

NEWBERRY SCHOOLS.

A Patron Writes a Protest About Books and Kicks Generally.

Newberry Observer.

Editor Observer: Under any circumstances it is disagreeable to be a "kicker." But it is the opinion of the heads of at least a hundred families in Newberry that the time has come to "kick." That there has been "kicking," and "kicking" in no uncertain tones, has been evident to anyone that has come in contact with any person within the past week that has been one of those who, in order to try to give their children an education, and in order to comply with the rules of the schools, had to "walk up to the captain's office" and buy books.

There are many who "kick" silently, or on the quiet; who sit and wait for the other fellow to make the move; and I have, though a humble citizen, decided for one to enter a protest to some things that seem unreasonable.

Some time back, in the not long distant past, there appeared in your valuable paper several communications desiring the information from the delegation in the legislature as to who was responsible for the defeat of a certain bill concerning the city schools. There are a great many patrons of the schools in Newberry who would now like to have a little information along certain lines in regard to the schools. And this inquiry is all in good spirit and kindly feeling, with no ill will to any one—only a little injured pocket book—that's all.

We have heard of all kinds of trusts—big trusts and little trusts—and now a good many people in Newberry would like to know if there is not such a thing as a "book trust," and if the almost complete change of books for the different grades each year is not made in the interest of this trust. Certain it is that they are not made in the financial interest of the patrons of the school, and we know that some of them at least cannot be in the interest of the pupils.

As the years go by matters in this regard seem to grow worse, and if it continues in the future as it has in the past few years poor people will simply have to throw up their hands and surrender, allowing their little ones to go uneducated. There are people in Newberry to-day whose children are remaining away from school because they are not able to buy the books to send them with—and this under our free school system. Each year almost a complete change in studies; so that a new set must be bought—and this year a "song book" is added in.

And they used to exchange, take old books as part pay for new ones; but, oh no, that doesn't go now. You must buy them out and out. To furnish one child anywhere from the first grade up with books costs anywhere from \$2.50 to \$10.00. Those who have three and four to send have to haul out about \$20 or \$25 for books—and next year the trustees, or somebody, will take a notion for another change, and another new set will follow—and so on it goes, and the book trust reaps the harvest.

There are many in Newberry who thought that when the legislature changed the law so that the people, the patrons of the school, could elect the trustees it would prove best for the schools; but it seems that we have gone from the "sublime to the ridiculous." It has proved a dear change for some of us.

Now, a word to the patrons of the school: Get together. Begin this fall. Put in a set of men for trustees who have three or four children to educate—men that are not independent financially; men that know how to appreciate the condition of those who are not so well off in this world's goods; and then probably so many complete and expensive changes will not be made in books each year. Now is the time to begin; it will take four or five years to accomplish it, but it is up to the patrons. Either do this or stop "kicking" and encouraging others to "kick" and forever hereafter hold your peace.

We would like to go a little further and ask a comparison of our schools with those of other cities in the State, and see if others are not far superior to ours. How often do you see in print and hear otherwise of the city schools and their good work of Columbia, Spartanburg, Greenville, Laurens and Greenwood. Do you ever see or hear anything about Newberry's? There's a reason. What is it? Isn't one or two other changes besides books needed? Are we getting our money's worth—value received for what the schools cost?

Now, to the trustees: Turn your eyes from books a little and look elsewhere, and the book trusts won't make quite so much and the patrons will be benefited more and the chil-

dren—that is some of those that are not of the favored few—will fare better. Now, please don't, not anyways soon, submit any question to the voters of the town about voting any additional tax to improve the schools. If they should be any further improved even the richest of our citizens couldn't afford to buy the books. Now don't; yes, please don't.

A Patron,
Who Voices the Sentiments of Many.

MR. WICKER REPLIES.

Answers the "Kick" of Patron—
Says He Likes a "Kicker"—
Wants More.

Editor Observer: I notice in your last edition a complaint from "Patron" against the trustees of the graded school and the way the school is managed.

First, let me say that we are not satisfied with the school ourselves, and are trying to improve the school and bring it up to the schools that "Patron" has mentioned in his complaint, namely, Columbia, Spartanburg, Greenville, Sumter and others. You will say, How are you trying to do this? I answer: By adopting the same books that these schools are using, by putting new life, by devoting our time, by giving you good teachers and by doing all that we know how for the good of the school.

What is "Patron" kicking about? About buying books for his children, so that his child can have as good a chance to learn as the children of these other towns. I think "Patron" is paying too much for his books, as he says it takes from \$2.50 to \$10.00. I will agree to furnish all the books for his children for the first grade for \$1.00; so you see that "Patron" wants to kick, and really there is nothing to kick at.

"Patron" says that some time back there was some one asking why the school bill did not pass. I am the one that did most of the inquiring, and did not get an answer; and I thought that I did not get the support that I ought to have had from our legislators—by their keeping quiet—from our board—by their not taking any action—and by the public—by not helping to get an answer. And now I am ready to answer any question that any patron will ask concerning the school.

Is there a book trust? I am sorry that I cannot answer that question, but will say that we are not in it, and most surely the change in books was not made to help them, but to help your children. We have made some changes this year, for the first time in years, trying to bring our school up. If "Patron" will tell this board who it is that hasn't the books, and wants them, I will guarantee that the board will give these books out of their pockets—even this song book that "Patron" ought to have studied, so he could sing, instead of kicking.

"Patron" has a great deal to say as to what the legislature did in changing the law as to the method of electing the trustees for the graded school, and now is the time for to begin kicking. Who is "Patron"? I want to know, whether he, she or it. I love to know who I am talking to, so I can take off my hat if it is a lady. Don't think I am not your friend because you kick. I love a kicker—I am one—but let us kick when we have something to kick about; and kick for the good of the school, not about buying books. I want more kickers, for when you kick you are thinking about the school, and that is what we want. I want to get the people to work, get them mad, and you may look for something. So I say kick, kick.

Now, if "Patron" had stopped here, and not have tried to give the trustees any advice as to submitting the question for an additional tax for the school, I would have loved him, or her; but here is where he shows himself up. He is not wanting any improvements in the school work, even to buying books for his boy. I will make this assertion that "Patron" has not been to the graded school, and does not know what he is talking about. We want this tax, and we want you to talk about it and write about it, and kick, until we get the one mille tax. We are not ashamed to tell you what we want, and not ashamed to put our names to what we write; so you will know who we are and what we are. So you see I, for one, do not have to take your advice as to not asking for the tax, and as you have mentioned the matter, let us keep it going, and keep on and on until we get it.

So you see what you have done by your kicking: you have started the ball rolling, and I, for one, will help you keep it rolling.

But who are you?
J. H. Wicker.

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