

Remarks by Representative John E. Fogarty

P-TA

Adah Hawkins School, Harmony, Rhode Island
Monday, February 12, 1962 at 8 P.M.

It pleases me greatly to have the chance to meet with the parents and teachers of Adah Hawkins School -- because this is a very special school.

It is special because it has taken, in commemoration, the name of a woman who left a special imprint upon this community. Adah Hawkins School has a tradition -- a goal in education -- which it assumed when it adopted the name of that long-time teacher and public-spirited citizen of Harmony.

The teachers, the parents and the children of this school are committed thereby to the whole concept of education at its best -- to the philosophy of educational opportunity for all -- to the perpetuation of the love of learning.

It is appropriate, on Lincoln's birthday, to quote his views on the value of schooling. He once admonished the people of Sangamon County, Illinois:

"Upon the subject of education, not presuming to dictate any plan or system respecting it, I can only say that I view it as the most important subject which we as a people can be engaged in."

The great truth of his words has been brought home to me many times ^{the past 22 years that} over ~~since~~ I have been a Member of the Congress of the United States.

~~In the past 22 years~~
Over more than a decade, from my vantage point in the House Appropriations Committee, I have observed increasing cooperation between the States and local communities of this country and the Federal Government in an effort to meet our growing educational needs in new and farsighted ways.

As Chairman of the Subcommittee on Health, Education, and Welfare, I foresee in this second session of the 87th Congress still further success.

As you people well know, the "baby boom" has put new pressures on local communities. The traditional sources of school funds are not always sufficient nowadays to cope with the expanding school population and the growing emphasis upon quality education. We need new classrooms in many areas. We need highly trained teachers to present the multiplying fund of knowledge which mankind is storing up. We need wider opportunities for young people to reach their peaks in achievement and in personal satisfaction.

The Administration sees these needs. That is why there have been proposals for Federal financial aid for school construction and teachers' salaries. That is why there will be new proposals for construction money for colleges and professional institutions and for some kind of real help for talented but needy students.

Some Federal school aid already exists. The National Defense Education Act, on the books since 1958 and extended last year through June, 1964, has already had its impact. It has given impetus to local school districts to broaden and intensify studies in mathematics, sciences and foreign languages; It has encouraged educational research. It has stimulated interest in uncommon foreign languages and has promoted better foreign language teaching ability. And it has made loans available to college students.

These forms of Federal aid serve as a stimulus and an encouragement to local and individual effort.

The impact of local activities -- and of individual attitudes--is nationwide. In the words of President Kennedy, "The dynamic of democracy is the power and the purpose of the individual."

The needs, the interests and the inclinations of each individual child are important. Only by recognizing them can mass education be quality education. We are presumably educating our children for a life of living. School programs, then, must fit them for doing the things they are best able to do -- for opening to them the portal of personal fulfillment.

The challenge to American communities, such as Harmony, and to consolidated school districts, such as Foster-Glocester, is tremendous. You can give education many directions -- once it is grounded upon the basic subjects, which must be well taught and well learned in the elementary grades.

Education can be academic, with a view to college and graduate school. It can be in the direction of commerce and business, with the vast areas of opportunity which lie at the end of this road. It can be education for specialized, technical skill -- in construction, in mechanics, in electronics, in the peripheral areas of medical and physical sciences, to name but a few of the fields where know-how is the key.

The new approach to schooling -- the consolidated school -- can make this wide sweep of education possible. By pooling the financial resources of neighboring communities, and by sharing of hopes and ideas, new approaches evolve. In the consolidated school district it often becomes possible to build the kind of building and facilities necessary to a stimulating program. It becomes possible to hire more teachers, specialized teachers. And it becomes feasible to launch guidance and counseling programs to help each student find his true direction.

The consolidated school is a stepping stone into the new American age. The little red schoolhouse belongs nowhere today except in our sentimental memories. There was a time when a fourth-grade education was the top goal of many, when a high school diploma was a luxury, and when college was only for the elite.

Education has a far different connotation in our national life today. More than half of our high school graduates go on to college or to some kind of higher specialized training. It is almost a must.

I myself did not go to college. In the intervening thirty years I have countless times over been made to realize the advantages which a firm educational background can give. It must be extremely difficult in this decade for the young person who has left school too early to find his way. I look to the day when beyond-high-school study will be available universally, for both adults and youth.

Along this line of thought, I feel that we should seek new dimensions for the term "vocational education". Right now a Panel of Consultants, drawn from the ranks of prominent lay persons and educators, is reviewing existing Federal programs which assist State vocational education. Their task is to examine these programs in the light of future needs. Vocational training nowadays implies training beyond high school, not in place of high school. It is to our common advantage to give new dimensions to this aspect of education.

Almost any kind of employment you can name which offers possibilities of advancement requires not only a good general education but a degree of specialized training or skill. The age of automation is upon us, with machines replacing men in more and more kinds of work. One step toward solving the dilemma is to develop new skills which will take our employable manpower into new endeavors deriving from the varied scientific advances of the past few years. Knowledge, skill, and trained intelligence will always be needed. After all, it takes such to make the machines!

We must devise ways to meet the new kinds of education needs through our established education systems. All of us share the responsibility.

I realize that you parents and teachers have your immediate stake in the elementary school. I have chosen to speak chiefly in terms of higher levels of public education for two reasons.

First, the success of the secondary school program depends upon the quality of preparation offered at the elementary level.

Second, I feel that my views on education are in keeping with the philosophy of Mrs. Adah Hawkins. To her, education was a continuing and all-embracing thing.

I am awed by her lifelong dedication to the spread of knowledge. Not only a teacher and a school principal --a lifetime career--she was a leading figure on the Gloucester School Committee, founder of the Harmony Library, director of the nursing association, and an active member in such diverse civic activities as the fire department, the Grange, and the DAR. This record of service indeed exemplifies the philosophy that education and a fulfilled life go hand-in-hand.

Some of us fret about education "problems". Mrs. Hawkins did not regard education as a problem, but rather as a challenge. It is not unlike the challenges which earlier generations of Americans faced with imagination, energy and phenomenal success in developing our country's natural resources.

Our greatest resource in this new age is the American mind. We can succor it -- or starve it -- by our measure of vision.