



Editor's note: Appended is a copy of a letter directed to Jesse R. Gathercoal of the New Trier Township High School Board of Education by John Taylor Booz of Wilmette. The communication is a reply to a letter addressed to Mr. Booz by Mr. Gathercoal, copy of which appeared in the *Public Forum* column of the issue of November 28.

November 29, 1930

Mr. Jesse R. Gathercoal,  
175 West Jackson Boulevard,  
Chicago, Illinois.  
Dear Sir:

Yours dated November 21st and post marked November 26th in reply to my letter of November 17th has been received.

You quote from my letter "the citizens of New Trier undoubtedly wish and are prepared to do everything in their power to continue and increase the high standing and efficiency of their High School" but you fail to add therefrom "but under conditions such as exist now, it seems very questionable whether, until something like normal times are restored, the improvements contemplated should not be deferred".

I take no issue with your statement that the school is overcrowded or that a much more favorable building contract can be obtained within the next six months than could be obtained a year or two later. I would but say that people owning real estate, improved or unimproved, can now obtain better contracts for such improvements or changes as they may desire than they could at a later date; they can also purchase merchandise and other things needed at a much lower price; provided that in any case, they have the money. Most people apparently now do not have it and, therefore, make the best of conditions.

I regret that I am unable to concede that "the school board went to great pains to give the bond election wide publicity". Inquiry of not less than twenty-five well known and well read citizens of Wilmette, develops that only one heard of the election prior thereto and none of any public meeting. Inquiry of two or three in Winnetka reveals that they never heard of any public meeting or the election. I have not made further inquiries. Naturally the Parent-Teachers association would probably favor the bond issue; others with children not yet at school would not. It can hardly be assumed that there was even a full attendance at the Parent-Teachers association and that all were favorable to this issue.

The vote cast at an election for Trustees cannot properly be compared with the vote that would be cast upon a bond issue after a full notice was given all voters. When reputable men are nominated for office of Trustee, then naturally citizens who are willing for them to serve do not vote. When bond issues are submitted that takes money out of the pockets of the voters, then a different situation exists.

You quote from my letter "had they not voted you might then have properly assumed that they favored or were not opposed to it", but you fail to quote the entire paragraph,—which is as follows:

"It would have been comparatively inexpensive for your board to mail a notice to each voter in ample time so that they could have considered same and thereby you would have received an expression of their wishes. Had they not voted, you might then have properly assumed that they favored or were not opposed to it, but you certainly are not at liberty so to do under present circumstances."

Without examining the law, I take it that the providing of a separate ballot box in or at least near the place where the general election was held with the usual call for a special election would have covered the law but assuming it did not, a notice mailed to all of the qualified voters would have been comparatively inexpensive and would have resulted in an expression of the will of the majority of those who elected you and your Co-Trustees.

Whether bonds could be issued later at a sufficiently lower rate of interest to save whatever the gain is by the making of a building contract now is, of course, open to question.

You doubtless know that the 1929 assessed valuation of all real estate in New Trier Township (except railroads) subject to revision by the Board of Review is \$75,677,189. This bond issue is for \$875,000.00 or approximately 1.15% thereof. I do not know how many other outstanding bond issues there are.

I understand that Mr. E. J. Phelps to whom my letter was addressed as Pres-

ident is not president but one of the Trustees.

I am personally in favor of all necessary bond issues or revenue to maintain the high standard of the New Trier High School but I am firmly of the opinion that it was the clear duty of the Trustees to have given each voter a notice of this election with their reasons

for asking for the approval of this bond issue at this time. I am also of the opinion it is their duty to do so at all times.

I do not care to engage in further correspondence in this matter as no good purpose can be subserved thereby and leave it to the conscience of the Trustees as to what they propose doing in reference to the present bond issue and future bond issues.

I am sending copy of this letter to each of the Trustees together with a copy of your letter of November 21st and also to the "WILMETTE LIFE" and "Wilmette Announcements", which disposes of the matter insofar as I am concerned.

Yours truly,  
John Taylor Booz

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