

Students and concerned adults express ideas at Sept. 11 board meeting.

Friday: first meeting, first walkout

Dr. Lloyd C. Nielson and James Bonkowske faced each other for the first time in front of an all student audience at a Lyceum Sept. 12.

The Lyceum was reportedly requested because of popular demand by concerned students who wanted to hear the facts about the teacher contract dispute.

Dr. Neilson announced that he and Bonkowske had met the previous night from 10:15 p.m. to 6:15 a.m. following a school board meeting at which the issue had been discussed by students, interested members of the community, as well as teachers and administrators.

As proceedings continued, students became generally restless, often replying to Dr. Neilson and Bonkowske from the floor. At one point senior Jim Meehan stood up and shouted at some of the agitators in the bleachers, "If you don't want to get up there, then shut-up." His statement was received with rousing applause.

The four students on the panel on stage with Bonkowske and Dr. Neilson, seniors Barb Metzger, Rich Thurlow, Mark Johnson, and Ann Hawewass, all at one time or another tried to quiet the restless segment of the audience.

Soon four students sitting in the south end of the bleachers rose, left their seats and headed for the door to the applause of a majority of students.

They were followed shortly by 50-75 students who also left their seats but did not leave the gym.

These students caused proceedings to be interrupted two or three times. Bonkowske tried to quiet things by requesting, "Will the minority please respect the wishes of the majority."

After the lyceum was dismissed and students were excused to first hour classes, members of the group which walked out earlier stayed in or around the gym and refused to go back to class.

At 9:25 all students were called back to the gym by Principal Curtis Johnson for a special student announcement.

announcement

This announcement pulled the other 1400 students out of their classes to the gym. It also pulled the students in the halls up onto the stage where they surrounded Principal Johnson and a small group of student leaders, pressuring them with cries of "We want a walkout!"

By the time Principal Johnson and the student leadership had pushed their way through the crowd on stage and met where

the stage crew had set up the microphone, most of the student body was in the gym.

At this point Johnson pointed to Barb Metzger and asked her to "pacify the students".

Only two nights before at a meeting of students drafting Barb Metzger, she had agreed that a student demonstration was the last thing she wanted. Since then, however, she had had plenty of evidence of a stalemate in the negotiations and right now, behind her, there was a rather vocal group wanting a walkout.

Whatever she may have thought, the loud roar of approval that greeted her first sentence, "You know what we're all here for!" seemed to provide all the proof she needed. A vocal segment of the student body wanted a walkout.

The next hour was a mass of confused pandemonium.

The group that originally sparked the sit-in by refusing to return to classes, left school within 15-20 minutes after the walkout began and were seen no more that day.

Many of the students who participated in the walkout did so because it was fun, it was exciting, it was as good a way as any to miss school or (and this swung many students' support) everyone else was doing it.

mike grabbed

Whenever Rosselit or Dr. Johnson or a student tried to speak against the walkout, the mike was grabbed and the students were still emotionalized with "We will not be used!" rhetoric.

Barb was in control. At one point student council president Chuck Drange asked, "Can I talk too?"

Some students preferred to ignore the whole matter of why they joined the walkout. However, when pressed, they answered, "Well it's already started, and I can't do anything to stop it, so I might as well join."

Lynn Anderson was the only person who attempted to keep students in school. There were never more than 1100 students in the gym and that number fell to 600 by the time the buses came. The rest wandered in the halls and an estimated 500 went home early.

Almost all the remaining students left on the buses save about 70 who stayed to eat lunch and a group of 16 who met with Barb in room 131.

Barb had been in contact with Dr. Nielson who asked her to bring a group of six students to meet with him and representatives of the teachers at 3:15 that afternoon.

At the meeting in 131, Barb picked the six: herself, Ann Hauerwas, Jim Meehan, Pat McGuigan, Jan Clark and Allison Cash. At the meeting they discussed the sit-in, recognizing it as a mistake. They determined what Dr. Neilson would be told of the incident.

Meanwhile, back in the cafeteria, Jim Meehan was angrily denouncing the walkout and its leaders and precipitating a heated discussion. When Barb adjourned her meeting and came into the cafeteria to ask Jim to be a representative of Ramsey, he refused. Rich Thurlow was then picked in Meehan's place.

The 3:15 p.m. meeting with Dr. Nielson and teacher representatives was reportedly a flop as far as the students were concerned. It had been believed that each side would sit down calmly and discuss the situation.

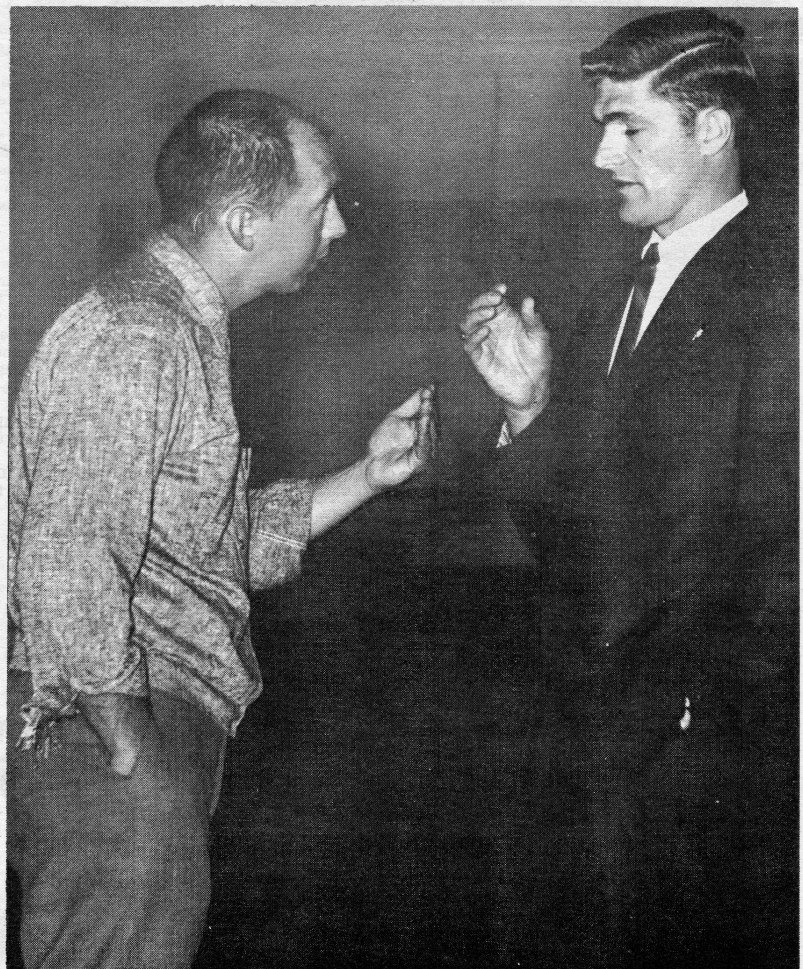
Nothing of the sort happened. Both Dr. Nielson and the teachers understood the meeting to be simply an exchange of information between the two groups and that's what it turned out to be.

Five representatives of Kellogg were also present at the meeting. Among them was Lynn Anderson, who had been

asked by the Kellogg student council executive board to help represent their school.

On Saturday Lynn believed a student walkout on Monday would be a mistake. She then asked Mark Johnson to write an announcement for Monday morning that could convince the students not to walk out.

This effort was halted on Sunday night when two other groups including Barb and Carl Anderson convinced themselves and Lynn, that a walkout on Monday could not be stopped so it needed leadership. They drafted a leaflet to be passed out at the end of second hour.



Dr. Dale Johnson, board representative, and William Rosselit discuss Friday's walkout.