

KENTUCKIANS ASK A SPECIAL SESSION

George Colvin, superintendent of public instruction of Kentucky, has issued a public statement relative to his attitude in the matter of the location of the new normal schools. He says that while Murray might have been selected by trickery just as Morehead was, the choice in Western Kentucky at least is not impossible from an educational point and from the standpoint of accessibility.

Yet, he says, he deplores the selection of Morehead. Saying nothing about the schemings that preceded the announcement of Morehead's selection, he treats the subject strictly from an educator's viewpoint. Here are some of the things he says:

"When the amendment was adopted by the House it was common gossip about the Capitol that the amendment was in the interest of Morehead and Murray. When the members of the commission were appointed, this gossip became more insistent; people generally guessed that the schools would be located at Morehead and at Murray. After eight months' delay, the action of the Normal School Commission shows that the people guessed right. These were selected in each case by a five to three vote, the three members of the commission appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor refusing to vote for either Murray or for Morehead.

"Having chosen the sites for the two normal schools the Normal School Commission is claiming the right to erect buildings, to employ faculties, and to prescribe the course of study. Had the Legislature anticipated that the commission would expend money for the erection of buildings or the employment of faculties, it seems reasonable to assume that they would have required a proper bond of some one of the commission.

"The fact that no such bond was required indicates rather clearly that it never was contemplated that this commission would expend moneys whether received from donations or from appropriations. We believe that this power belongs and was intended by the legislature to belong to the State Board of Education. The treasurer of the State Board of Education is under bond; the chairman of the State Board of Education is likewise under bond. Thus the expenditure of moneys whether derived from donations or appropriations is safeguarded and protected. The courts at once ought to be asked to interpret this law, to the end that contention may cease and that the cause of education may not suffer further from the controversy.

"A school located at Morehead will not serve the purpose contemplated by the Survey Commission; it will not serve the needs of the Big Sandy Valley; neither will it serve the needs of the Kentucky River Valley; it will merely be in the way at some future date when a school will be established in the Big Sandy Valley and another in the Kentucky River Valley. Its patronage will largely come from the territory properly belonging to the school located at Richmond. The situation at Murray is better. Murray is in the Purchase, though too close to the Tennessee line; it is neither the geographic center nor the transportation center of the Purchase. Murray is a splendid school town and there is a wonderful school sentiment in both town and county. It is possible to make a school located at Murray serve the needs of the Purchase provided the people in that section will support it.

"Kentucky needs two new normal schools—needs them imperatively—needs them at once. With the new normal schools located as they have been, it is doubtful whether this need will be served.

"Education in Kentucky inevitably will suffer for years to come by reason of this situation. The people should know where to place the blame."

The need is pressing. The evidence of trickery is obvious. The Governor will do well to call the legislature into special session and ask re-consideration of the normal school bill as amended and passed last January. It should be repealed and the power to select a site should be placed in the proper hands, those of the state board of education. The roving commission should be rebuked. The foul hand of politics in education should be squeezed until it is withdrawn forever.