

# Parents Get Legislature's Attention

THE LEGISLATURE recently adopted a strong resolution calling for a better selection of textbooks for Oklahoma schools, but the idea didn't strike a favorable note with everybody.

The president of Oklahoma Education Association said it is "ridiculous and a slap in the face." A Tulsa member of the state textbook commission protested it is "a kind of censorship" that intrudes upon the commission's function.

Both could be right, but if educators and the textbook commission had been doing what school patrons want there probably would have been no resolution. Parents who have taken time to look have found textbooks contain materials they regard as objectionable.

Indications are that the textbook commission has done only a superficial job of reviewing the hundreds of publications submitted for adoption. The notion that rejections might constitute "censorship" doesn't help provide youngsters with wholesome materials.

Isn't it the purpose of a textbook

commission to weed out obscene, immoral, incompetent, irrelevant, dishonest and un-American teachings? If not, what useful purpose does a textbook commission serve? If it doesn't screen teaching materials, who will?

To a considerable degree, liberalization of textbooks and lax discipline in public schools have coincided with declines in scholastic test scores and increases in the numbers of private and religious schools.

Public school educators decry these schools, claiming pupils "don't learn science, history and government through an entirely religious background." The opposite view is that children don't learn right living in an anti-religious, political situation.

Whatever the reasons, parents in growing numbers have been making their protest known, both by transferring their children to private schools and by helping their legislators understand their preferences. Efforts to explain their goals to public school officials and teachers had not produced results they wanted.

Notably, no audible "Nay" votes were heard when the House passed HCR 1025 on March 8 and there was no effective opposition in the Senate, either. Legislators seem to have heard what the state Textbook Commission and teachers hadn't — the voice of the people.

There is nothing in the resolution that might be regarded as offensive, intrusive or excessively restrictive. It simply calls for public school practices designed to uphold traditional principles of freedom and to motivate students toward higher things of life.

If parents follow through to see that their local schools observe the intent of this resolution, we might see an upturn in the oft-denounced quality of public education. If this occurs, the so-called "problem of private schools" likely will be resolved.

Not all parents are indifferent to what their children are taught. Many want their offspring to be better situated in life than they were and realize that proper preparation is essential.