

# 7 P.C. of Church Schools Closed in Last 3 Years

New York — While the enrollment in the nation's Catholic elementary and secondary school system has declined 10 per cent since the Fall of 1967, the annual cost of operating the schools has increased \$200 million. The church has closed 7 per cent of its schools in three years.

A sharp drop in the number of teaching-Sisters and a proportionate rise in the ranks of the lay teachers drawing larger salaries than the religious was a major factor in the rising operational costs.

These statistics were disclosed by the National Catholic Education Association in a report that was based on information from its new computer-operated data bank. The bank, established in 1969 under a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, compiled the data from records in almost 12,000 schools.

There has been a constant erosion of parochial schools over the last three years as pastors and diocesan officials have eliminated or consolidated their schools when it became economically unfeasible to carry on. A recent example was the Buffalo Diocese, where parents were notified that 10 schools would be closed next year.

The report showed that tuition, which has been the backbone of parochial school financing, now pays only one-third of the cost in elementary schools and three-quarters in the high schools.

The average elementary pupil cost is now \$200 a year against \$145 in 1968.

The secondary school cost is

\$435, against \$335 in 1968. The public school cost is \$717.

Although there are fewer schools and pupils, the report said that the total number of full-time and part-time professional staff members increased over the three years to 195,000, from about 188,000. Most of the increase involved part-time staff.

The total number of full-time priests, brothers and sisters at both school levels decreased to about 87,000, from 99,400, a decline of 12 per cent. The number of the religious dropped to 51 per cent from 59 per cent in elementary schools and to 55 per cent from 62 per cent in the secondary schools.

The report noted that this decrease in the number of religious was a financial blow because their "contributed services" helped keep costs down.

The report cited as an example of contributed services the following:

"If a sister's salary evaluation was \$6,000 (as related to a lay teacher's salary) and she was paid \$1,800 in addition to \$2,000 worth of room and

board, this sister would reflect \$2,200 of contributed services."

It was estimated that such contributed services amounted to \$225-million in elementary schools in 1969-70 and \$204-million in secondary schools.

On the basis of average elementary school figures reported, about 74 per cent of the full-time lay teachers are paid annual salaries of from \$4,000 to \$7,000 and 72 per cent of the secondary school teachers receive from \$5,000 to \$8,000.

A report on the ethnic distribution of pupils showed that black and Puerto Rican pupils constitute 10.8 per cent of the enrollment in elementary schools and 7.5 per cent in the high schools.

## VOTING AT 15

Quincy, Mass. — (RNS) — Salem Lutheran church here has decided to lower the voting age on congregational matters from 21 to 15. The action to allow all confirmed members to vote recognized "the vital role of youth in the total life of the church."

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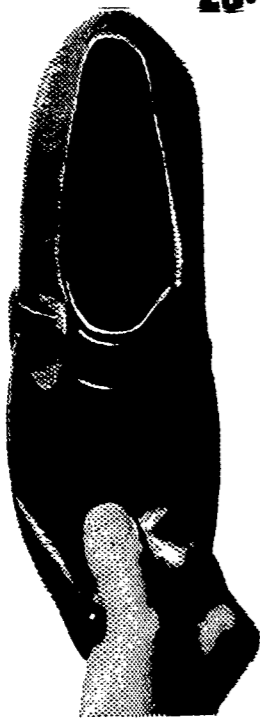
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