

F-123

February 18, 1916

Mrs. Josephine C. Preston
State Superintendent of Public Instruction
Olympia

My dear Mrs. Preston:

Yours, enclosing a letter from Mrs. Edmund Burt of this city addressed to you relative to the operation of the law regarding flag exercises and flag salutes in the public schools of this city, received. My response has been delayed by reason of the fact that I am just recovering from a long illness. We would gladly have answered Mrs. Burt's question from this office if she had seen fit to call us by telephone or had communicated with us by letter.

what
flag
law?
national, local, state?

Last fall, soon after the opening of school, the attention of the principals was called to this newly enacted law regarding flag exercises and they were instructed to carry into effect the letter and spirit of the law as nearly as practicable. The particular method of doing this was left to them.

I believe that principals and teachers generally are in sympathy with the intention of this law. The fact that there has been used in this city for six or eight years past a flag ritual, a copy of which I am sending you, is evidence that we have not been unmindful of the desirability of improving citizenship through respect for the flag and what it stands for. I mention this as proof that I and those associated with me are not open to the charge of lightly regarding the inculcation of patriotic principles and sentiments, since we attended to such instruction before it became a matter of law.

I very much fear that a strict observance of this law, to hold flag exercises in every school every week, will defeat the purpose of the law and of its authors. I think the attention of the Daughters of the American Revolution should be called to the fact that there are certain psychological effects unfavorable to accomplishment of the desired end which may have been overlooked in enthusiasm for the end to be achieved. I wonder as to the effect upon high school boys and girls of having them participate every week in flag exercises and a flag salute according to the prescribed legal formula laid down. I think that it would be easy for those who are conversant with the reactions of boys and girls in the adolescent

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period to conceive how a distaste for flag exercises and for the flag itself might result in the minds of many from the weekly repetition of this formal exercise. With the smaller children this would not be true, but I think it would be much better even there to leave to the patriotic initiative of the teacher the selection of time and occasion. In this way what would be a stimulating and inspiring exercise would not become perfunctory and tasteless. If this law is strictly observed, a pupil in his course through the grades and high school will have participated in this formal exercise every week of every year through his entire course. Is it not possible that we may do more harm to the patriotic impulse and to the inspired feeling which should accompany the sight of "Old Glory" by a strict observance of this law than if its purpose were carried out with less attention to regularity and to formality?

I wish you might suggest to the ladies of the D.A.R. the advisability of securing the opinions of high school principals and grade principals, also, regarding the possible effects as to the literal carrying out of this law. I may be wrong. If I am, I am willing to be put right.

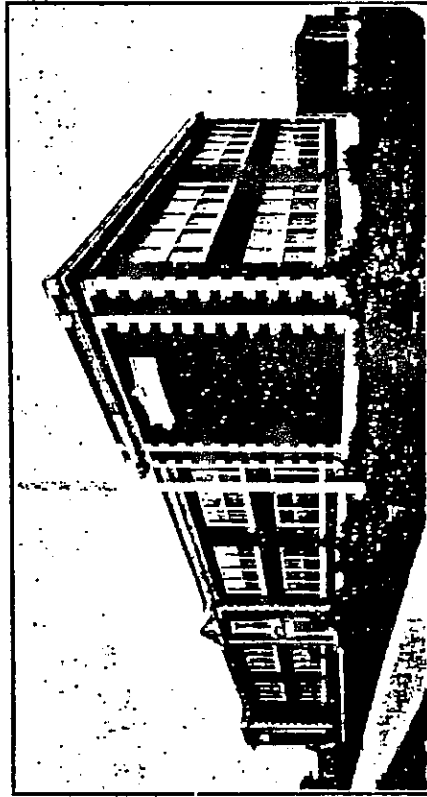
Yours truly,

Frank B. Cooper.

- Flag Law, newly enacted (when?) (war related?)
- Improving citizenship through respect for flag & what it stands for
- Cooper against strict observance (flag exercises in every school, every week), literal carrying out of the law, for fear of ...
- Leave decision to individual schools (esp. principals & teachers)

bought are the ideals of liberty, and the institutions of representative government through contact with such stories as that of the Magna Charta.

* In the seventh and eighth grades, the story appeal gives way to a more sustained application on the part of the pupil. Civic information is now stressed in relation to its historical background. The growth of the American spirit; its crystallization in the Constitution upon which the new nation is founded; the expression and development of the new Republic; its successful grapple with political and international crises; its final burgeoning as a great world power—all receive careful



WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL. OCCUPIED SEPTEMBER 7, 1926. THE FIRST ELEMENTARY-SCHOOL PLANT DESIGNED ESPECIALLY FOR THE SEATTLE SEMI-DEPARTMENTAL ORGANIZATION

attention. The Constitution of the United States and of the state of Washington are a part of the curriculum for these grades.

High School History and Civics—The Seattle high schools give much emphasis to the study of history and civics. One-fourth of all the subjects prescribed for graduation are in the history department. This includes one-half year of community civics, one year of world history, one-half year of American history, and one-half year of advanced civics.

The text used in advanced civics contains 457 pages, 269 of which are devoted to the national government with special attention given to the Constitution.

In addition to the ninth year text, a supplementary book, dealing with the government of Seattle, King County, and the state of Washington, is used for instruction purposes.

* **School Assembly as a Means of Citizenship Training**—The school assembly has become an important factor in citizenship training. The following report by a Seattle Principal illustrates its possibilities:

"The school child is both an immediate citizen and a prospective citizen. As an immediate citizen he is a member of his room group and his school; as a prospective citizen he is to be trained for the duties he is to discharge after he leaves the school and enters a larger community. The school assembly may assist definitely in the training of the pupil, both as an immediate and as a prospective citizen. Our assemblies are opened with a revised edition of the familiar school ritual. We attempted to simplify this ritual in order to bring it more solidly in the consciousness of our pupils. Our ritual follows:

Pupil Leader: Salute the flag! (We give the salute and follow with the pledge of allegiance).

Assembly: Why do we salute the flag?

Leader: Because we desire to honor it.

Assembly: Why should we honor it?

Leader: Because it stands for liberty, justice and equal opportunities in life for all those who live under its folds.

Assembly: How can we best show our devotion to the flag?

Leader: By obeying the laws of our country.

Assembly: Who are the enemies of the flag?

Leader: All persons who strike at our flag by war or who break the laws that have been made to keep our liberties.

Assembly: What are our duties as citizens?

Leader: First, always to defend the honor of our country; second, to obey the laws and see that others obey them; and third, always to remember that first of all we are American citizens, whose duty it is to stand by our country and keep its flag free from dishonor.

"At every assembly, this ritual is followed by a class exercise. If there happens to be a patriotic anniversary, that is the central theme; otherwise, the exercise is usually in the nature of a demonstration of some sort of school work. We have