



ALTHOUGH ONLY PARTIALLY completed, the new Embury Methodist church on 11 Mile road will be consecrated at the 11 a.m. service Sunday. Bishop Marshall Reed will deliver the principal address; with Dr. Benjamin Holme, district superintendent, and Dr. Gordon Phillips, executive secretary of the Methodist Union, also taking part. The newly appointed choir director, Victor Ulrich, will sing "Bless This House." According to the pastor, the Rev. Reginald Becker, numerous church activities are being held there in spite of unfinished rooms. (Eccentric Staff Photo)

B of E President Protests Proposed Shopping Center

The proposed Cranbrook Development company's shopping center at the corner of Lincoln and Cranbrook in Bloomfield township has drawn a blast from the Birmingham Board of Education.

Ernest W. Seaholm, president of the school board, submitted the following letter to township officials when the township board held a special meeting Oct. 13 on the proposed 30-acre commercial development recommended to them by the township zoning board:

"The article in the Birmingham Eccentric of October 9, 1952, relative to a large shopping center across Cranbrook road from the new high school has come to my attention. This disclosure comes as a shocking surprise to those of us entrusted with the direct responsibility for the schools of the district.

"We have been blissfully unaware of the project and are astounded by its magnitude. We find it difficult to realize that the thought of such a major center, adjacent to a large secondary school and particularly to one such as ours, is being seriously considered.

"WE ARE PERTURBED that matters have progressed to this point without some consultation with your school authorities who obviously are deeply concerned.

"In light of this, we gain an impression of one-sided planning in which vital educational factors have been subordinated to commercial ones.

"The implications to the school and the welfare of its pupils are disturbing and must not lightly be

dismissed. Once they are recognized, they will become as vital a concern to parents throughout the whole school district as they now are to members of your school board and your school administration.

"Your school board, due to lack of time, will not have opportunity to discuss the matter before the hearing of October 13. I regret that I, myself, due to a P.T.A. engagement will be unable to appear. However, unofficially, I must register a vehement protest against locating the proposed center anywhere near the school.

"FROM THE standpoint of our school, in which our communities have such a large stake, its consumption would be deplorable. It must not be allowed to happen.

"As a district, in the concept and execution of this school, we have made great, forward strides. Aesthetically and functionally, it excels. Its location and environs with their freedom from commercial encroachment create a delightful atmosphere such as very few schools enjoy.

"We have an ideal cafeteria program. Nourishing food is served at low cost in attractive surroundings. The lunch period is limited to one half hour automatically preventing those so inclined from going too far afield.

"The pupils remain on the property during the whole school day. Morale is high, students are happy and supervision is no problem.

"A SHOPPING CENTER, close at hand, would throw a monkey wrench into this ideal state of affairs.

"Outside of such municipal problems as those related to aesthetic control, traffic, nuisances, and community housekeeping, the school authorities and the parents would again have in their hands those occasioned by the irresistible attraction of stores to the young, their preference for comfort and cokes to nourishing food and the fascinating opportunities for slipping away and happily circu-

lating on the loose, free of parental and school control.

"On the other side of the picture, shoppers near large concentrations of children encounter serious problems which in time find their way to the school principal's office.

"IN SPITE OF everything that can be done, youngsters of this age group and of these times have a way of taking over establishments that appeal to their unpredictable fancies and unwittingly become a liability, driving away lucrative business. The larger the school, the greater this problem.

"Hard feelings are engendered, school authorities are harassed, and schools are blamed in general for situations that are none of their making.

"Our communities cannot afford to step into this lightly. At much expense and with great effort, we have acquired an outstandingly fine school.

"Why jeopardize it and its great advantages? Let us not be shortsighted and through lack of vision force our schools back into situations like the ones from which we have so recently emerged.

Yours truly,
Ernest W. Seaholm,
President
Birmingham Board of Education"

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