

bending manner when professional and articulate questions were asked by members of our professional group. His presentation was characterized by complete inflexibility and frigidity. An example of this uncompromising manner was his reply to a school superintendent who asked him what a superintendent and board of education would do in the case of a white teacher who might be assigned to a previously all negro school and who might refuse to accept the new assignment. His cryptic reply was, "You would fire her for insubordination."

Commissioner Harold Howe, several of his associates, and members of the Georgia Congressional delegation participated in this Washington conference, March 30. The Commissioner appeared quite perturbed by statements made by the members of our Georgia delegation and requested a subsequent conference on April 5 with a small committee of school board members and superintendents from Georgia. Our committee was heartened in this conference with the Commissioner when he explained that he was aware of gross misunderstanding as between the Office of Education and the officials of local school systems insofar as the implementation of Guidelines was concerned. The Commissioner took great pains to state, first, that he was fully cognizant of the necessity of gradualism in the process of desegregation; secondly, that the Office of Education asked for nothing more than gradualism—progress year by year over the preceding year. We left this conference with the feeling that the Commissioner had concurred in our understanding of the purposes, intention, and interpretation of the 1966 Guidelines.

As a result of what we considered a highly satisfactory conference with the Commissioner, our Board of Education decided to take steps beyond its desegregation plans as previously approved by the Office of Education and to desegregate all twelve grades in 1966-67 rather than eight, as well as to keep open the period of Freedom of Choice for ninety days rather than the thirty days prescribed by the Federal government. The Board also proceeded promptly with faculty desegregation consistent with its understanding of the Commissioner's statement. Our Board of Education experienced a major shock when it received a letter from Mr. Stanley Kruger under date of July 14, 1966 in which he implied that the Fulton County Board of Education was not moving in good faith with its desegregation program. He went so far as to suggest that the Board might arrange meetings and conferences with parents and civic groups in order to limit opportunities for intimidation. Consistent with the desire of the Fulton County Board of Education to move professionally and properly, the Board President and the Superintendent were immediately authorized to seek an additional conference with Commissioner Howe. This took place August 4, 1966 and was attended by Commissioner Howe, Mr. Kruger and Mr. David Seely. When the Board President and Superintendent read excerpts from Mr. Kruger's letter of July 14, the Commissioner replied that he did not know the letter had been written and that he felt there was gross misunderstanding with regard to the intent of the letter. At this point, parts of the letter were re-read to him to give full evidence of a lack of communication, confusion, and chaos which apparently characterize the activities of the Commissioner's office. The Commissioner assured the group that no other letters of this nature would be forthcoming.

Our concern is heightened by direct quotations of the Commissioner in magazine and newspaper stories when his words are in direct conflict with the apparent policies and actions of his office.

Mrs. GREEN. Now may I call on Mrs. Hallford, superintendent of the Habersham County schools.

STATEMENT OF MRS. NELL HALLFORD, SUPERINTENDENT, HABERSHAM COUNTY SCHOOLS

Mrs. HALLFORD. Madam Chairman and members of the subcommittee, I, too, appreciate the opportunity to talk with you today.

I do not have any copies to submit to you, because my invitation did not come with instructions, so I am delinquent.

My system is rural, having an enrollment of around 4,800 students. There are seven elementary schools and three high schools. We have 172 classroom teachers. We do have in our community the services of a State trade and industrial school.