

UFT Would Support Long Island Strike

The United Federation of Teachers threw its "deeds and dollars" behind a strike being threatened for next Tuesday by the Plainview (L. I.) Federation of Teachers. Albert Shanker, UFT president, made the pledge for the 38,000-member organization at a news conference at union headquarters, 300 Park Ave. South. Jerry Berger, president of the Plainview Federation, said the teachers had scheduled the strike because "the Board of Education does not permit teachers to participate in decision-making and will not sign a written contract." Union officials said it would be the first teachers' strike ever held on Long Island, and that more than 450 of the system's 590 would take part. The system has 11,000 students in 12 schools.

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Allen Asks Censure Of Teachers in Strike —And They Ask His

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Education Editor

FIZZLE

Militant teachers, who have increasingly used strikes to win higher salaries and more say-so in school policy, got away with it again yesterday.

Almost four weeks ago, Dr. James Allen Jr., State Commissioner of Education, took an unprecedented step:

He issued a stay order against teachers who had announced a strike for March 8 against the public schools of Plainview-Old Bethpage, L. I. The teachers, members of the Plainview Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO, struck anyway for six days—in defiance of Dr. Allen's order and in defiance of the state's Condon-Wadlin Act, which prohibits strikes by public employees.

There was considerable fanfare about Dr. Allen's intervention, followed by some prickly questions:

◀Would the Commissioner revoke the licenses of the striking teachers (as he is empowered to do under Section 305, subdivision 7 of the State Education Law)?

◀Would he suspend the strikers, who at one time forced seven of the 12 schools in Plainview to close down?

Dr. Allen had said privately he might well suspend licenses of the striking teachers.

Yesterday, the fanfare turned into something of a fizzle. Dr. Allen announced that he had imposed a "formal censure and reprimand" on 367 individual teacher-strikers "because you have failed to exercise professional responsibility by participating in the said strike." The Commissioner also ordered that "this censure and reprimand be entered on your record of license and certification in the State Education Department, and that a copy be filed in the office of the Board of Education of your school district."

The reaction to the light slap on the wrist from the Plainview teachers' union showed the lack of concern there. Jerry Berger, union president, said: "I don't think it will create any problem for any person in Plainview." And the union's Executive Committee said last night that it will call on its parent organization, the Empire State Federation of Teachers, to urge Gov. Rockefeller "to censure and reprimand the Commissioner for his anti-teacher stand."

Dr. Robert F. Savitt, Plainview school superintendent, and Irving Woliver, school-board president, had no comment yesterday afternoon. Mr. Berger did add that he would consult his attorneys about the possibility of an appeal.

But Dr. Allen defended his order. Reached by telephone in Santa Fe, N. M., where he was attending a meeting of the interstate Compact for Education, he said:

"I had to consider the

children as well as the teachers. What I have done has never been done before; after long consideration, I decided this was the best thing to do. Yes, I took the least punitive action, but this decision doesn't mean that it will be the same next time. I have never said before that a strike was 'unprofessional conduct.' I have now taken action, which is more than anybody else has ever done."

The "next time" to which Dr. Allen referred could happen in either Buffalo or Rochester. The Buffalo Teachers Federation, a 2,300-member affiliate of the National Education Association, has announced that it would strike April 19 to achieve higher teachers' salaries and better working conditions. American Federation of Teachers Local 39, AFL-CIO, representing some 300 teachers, has also announced a Buffalo strike, with no date set.

In Rochester, the Rochester Teachers Association, an NEA affiliate, has gathered 1,300 resignations from the city's 2,230 teachers, to be handed in unless pay raises and other issues are settled. No date has been set for the mass resignations, and the dispute is now in arbitration.

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