

**The School Platform.**

The program adopted by the citizens school committee is commendable in all particulars and its specifications have evidently been carefully considered. The unpleasant tangle into which the course of the present board of commissioners has brought school affairs has been in one sense a fortunate thing in that it has directed public attention to abuses and shortcomings in the management of these important interests, a knowledge of which it is well for the taxpayers and school patrons to have and that might have been delayed.

The platform or declaration of principles formulated by the committee is largely based on the disclosures made of the sins of omission and commission of the school board in its management—a course that even if it were something less than consciously and intentionally injurious to the school interests, was none the less unbecoming. It proved at the best a lack of judgment and business ability that makes a further continuance of the board in office a menace to the schools and emphasizes the need of a new deal.

Of the principles outlined all are important, but some stand out more prominently than others. Among these are a seat for every child in a schoolhouse built according to law; freedom from the influence of school book publishers; the best textbooks for the least money and no unnecessary changes; friendly co-operation between the board and the state departments; an elimination of extravagance in outlay; real competition in all purchases and building undertakings. Of the first pronouncement of the committee, "we favor the restoration of our schools to their former prestige," there is this to be said: Every intelligent person does favor this, for it is certain that our schools do not have the high rank that distinguished them some years ago. For this the present school board has its share of blame, but the difficulty began further back in the lessening of the close co-operation that used to exist between school authorities and teachers—a growing defect in team work.

It is wrong, however, to charge Indianapolis schools with the entire responsibility of lowering the standard that has brought the state to the educational grade of seventeenth from the top in the list of states. It would be unjust to the teachers to do this, for as a body they have worked faithfully and ably to uphold high standards, unlettered by low salaries and other discouraging circumstances, and they deserve much credit. The country schools of the state, with their short terms and low salaries, made it increasingly difficult for several years to secure and retain properly qualified teachers, and this fact had much to do with the lowered grade. It is Indiana, not Indianapolis, that ranks seventeenth, it is to be remembered, and though the capital city shares the stigma, it is not alone to blame.

Indianapolis has a position to aspire to and maintain. Its schools once had second place among the cities of the country, according to a survey, and it should reach that place again. It cannot do this with an inadequate school board. There must be harmony from the top down—from the board to the janitors, from the superintendents to the youngest teacher; a co-operation, a pulling together, that can not exist as matters are at present. Also confidence must be established in the public mind, which can best be done through the election of a wholly new board.

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