

*New Jersey Commission to Study the
"Proposed Discontinuance of Bordentown
Manual Training School."*

PUBLIC HEARING

Before

The Commission established under A.C.R. No. 22
to study methods of providing an integrated vocational training
program under State sponsorship and to investigate the circumstances
surrounding the proposed closing of Bordentown Manual Training School.

Assembly Chamber
State House
Trenton, New Jersey
May 19, 1955

Members of Commission present:

Senator Albert R. McCay
Senator Richard R. Stout
Assemblyman C. William Haines
Assemblyman Edward T. Bowser

Absent: Senator W. Howard Sharp
Assemblyman Howard V. Ritter

974.90
5372
1955a
V.2

Reported and transcribed by
Dorothea Tempesto, C.S.R.

I N D E X

	<u>Page</u>
MRS. EDWARD L. KATZENBACH, N. J. State Board of Education	1
MR. JAMES E. SEGEAR, Superintendent, Bordentown Manual Training School	3
MR. JOHN F. LYNCH, N. J. State Board of Education	11
DR. MARIE S. CARPENTER, N. J. State Board of Control	13
MRS. MARGARET T. ARMSTRONG, N. J. State Board of Education	14
MR. HERBERT TATE - Counsel, Bordentown Alumni Association	16
Telegram from Benjamin A. Collier, Executive Secretary, Board of Directors, Urban League of Eastern Union County	20
Resolution from A. M. E. Zion Conference of New Jersey	21

* * * * *

MRS. EDWARD L. KATZENBACH, N. J. State Board of Education

Thank you very much for giving me an opportunity to say a few words. I want to say first that no one takes more pride in the State of New Jersey than I do in the way it has met the segregation problem. Immediately following November of 1947, when the people approved the new Constitution, the New Jersey State Board of Education went on record changing the name of the Bordentown Manual Training School for Colored Youth, dropping the word "colored". That was the first thing we did toward integration according to the Constitution. Immediately steps were taken in the public school system of the State. And I defy anyone to tell me that there is any State in the whole Union that has done more for integration than we have.

At the present time, I can say to you that there are only a few spots that have not yet been completely covered by the State Department of Education in the integration of our schools. Part of that is due to school building difficulties, and others. But I think I can say, almost without fail, that certainly by the first of September of this year, there will not be any segregated schools in the State. I am proud of that, and I don't care who says anything to the contrary.

Now, let us come to this Bordentown situation. Those of you here present this afternoon must understand that that which makes possible the integration of the public schools is not true of Bordentown. Now, why? Because the public schools are spread in areas throughout the State. The Commissioner can say that we have got to integrate; that we have got to arrange for children from this area to attend the schools in that area; that there can be no segregation. That he has done. I can assure you; I have seen it, and I know what has been done. But can he do that for Bordentown? Bordentown is not a public school in that sense. That is not an area from which you can draw, and say that this boy, or that girl should go to Bordentown, because it cannot be done.

Now, until we passed that resolution in December, every honest-to-goodness effort was made not to have that school segregated. We could not say that the children must go there. One child came down there, was admitted, and the father looked at it, and then what happened? The child was withdrawn. It cannot be done in that way. Now, I want to say further that I know many of the graduates of the Bordentown school well, and I am proud of that connection. And I have no greater respect for any man than I have for Mr. Valentine and for the work he did there during those years. I want you to understand that without any question whatsoever. But, gentlemen, the Bordentown school, up to ten years ago, was a very different school than it is today. The work of the students themselves was different.

Now, I am not going to take anymore of your time. I can assure you that we did try to integrate the school, through the Department, through Dr. Segear, through making contacts, but more than that we could not do. We could not say that this child, or that child, or any other child, should go to Bordentown. That, sir, I know, and I would like Dr. Segear to tell you about the efforts that have been made. Thank you.

MR. McCAY: Thank you, Mrs. Katzenbach. Now we will hear from Mr. James Segear.

JAMES E. SEGEAR, Superintendent, Bordentown Manual Training School

Honorable Chairman, ladies and gentlemen: I come to you as one who is intensely interested in the orderly evolutionary progress of the school that we all love so well. First of all, I want to tell you a little something about the efforts that have been made to integrate the school.

With respect to efforts toward achieving racial integration at this school it has been the policy of the present administration to acquaint the people of the State with the program of the school, and then to indicate that enrollment is open to all youth of high school age who are bona fide residents of the State. We have avoided making a general public appeal for integration on a strictly racial basis, because we are convinced that the psychological effect of such a course of action would have tended to nullify our efforts. Incidentally, we have also been constantly alert to our responsibility to avoid sponsoring publicity that might be regarded as propaganda of the type that would be inimical to the dignity of the State and the school.

Following is a resume' of the most outstanding integration efforts during the years covered by the present administration, namely, 1951-1954. Unless otherwise indicated, the groups contacted have been wholly or predominately of the Caucasian Race.

On the occasion of his installation address on April 27, 1951, the Superintendent (then titled "Principal") said: "In keeping with the laws of the State of New Jersey and in keeping with the policy of the State Department of Education, this school will seek to achieve the integration of races, both in the student body and in the faculty. Selection shall be on the basis of qualifications and merit alone". Although this statement was made to an audience that was almost entirely Negro except for the members of the State Board of Education and the State Department of Education, we feel that it was an important pronouncement for the reason that all employees of the school staff and the friends of the school were assembled, were thereby enabled to interpret that aspect of school policy to others, during future contacts.

In numerous talks before various churches and clubs, the Superintendent has explained the program of the school and informed his hearers that the school is open to all youth.

Also in a major address, a member of the faculty rendered a similar service before members of the Vineland Methodist Church on February 4, 1954. Incidentally this faculty member reports that on several occasions in his classes at Rutgers University and in his contacts throughout the State in his connection with the school's athletic program, he has informed scores of white people concerning the enrollment policy of the Bordentown Manual Training and Industrial School.

In brief remarks before the First Presbyterian and Trinity Church of South Orange on March 7, 1954, the Superintendent informed his hearers that enrollment is open to all youth of the State. Likewise, on numerous occasions when the school choir has sung throughout the State, the Superintendent or some other member of the faculty has accompanied the choir and carried a message concerning the schools' program and policies to the people of New Jersey.

On February 8, 1952, the Washington Street Branch Y.M.C.A., of Montclair presented the Bordentown Choir in a program honoring the former Principal of the School, Dr. W.R. Valentine. The audience consisted of about 700 persons, a few of whom were white. Dr. Valentine's remarks were devoted almost entirely to emphasizing the absence of racial restrictions upon enrollment at Bordentown. He expressed grave concern about criticism increasingly directed against the administration for failure to integrate the school. Said he: "The administration cannot go much further than to assure our white citizens that their children would be welcomed as pupils at the institution".

Several important groups have visited the school, thereby receiving first-hand information concerning its facilities, program and policies. In each of the following instances, either the Superintendent or the school's Field Agent, personally conducted a tour of the campus and emphasized that enrollment is open to all New Jersey

Youth. September 10, 1951: A group was led by Mrs. Florence L. Farber, Helping Teacher of Sussex County. April 22, 1952: A group of 12 members of the Warren County Supervising Principals Association, led by Mr. Leon Fisher. April, 1953: A group of about 15 Social workers from the Camden area.

For several years the Bulletin has indicated that the word "Colored" was dropped from the original name of the school in 1948, upon the adoption of the new State Constitution. In the current issue, an amplifying statement has been added (p.4) to the effect that enrollment is open to all youth of the State. Copies of this publication are sent each **year** to all applicants and to many schools, social workers and public agencies throughout the State.

A factual article on the Bordentown School appears in the January, 1953 issue of this publication of the State Department of Education. While no specific mention is made of "race", the entrance requirements (p.97) indicate clearly that any resident of New Jersey who meets the conditions set forth therein will be admitted to the school. In addition, the article lists the address and telephone number of the school and invites inquiries.

In the April, 1954 issue of this publication of the New Jersey Education Association, a special article on the Bordentown School is presented on page 317. From this article the following is quoted: " In 1948, the school's name, which had evolved to 'The Manual Training and Industrial School for Colored Youth', was changed by legislative action to 'The Manual Training and Industrial School for Youth'. This change signified the opening of the doors of the school to all youth of the State, in keeping with the policy inherent in the then newly adopted State Constitution". This publication is the official organ of the New Jersey Education Association and therefore has wide circulation among the school teachers, counselors and administrators of the State.

The State Department of Education made it possible for a special statement

to be incorporated on the official printed program of the meeting of the New Jersey Secondary School Principals Association, held on May 1, 1953 at Rutgers University. The aforementioned statement gave a brief description of the school and asked the secondary principals of the State to help guide worthy pupils to the school.

Through the efforts of the State Department of Education, the Superintendent of the Bordentown School was scheduled on the official program of the New Jersey County Superintendents Association, during their meeting held at Princeton University on October 7, 1952. Copies of the school's Bulletin were distributed to all of the County Superintendents. A description of the Bordentown School was followed by a period of questions and answers. The Bordentown Superintendent specifically solicited the aid of the County Superintendents toward the achievement of racial integration at the Bordentown Manual Training and Industrial School.

At present, the school's staff of 62 employees includes only 2 white workers, both of whom serve in the non-professional division. One deterrent to racial integration on the professional level is possible the slow rate of personnel 'turn-over'. During the years 1951 through 1954, only one new classroom teacher has been employed and that vacancy (in home economics) occurred in April, necessitating an emergency appointment at a time when applicants for teaching positions were practically non-existent. The wife of a faculty member qualified for, and was appointed to the position.

On the clerical level, two efforts to fill vacancies from Civil Service lists of eligibles, most of all of whom were white, were not successful. The school contacted 23 clerk-bookkeeper eligibles in 1951-52, and 34 clerk-typists eligibles in 1952-53. None was interested. Efforts to procure clerical employees through Rider College May 28, 1952 were likewise unsuccessful.

Unfortunately, few Negroes are acquainted with the efforts toward integration for the reason that most contacts, by the nature of the problem, have been with white people. Some people are inclined to be critical because of our failure or re-

fusal to pursue a more dynamic or dramatic approach. For example, there was a suggestion that integration would be achieved if the State Board of Child Welfare were to 'commit' some of its white clients to the Bordentown School. The administration of this school is irrevocably of the conviction that any forced use of defenseless children to effect a complex change in the social pattern of an institution of this type would be unprincipled, even if it were legal, and that such efforts to integrate the school would be detrimental to race relations, and wholly unsuccessful. We are confident that the State Board of Child Welfare and the State Department of Education would concur in this opinion.

Currently, no white pupil is enrolled at this school. To date, only one white child has paid the matriculation fee required for enrollment, but in that instance family conditions forced the pupil's withdrawal within the matter of minutes. Although the integration goal has not been reached in this school, we find satisfaction in the fact that our attempts to achieve integration were maintained on a high level. We would be the first to agree with those who claim that more effort might have been made. In the very delicate area of human relations, the opportunities for trial and error are illimitable.

In addition to that, I have another statement that I would like to read to you.

The Manual Training and Industrial School for Youth, located at Bordentown, New Jersey has, for 69 years, rendered a service of great distinction to the people of New Jersey. The founders of this great institution and all of its illustrious teachers and other employees and friends who have nourished it through the years with sacrificial service, have reason to be proud of their accomplishment, and are worthy of the esteem and gratitude of the youth and the citizens whom they have served.

With respect to the proposal of the State Board of Education to terminate, as of June 30, 1955, this school which I am now honored and privileged to serve as

Superintendent, the following observations seem pertinent.

It may be desirable at the outset, even necessary, that I attempt to clarify the position of the Superintendent in this whole matter. Realizing my responsibility and obligation both to the State Board and to the Bordentown School, and also recognizing the authority of the State Board to formulate its own policy, I have refrained from assuming the role of an advocate of any specific proposal regarding the termination of the school or the future use of its facilities. However, recognizing also the inevitability of some substantial change in the life of this institution, I have sought to gather ideas and information and to make these available to the Board for whatever value they may have, I have assured the Board that it is my pleasure to cooperate wholeheartedly toward the development of a sound policy regarding the future use of the Bordentown facilities.

The Board's proposal has set in motion the sort of public discussion which is the very essence of our democratic way of life. Unfortunately, however, controversy regarding the resolution that was adopted by the Board is serving to eclipse discussion on the major objective of the future use of the Bordentown facilities. Most of the controversy stems from the fact that the resolution adopted by the Board bases its proposal to close the school on the failure of the school to achieve racial integration. Those who take exception to this promise feel that efforts to integrate were not sufficiently substantial. Arguments, pro and con, on this subject could become interminable for, although numerous efforts have been made to integrate the school, one can never say that everything was done that could have been done. Problems in human relations do not lend themselves to such finality. The difficulty of integrating Bordentown is accentuated by the fact that, unlike the ordinary public school, student enrollment is not governed by district or neighborhood lines. The students of Bordentown come from nearly all of the counties of the State and they are all free to enroll or not to enroll as they and their parents may decide. With respect to integration of the faculty, again the difficulty is accentuated by lack of

similarity to the ordinary local school community where several schools, in close proximity, make possible a shifting or mixing of teaching personnel when necessary or desirable. The difficulty of achieving racial integration at Bordentown is probably that of overcoming custom and tradition for there is hardly a parent in New Jersey who is not aware of his privilege as a citizen to enroll his child in a public school without regard to race.

An important original purpose of the school was that of providing vocational instruction that was not generally available throughout the State. The subsequent establishment of numerous vocational schools has increasingly met that need. Although there is yet a need for a vocational school in the Trenton-Bordentown area, the proposal to use the Bordentown facilities for this purpose raises the important questions of excessive local financing of a huge plant and of the adaptability of a boarding school plant to a local community vocational program. If the Boarding school plant can better serve some other State need, then it would be the course of wisdom to so use it and to construct a vocational school plant especially designed for its specific purpose.

In recent years, one of the main reasons for the existence of the Bordentown School in its present form has been the wholesome environment that it provides for those of its pupils who suffer the effects of broken homes. The value of this service should not be underestimated. Yet, in making a factual appraisal, we must be mindful of the work being done by other State agencies in the same area. For example, in response to our recent query, the State Board of Child Welfare said: "It was our conclusion that all of our children now attending your school will be able to adjust to foster home living and public school attendance".

In this connection it is pertinent to observe that, in my opinion, it is not feasible for the State to adequately address itself to the problem of the broken-home child on a state-wide basis in a single institution, such as that now located at Bordentown. Even if enrollment were limited to this type of pupil and the capacity

of the school increased to around 500 pupils, this would only be a small fraction of the total number of New Jersey's broken-home children.

If the State of New Jersey feels that the problem of the broken-home child requires action on a State-wide basis then, again, in my opinion, it would do well to consider the wisdom of establishing in each county where necessary, a public institution patterned after the Burlington County Children's Home. The distinguishing feature of this type of institution is that, although it becomes a home for the children in the sense that they live there, no attempt is made to provide formal instruction for them at that institution. Instead, the children all attend the regularly established schools of the local community. This precludes unnecessary duplication of facilities and by helping to keep per capita costs within reasonable limits should assure a better and more flexible educational opportunity for each child concerned.

In its true perspective, as I see it, it is really not a matter of terminating or closing the school but, rather, of converting it to a greater usefulness. That "greater usefulness" must be in terms of the most pressing needs of the State to which the school's facilities and personnel are reasonable adaptable. Recent news releases regarding the enormity of the mental hygiene problem in this State have convinced many citizens of the wisdom of the proposal to establish a research and treatment center directed toward prevention and cure of mental diseases and disorders.

We are told that there exists a waiting list of about 1200 mentally retarded children. Those persons who have expressed great concern that some of the present Bordentown pupils, if returned to their home communities, would become juvenile delinquents, would do well to consider whether it is the mentally normal child who is more susceptible to the temptations that result in juvenile delinquency. It must be remembered that many of the mentally retarded children are also, at the same time, victims of broken-homes. We might say that these poor children are exposed to a double jeopardy through no fault of their own.

Certainly, if it can be objectively determined that the Bordentown School can evolve to a greater and continuing usefulness in this area of service, and that its personnel (excluding the Superintendent) can be absorbed in the new program, then it would be to the advantage of our citizens to accept that proposal and to work diligently in the support thereof. Such a conversion, properly conceived and fostered would also serve to perpetuate the memory of the founders and builders of the parent institution.

Thank you.

MR. McCAY: Mr. John Lynch.

MR. JOHN F. LYNCH, Member, N. J. State Board of Education

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen: I am a member of the State Board of Education which voted for this resolution. Because of the lateness of the hour I would ordinarily hesitate to even rise, but I want to say to this Commission and to the distinguished speakers before me, for whom I have the most profound respect, that there has been a suggestion, perhaps a little bit emotional, but nevertheless directed to the integrity of the thinking of the members of the State Board in voting for this resolution, as Mr. Tate, for example, indicated. Because of that, I could not be true to myself if I did not stand here and tell you why we voted for that resolution.

Unfortunately, as we all know, this is a very ticklish problem when it develops into a public controversy such as it has today. It seems almost as if we have an aisle between us. I would rather think that we are all one, and that we are all thinking and acting toward the same objective, namely, the equal rights of every human being in the State of New Jersey.

I think I should tell you some of my background, and excuse me for being personal, but I think it should be mentioned for the sole reason of convincing you of my absolute conviction and my great pride that I can look myself in the face in the mirror every morning, if you please, on the question involving equality of race,

or religion, or anything like that. I had experience in teaching in a community which has always prided itself upon its equality for everyone. I taught in a high school where there was a goodly proportion of colored pupils - I would say approximately 25 or 30 percent - and I am also very proud of the fact that among my pupils were many colored pupils, two of whom, at least, became distinguished members of the ministry, and one of them I had particularly under my wing, and I will be happy to name him if anyone asks me. I am very proud of the fact that he was one of the finest pupils I ever had in my whole career of teaching. I happen now to be a member of the Bar, and I can also say that among my dearest friends are those of the colored race. My whole background has been motivated by a desire - especially when I became a member of the Board of Education - to be sure that everybody gets equal rights. And it so happens that I was on the committee which considered this particular question. And being a member of the Bar, I happen to be mindful, as perhaps you all are, of the import of the Supreme Court decision, and I read it in its own words. I read it in its historical background, its racial background, and its very, very American background. And I might say that when Mr. Tate quoted the resolution which we passed, he omitted - undoubtedly not intentionally - a certain paragraph which, to my way of thinking, is the essence, at least in this one respect, of the problem that confronted us, and it was a difficult problem. And that paragraph is this, which Mr. Tate omitted unintentionally: "Whereas, the Supreme Court, in its recent historical decision, has reemphasized that such separation has a tendency to regard the educational and mental development of Negro children, and to deprive them of some of the benefits which they would receive in a racially integrated school system, to all of which principles the State Board of Education does now, and has always subscribed."

The words of that "Whereas" clause, ladies and gentlemen, are "in haec verba", as they say, in the exact words from the Supreme Court decision on segregation. Now, we have before us in this State Board the testimony of the members of the Department.

who said that they had made every effort - and I believe them - to integrate this school. We had a right to rely upon that, and I still do, because despite all the fine speeches today, I have not heard one single word suggesting what else might have been done beyond what was done.

Now, when we made that decision, based upon that recommendation, we all thought about it very conscientiously, and believe me we did, despite the insinuations that may have been made here today. And I suggest to you ladies and gentlemen, and to the members of this Commission, that had we not recommended the closing of Bordentown, segregated in fact as it was, and is, we would be violating the spirit of the Supreme Court decision, because the fact is that it is a segregated school. And we were mindful full well of the evil which the Supreme Court pointed out when you have segregated Negro children, or even segregated white children, if you please, then education is retarded. They are deprived of the benefits of an integrated school system. And we have accomplished what the Supreme Court and our own principles dictate. We have - and I defy anyone to contradict this statement - paved the path for integration of every boy and girl in Bordentown by closing the Bordentown school. Again the fact, and not the emotion, is this, that whenever Bordentown is closed, every single one of those boys and girls will be integrated into a school, the object of which was the philosophy of the Supreme Court decision. And I may say - and I am happy that I am true to myself - that if I voted the other way on this resolution I would not be true to myself with regard to those principles of equality to which I personally, and I am sure, the other members of the Board of Education have dedicated themselves.

MR. McCAY: Dr. Marie S. Carpenter.

DR. MARIE S. CARPENTER, Member of the State Board of Control.

I sat here, and as I observed these proceedings, although I am a member of the StateBoard of Control, I know what one side is talking about when they reacted to the statement that Bordentown was being closed because it was a segregated school and

could not be integrated. Being a Negro, and being a student of history, and particularly Negro history, I knew the psychological effects. It was both depressing and infuriating. And then I sat here and listened to the other side - and I am not talking about the future of Bordentown, because that is an entirely different issue - I listened to the other side about the attempts at integration, and I thought to myself, as was said here, "Well, what else could have been done"? Even if the faculty has been contacted, even if more Negroes had been contacted, would the effect have been any different? I have tried to take an all inclusive view, and I sat here wondering which way would I go if I were on that State Board of Education?

I am a Negro. I believe in integration. I have worked for it for something like twenty or twenty-five years. I have seen it take place in Jersey City, for instance, where we closed a branch and went up to Central where everyone goes now. The net result is very much the same as this discussion here. We are losing our right of UCA. They are taking our branch away from us. And yet what happens at Central? Better facilities; integration of staff and voluntary members.

The only thing I can say is just to express the thoughts that have run through my mind as I sat here.

MR. McCAY: Now, the Commission feels that those who are opposed to the closing of the school are entitled to a rebuttal. However, before I call on Mr. Tate, I understand there is one more speaker, a member of the State Board of Education, who wishes to be heard.

MRS. MARGARET T. ARMSTRONG, Member, Board of Education of New Jersey

I am a resident of Stewartsville, New Jersey, in Warren County. I want to give you a little personal background too, because I think it has some bearing here. I am a mother; a home-maker; I have been a recreational worker. I am a member of the League of Women Voters, and was president for four years. I am a member of the Welfare Council. I have been chairman of the Children's Committee of Warren County,

a group organized of both lay and professional people, to work in the better interests of children. I am now a member of the State Board of Education, and honorary position for which I have great respect. I have lived all over these United States - in the South, the West, the North, and now the East. I have lived in many parts of Europe. I have gone to school in all white schools; I have gone to school with colored children. I have worked in close association with many talented and able Negro men and women in Cincinnati in the field of public recreation and education.

My youngest child, who died three years ago, once asked a baby sitter, in a series of baby sitters during the war, who does, incidentally, happen to have a darker skin, why her skin was dark. The wonderful reply given to that baby, I think, is one which I have maintained and which my family and my associates maintain - "Just as God has made flowers of different colors, so God has made people with skins of different colors".

I know no difference in people because of their color, nor their religion. We are all equal and have the same color in the eyes of our Maker. To me, people are persons, personalities, individuals. And I respect profoundly the struggle of any group to obtain recognition and a place of equality. That is why I have been amazed at the efforts of the groups opposing the closing of the school, because in so doing, I feel they are requesting unequal rights.

May I remind you of the remarks of Judge Hastings made at the commencement exercises of the Bordentown School in 1954, when he said in effect that the recent Supreme Court decision has made the Major Leagues open to the Negro race. You no longer can say there are barriers, or reasons why you cannot play ball in the big leagues. But, you have to be big league material.

I wish to appeal to your common sense to recognize that on this Board, we have not been insensitive to the problems which you have presented. We are all concerned with children; with their welfare; with the prevention of delinquency. But

I also want to remind you that our function is that of educating the children. I want to remind you that when, by prolonged and concentrated study, it was proven to the Committee of ten working most intensively on this Bordentown School, that the school was not an integrated school, and what is more, that for that very realistic reason, it could not compete with local industrial and vocational training schools. Believe me, the State Board of Education felt that it had a strong responsibility to recommend to the State of New Jersey that it could no longer maintain what was, in effect, a private boarding school for a small segment of the school population, whatever its race or religion, when the educational opportunities offered in the local communities could do an equally good job in a completely integrated situation.

I just wish to say that among the considerations given to the future use of Bordentown School there were many, and none of them was considered in any kind of a segregated way or nature. I think that some of our thoughts will suggest that to you -- that it be an addition to the School for the Deaf. There is a school which is handling a very special problem that no other school in the State of New Jersey could handle. It would be open to children of all ages, and any race, or religion. It could be a research center for the study of the educational training and techniques in educating all exceptional children; that would include the gifted, the retarded, the handicapped. And last of all, as a research center for the study of mental deficiencies.

I would like to add, also, that this idea was a parallel, and not in advance of, nor following the recommendation of the Governor. It was the very, very, considered and learned suggestion of our beloved Mrs. Katzenbach who certainly knows education after her thirty-four years on the State Board.

Thank you.

MR. McCAY: Mr. Tate.

MR. HERBERT TATE

Mr. Chairman, and members of the Committee: I have listened to the

statements, and I am very happy that the members of the State Board of Education did feel it necessary to tell us their reasons for voting for the resolution, and their reasons why integration could not work in the State of New Jersey.

First, let me refer to Superintendent Segear's report. And may I point out that he did not give you the date on which he made this report. The date of this report was December 27, 1954, which was later than the report of the State Board of Education on December 17, 1954. In other words, they had already decided that the school should be closed before Mr. Segear gave his report as to what had been done toward integration. It was an epitaph read by Superintendent Segear at the death of a glorious institution. I never before heard one man read himself out of a job. Superintendent Segear took office in 1951, but not until today does he come before a legislative body and say, "I have failed". Not until today do we hear that these children have been unfairly taken advantage of in an institution like Bordentown. He quotes that there was a suggestion that integration would be achieved if the State Board of Child Welfare were to commit some of its white clients to Bordentown School. And the administration of this school is irrevocably of the conviction that any forced use of defenseless children - mind you, now, children are at the age of 13 when they are admitted to Bordentown - but that to use defenseless children to affect the complex change in the social pattern of an institution of this type would be unprincipled. Yet no one said "defenseless colored children" were being committed to Bordentown.

In his later report, he said the Child Welfare Board said they could withdraw their children from Bordentown, and put them in the local schools. Now, how did they get there if they were not placed there by the Child Welfare Board? Of course, they had to get the statement from the parents that these children could go and attend Bordentown School. But, was any attempt ever made to approach the parents of those white children to determine whether or not their children would want to go

voluntarily to Bordentown? I say No.

And then Mr. Lynch -- and I might say I have the highest respect for Mr. Lynch, a member of the State Board of Education, a fellow member of the bar; I know what Hudson County has stood for; I know that there has never been one instance of segregation in the school systems of Hudson County - but he asked for the facts, and let's give him the facts.

The United States Supreme Court did outlaw segregation, and as an attorney, I say that Bordentown School was not, and is not today, a segregated school since our New Jersey Constitution went into effect. If mere words are to desegregate a school, then we have had the greatest play on integration, because Mr. Segear said that is what they used - words. And we have had words, and statements, and the mandate of our own New Jersey Constitution that all schools in New Jersey should be open to all youth, regardless of race, color, or creed. So from that moment on, Bordentown was not a segregated school. Because white children did not avail themselves of Bordentown does not make it a segregated school.

Mr. Lynch says he has not heard this afternoon anyone give a recommendation as to what should have been done. Well, let me tell you, Mr. Lynch, I was a commissioner of the State Commission on Civil Rights under your State Department of Education, and we introduced a program here to desegregate the school system. Now, at no time have I been able to find that the State Board of Education called in its own arm of the Division Against Discrimination that employs experts in the field of human relations, to give them assistance in integrating Bordentown. At no point have they appealed to the Colored Women's Federation in New Jersey to give them assistance; nor have they appealed to the State Child Welfare Board, or the Department of Institutions and Agencies. Those are the facts, and if that had been done, as Mrs. Morris said, ten thousand colored people would have rolled up their sleeves in the State of New Jersey and gone about getting white children on the same economic

level, and who wanted the advantages given to them by Bordentown, and they would have been enrolled in Bordentown.

Mr. Segear refers to one white child that came to Bordentown and stayed there a matter of minutes. Was that white child recruited by the recruiting agent, the field agent? For years Bordentown has had a field representative, but Mr. Segear and the State Board of Education said that was no longer necessary. And I believe in 1952 they discharged, or abolished the office. It was necessary even then to have a field representative. But to say this white child enrolled at Bordentown, was he recruited by the faculty of Bordentown? No. Was he recruited by the State Board of Education? No. Was he recruited by Mr. Segear? No. I will tell you how he was recruited. He had a little colored friend in Camden, New Jersey, a playmate, a student of Bordentown, who told him of the glories of Bordentown and the advantages of attending. And influenced by that little playmate, he said he wanted to go to Bordentown, and he enrolled in Bordentown. But, unfortunately, no one went further in human relations, and the little colored boy who was a student at Bordentown did not reach the other members of the family, and the brother of this little white boy came to school and said, "This is no place for you". And we lost that one.

Now, I could go on and tell you of other instances, and since Mr. Lynch asked for the facts, and is a lawyer, I would like to confine myself to the facts. I could tell you of other instances where people in some of our agencies have attempted to recruit children, white children, to Bordentown, and when the names were submitted to the supervisor, the supervisor has said, "Don't you know that that is a Negro school, and we will not okay those children being sent there?"

Mrs. Armstrong, the other member of the State Board of Education, is the first member of the State Board of Education who has revealed a reason for closing Bordentown. And I am certain that if they searched the record, she did not vote for this resolution, because she did not place the closing of Bordentown on failure of

integration. But she stated to you that there was another reason, and that she thought there was a greater need for Bordentown. And I think, out of her broad experience, she would join with us in saying that she would not agree that Bordentown could not be integrated.

So, on behalf of the many organizations that are gathered here this afternoon, and the many speakers that have come to the aid of the Bordentown Alumni, and the friends of Bordentown, I wish to thank this Commission for our opportunity to be heard, and to praise God again for our democratic processes in New Jersey. May that banner always wave, and may we find that citizenship here will always be upheld to all groups, regardless of race, color, or creed.

MR. McCAY: That concludes our hearing. We wish to thank all of those who have participated, and to thank the other persons who attended, who did not speak, but who were here to manifest their interest in this subject.

(Hearing concluded)

* * * * *

The following telegram was received by the Commission:

The Board of Directors of the Urban League of Eastern Union County requests the committee studying Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 22 to recommend that the plant at Bordentown Manual Training School be transferred from State Department of Education to the State Department of Institutions and Agencies for their use as a mental health laboratory.

Benjamin A. Collier, Executive Secretary

The following resolution was received by the Commission:

Resolution from the A. M. E. Zion Conference of New Jersey

Reference: The Bordentown School.

In reading and hearing of the proposed plan of the State to change the present status of the Bordentown School; and realizing the historical origin of the Bordentown School, and the very significant role it has played in the education of a segment of the youth of the State of New Jersey; and further, realizing the great potentialities that it still has to make a great contribution to the State, we the ministers and laymen of the A. M. E. Zion Church of the State of New Jersey, hereby endorse the resolution presented to Governor Meyner by the Alumni, and interested citizens of the State of New Jersey to retain the school, and integrate the same. We feel that this will be a fair and just decision.

Rt. Rev. H. B. Shaw, Presiding Bishop of the
New Jersey Conference of the A. M. E.
Zion Church
