

# 623 settles negotiations

"No one wanted to put the students in the middle again"



"Amen."

photo fred wolf

## Value of law questioned

The Minnesota law governing relationships of School Board and Teacher Organizations, passed in 1967 has proved to be "not of much value" according to Robert Bell, State representative from 49B in view of last year's negotiations.

Bell feels that there was a lot of dissatisfaction in the way the negotiations went and the resulting strike.

The law provided for the following

5. Prior to March first either party may request an adjustment panel, (made-up of one board representative and one teacher representative along with a third neutral member) if any matter regarding economic aspects has not been agreed upon.
6. If the results of the Adjustment Panel are not satisfactory to either party by April first, a hearing may be requested.
7. Within 15 days of the hearing, the Panel shall report its findings to each of

Representatives of the School Board and the teachers of District 623 agreed on a salary schedule for the 1970-71 school year.

A settlement was reached on March 24, 1970, at 4:30 AM and approved, the next day by an overwhelming majority of the teachers. John Rose, Vice-chairman of the Teachers' Council, estimated that there were no more than, "25 dissenting votes out of the more than 300 teachers voting."

The settlement itself raises the salary of a beginning teacher with a B.A. degree to \$7,475 up \$475. A teacher with a M.A. and 12 or more years of experience will earn \$15,399 up \$979 and a teacher with a Doctor's degree can earn a maximum of \$16,595 up \$1,055.

The settlement also included an increase in various fringe benefits, el-

ementary teachers will get more preparation time, High school and Junior high coaches salaries will be increased, Health and Hospital insurance will be offered, and several other benefits will also be increased.

In a marked contrast to the disruption and disagreement that accompanied the '69--70 salary schedule negotiations, the negotiations this year were conducted in an atmosphere of calm and mutual search for an equitable salary schedule.

Dr. Lloyd Nielson, superintendent of district 623, explained why; "Last year we used the labor-management model of salary negotiations. . . The teachers asked for a 3% raise so the board had to come up with something equally ridiculous, it countered with an offer of a 1% increase."

"We found out this just didn't work," he said, "So this year we did it dif-

ferently. . . We first exchanged data and discussed and contested each other's data. Then each side brought in different salary ranges and fringe benefits. . . By March 25, the board was at \$7,425 and the teachers were at \$7,550."

"This year both sides acted responsibly and reasonably," Nielson continued, ". . . and I think they demonstrated the matter can be carried out with a minimum of dissatisfaction and conflict."

Rose agreed, when he stated, "I think to act in a manner that would. . . rebuild both groups wanted to show they had responsible leadership. They felt they had their prestige in the community and of course, no one wanted to put the students in the middle again."

## BURNSVILLE, STILLWATER

# Districts propose merit pay

In at least two districts this year, Stillwater and Burnsville, experiments and research are under way to study the question of "merit pay."

Merit pay is in essence more pay for better than average teachers.

Burnsville teachers agreed with the board's proposal of a new approach to teacher pay. They did not however, agree with the board's specific proposal.

In Stillwater, the teachers contract settlement arrived at included \$20,000 for a career teacher merit program.

It is planned that the teachers will help determine who merits extra pay.

The primary concern held by Burnsville district residents is that any form of merit pay might evolve into a system of punishment rather than reward for exceptional teachers.

The argument goes that the "apple polisher" teacher who never causes the board and administration trouble might get the extra pay while the exceptional teacher who occasionally might "make waves," would be penalized.

The Burnsville board estimates that the change will ultimately take two years to enact. Teachers who initiated a committee study of the board proposal say it may

take longer.

The Burnsville board has also proposed adding teacher competency to the traditional reasons for raises, education and experience.

There is some legal red tape to be cut first. Superintendent Robert L. Miller said the fact that teachers after attaining tenure are traditionally on a continuing contract "maybe where the law is going to catch us."

For example, a career teacher may merit extra pay one year and then go into a slump the next year. Under a continuing contract, "what has been given, cannot be taken away."