

FACULTY MOVE HELD ILLEGAL

Negro Teachers Scored For Meeting At Schooltime

By EDWARD G. PICKETT

The superintendent of Harford county schools yesterday branded as illegal meetings by teachers at an all-Negro school during the time they were supposed to be in classrooms.

Dr. Charles W. Willis said the law against such action "is very clear" and added he had instructed the faculty of the Havre de Grace Consolidated School not to meet again during school hours without permission of educational officials.

Many of the teachers at the school met twice during morning school hours last Friday to protest a four-year desegregation plan of the Board of Education and reject a suggestion in a local weekly newspaper they would regret integration.

Not Upset By Protest

"It is not the protest we are upset about," said Dr. Willis yesterday. "But we do object to teachers leaving the classrooms, when they should be teaching, for the meetings they held."

Dr. Willis said he considered the action of the faculty at the Havre de Grace school "Willful neglect of duty."

The protest initiated at the meetings was expressed in the form of a letter signed by Mrs. Maudeline Banks, president of the faculty group.

"We stand for complete and immediate desegregation of schools in our area," the letter said.

The teachers branded a report in an Aberdeen paper that Negro P.T.A. groups would be sorry to see the end of segregated schools as "unfounded, erroneous, misleading, bias. . . ."

The plan adopted by the Board of Education, on a 3-2 vote, would spread desegregation of the county's schools over a four-year period, beginning with high schools and ending with primary grades.

Seen Demoralizing

A minority on the board, as well as the Harford County Human Relations Commission, had pressed for immediate end of segregated public schools.

The Havre de Grace teachers said they "object to the slow process of de-populating our schools and feel it is demoralizing, derogatory and biased.

"It perpetuates the stigma of inferiority already unjustly stamped on our people.

"We object to the fact that the plan insultingly states that Negro teachers should be carefully selected—with competency the criteria. The Board of Education implies that the masses of our faculty are competent only in a segregated situation," the group said.