with it. In case it goes down there is a chance to run it again in the regular March elections. This matter depends on the school board's judgment (2:116). The alternatives of the March elections are that other issues can be expected to stimulate more interest, though at the same time detracting from the importance of the school levy. Also, better weather might be expected, which helps the turnout. Finally, election costs would be shared by more items on the ballot. However, failure would terminate the levy for that year (2:107). With these and many more considerations in mind, the date of February thirteenth is set. If need be they can file for election again in March. Such is the plan.

Manning the levy requires a large amount of organization of many diverse groups whose common interest is public education. The business people have to be convinced of what they have to gain by passing it, or what they will lose if they don't. The school board and its superintendent have worked together on the quality program long enough to be of one mind on what means will attain it. The board and administration now turn all their energies to education of the public.

Tried and truly still valid reasons are being used again and again in their many engagements as they speak out for the schools. "We need more elementary school libraries. Counseling service needs to be improved. We need to reduce the classroom size," are topics pursued with unflagging enthusiasm. The administration and board are a good working partnership.

The publicity for the district is in the charge of Willard Ronson, ex-newspaperman turned teacher and now editor of releases about school affairs of every kind. The research department primes him and his staff with endless statistics to show the need and worth of the program to be financed by the special levy. One such fact is that the taxes imposed by this levy will cost the owner of a home and property worth $10,000 only $3.15 to make his schools more able to prepare citizens for the Space Age. Another fact is that reducing classroom size by one child would cost the district $600,000. The principals do not have to gather and organize, for the "main office" handles the facts and the advertising of them, so far as publicity releases are concerned. They also cooperated with other groups that wanted information. The principals disseminate information to their own areas.

The Central P-TA Council and the Citizens for the School Levy gather the funds with which they print the leaflets, the bumper

stickers, and pay for the expensive thirty-second TV and radio advertising. Some of the advertising comes in the form of radio and television programs devoted to public issues and featuring local people who are expert enough to discuss for the electorate the issues at stake. The cost of this publicity is the energies of the people who arranged and participated.

The cost of mailing, advertising, etc., is up in five figures. This cost is paid for out of contributions. One year teachers were unfairly pressured to give, or felt they had been. So strongly had they protested that it is now made a point to define all contributions as voluntary, especially teachers'. Teachers are not to bear the burden disproportionately.

If all of the energy and cost of all the district's school levies could be devoted to improving the schools of The Big City, some of the conditions they are working to alleviate now would be a matter of history. The facts show that all costs (excepting voluntary hours and efforts) are about $100,000--the average yearly wages of fifteen teachers. It doesn't make sense, but the cost has to be worth the additional funds gained (8:42, 62).

At the area principals' meeting the first effects of the harbingers find their distribution center. Some advance facts and

figures about the forthcoming levy are coming through. They are but the first of many, in all shapes and colors, of levy information that Mr. Brando talks about in his faculty meetings, his P-TA Board meetings and school P-TA meetings. The children will soon take much home. This is one of each principal's main duties, to facilitate the distribution of materials, to inform faculty and patrons by whatever means are available. Thus, he relays and supplements the stream of visual and auditory material to which the public is exposed (5:380).

The P-TA is set up to carry much of the kind of work that needs doing. Mrs. Gatowski, legislative chairman, and Mrs. Harmon, who with her husband is president of the school chapter, are contacted by Mr. Brando. He lets them know that the first school levy stirrings are under way. He suggests they might like to have thought about possibilities before the board meeting. "Some of the hand-outs that will be going home later, were given to me at our area meeting," he said. "I'll send them with your children this afternoon. They'll probably help you."

At the board meeting the next night, the Mesdames Harmon and Gatowski present their talks on the needs to be met by the levy. They also talk about what number of votes must be gotten out under the

provisions of the 60-40 Law. The attitude of the P-TA members can be expressed more in "here we go again" than any other, for most of them are veterans of at least one campaign.

Mrs. Harmon as president is most zestful, perhaps because she has done some advance thinking on the levy. "As much as we might deplore the law," she says, "the most pressing concern is to make the best of it as we have done previously; to work hard, to not falter in our enthusiasm, and to do a bit more after we have already done our utmost." Polite applause. "And now we will ask our principal to say a few words."

"In last year's levy," he begins a little uncertainly, "there were some 'or elses' you may remember. If the measure did not pass, the school board had committed the district to drastic cut-backs. Maintenance, supplies, the music program, and kindergartens. You remember all that. We have none of that this year. What we have is to continue the dedication of our resources for the education of our children. That can be done if we can get out the vote. Our P-TA group has done it before. If we work together and do our best, we will succeed again." Although he was speaking informally, it sounded like a speech and made him feel a little foolish. He sat back hoping someone would take him out of the limelight.

"Well, we'll need to form committees for transportation to the polling places, and then there's free baby sitting service while the mothers vote," bubbles Mrs. Lehtola, treasurer and most talkative member of the board, for which Mr. Brando is thankful. "And maybe a telephone committee like we had last year."

The restraints are loosened. Since everyone has things to say about what should be done, the discussion is very confused and lively. Out of it the suggestion of a door-to-door effort, a successful strategy of former drives, is tabled. "Too much trouble."

"Why not organize a telephone committee? We can call every home the day before the election." This idea is more warmly received. The social chairman says that she and the room mothers can make up lists and assign some willing workers to be ready. She feels that they can have the machinery ready and working by the twelfth. The thirteenth is election day (6:535).

"Fine. With that settled," proceeds Mrs. Harmon, "we ought to start planning about . . ." The hour goes fast, with Mr. Brando supplying answers when he has them, but mostly he lets the ladies talk about everything, making their plans and getting organized. This is how the Special Levy Election is launched in the Walgren Hill area.

The parents are always counted to be the largest group of supporters. It is an important part of the campaign to supply them with much literature through the schools. Miss Wilson, the second grade teacher, is but one who begins to feel that all the printed pages are getting to be an interference with the instructional program. Mr. Brando explains to her how much depends on her children and all the others spreading the word, even if it is at the cost, temporarily, of their book learning. Maybe there are citizenship lessons such as the obligation of each citizen to vote that she will be able to work into the children's studies. She replies, "I will do what I can, but I still don't like all the fal-de-rol."

Of course school has to go on. With the mounting sense of crisis, some teachers given an over-emphasis to the drive. There are children who get the impression of having to buy their own books and supplies next year. One parent calls Mr. Brando about it. He tells them that this is a misunderstanding, and takes time to make a satisfactory explanation. He goes around to his teachers giving them some "do's and don't's" which he follows up with a bulletin that makes these points:

Roanoke School Bulletin

Re: School Special Levy February 11, 1961

1. Avoid saying how to vote. Stress importance of the act of voting.

2. You might have the children take home drawings or letters that will deal with "Quality Schools in the Space Age" or some such theme. If you are in doubt about what to send home, please discuss with me.

3. Work can be done in relation to the levy with language, art, or other school work. Don't make the children feel that Election Day is Doomsday.

4. Use the take home material as a discussion point of what the levy will do for The Big City schools.
i.e. We are affected by the library program. Talk about it.

5. If you have good ideas, tell others. Tell me. I need them.

L. B.

Election day approaches. Activities are reaching a feverish pitch. All channels of communication carry exhortations to vote. The pro-school forces are conducting the campaign in a vigorous and forceful way. Some of the board think that the public is not sufficiently disturbed. They have reservations about the strength of the morrow's vote, but they keep it to themselves. Most interested parties are confident that the well-conducted drive will get the desired results.

It is election day. Mr. Brando, the worrier, follows the returns on a transistor radio he brought for that purpose. After the first hour surge of workers on the way, tabulations of the city-wide vote show a pretty slow turnout. The Roanoke School gym is used as a polling place, and Mr. Brando's count there shows that the two precincts are following the city trend. He calls Mrs. Gatowski at the beauty salon where she works. "A rented loud speaker mounted on my car top will be at school by 11:30. I'll drive for an hour. If there are some teachers who will be able to use some noon and after school time to help broadcast or drive, we can keep right at them till the polls close." This last ditch effort is her own idea. Last night, she and Mrs. Harmon had agreed to fill out an afternoon schedule of P-TA helpers to keep the loud speaker continuously in action when the teachers were not helping. Mr. Brando hadn't heard the idea until this morning, but he thinks it is fine, as do the teachers who agree to fill in as announcers and drivers for several hours that day.

As the day progresses, the count from other areas continues to be discouraging, but has improved in the Walgren Hill area. Even for those who are following it at ten o'clock that night, there is no good news. The count is not finished, but it looks as if there are not enough votes cast to carry the levy. In some sectors there is reason

for good cheer, but gloom pervades most of The Big City. The anticipation of the victory so many had been working toward gives way as results are more complete. It will all have to be done over again in the March election.

For the fine, solid turnout in the Walgren Hill precincts, Louis Brando knows it means, "We have confidence in our schools." He knows that it is a reflection on his year at Roanoke Elementary School.

Failure of this levy was due to the apathy of the citizens. There was very little active resistance. If all of the P-TA membership had voted, it would have carried, for it was lack of numbers, not lack of "yes" votes, that lost the measure.

# CHAPTER IV

## SUMMARY

Despite intensive effort by local forces, the unduly restrictive 60-40 Law serves to hamper fund raising by special levy. It further increases costs, ironically so, as it was the outcome of the depression and its intent was to reduce taxes.

The levy's failure may seem a failure of human relations on the large scale. On the small scale on which this portion of the total is measured, we can say that the way Mr. Brando met the several problems that arose shows a growth in learning over the previous year. We may infer that there has been a corresponding development in his relationships with the faculty at Roanoke School.

The cases narrated here are not resolved, but left open so the reader may probe and piece together. Since these are human relations cases, they are not complete. No one ever has all of the evidence when he makes a human relations decision. All human relations decisions are made from the point of view of a particular person. Each case is the reporting of the actions, deeds, words, places, and situations that will help the reader to know and feel the problem to be unraveled. The solution that solves is the right one and there may be more than one.

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