



REV. RUSSELL J. OBMANN—ADMINISTRATOR OF ROSARY HIGH SCHOOL

SCHOOLS TODAY

Problems of Opening New School Discussed

By KING McELROY

Globe-Democrat Staff Writer

WHEN THE REV. RUSSELL J. OBMANN took the keys to Rosary Parish High School, 1720 Redman ave., North St. Louis County, last summer, he discovered quickly he was out in the country.

"The next morning I saw some cows and horses eating our grass," he said. "Then, I noticed that there are two truck gardens in our vicinity."

Father Obmann, administrator of the high school, and Sister Marie Pierre, S. S. N. D. (School Sisters of Notre Dame), principal, had two months to get ready for about 200 freshmen—the first class in the new school.

"During those two months, Sister and I worked every day—sometimes seven days a week—to get things in shape," he said. When school begins in September, Father Obmann was confronted with a number of problems.

"We had no upperclassmen to guide the freshmen in their first few weeks," he said. "We had to lead them by the hand and establish traditions day-by-day."

Because some of the students had poor study habits, the school faculty had to concentrate on fundamentals the first few weeks.

School officials also found starting an extracurricular program difficult because most of the students left school on buses following dismissal in the afternoon.

WHAT SOLVED THE PROBLEM was to place an activities period in the middle of the school day. "To do this," Father Obmann said, "we started school a bit earlier and ended it a bit later and thus created a half-hour period for activities."

The students had a little trouble in deciding on the nickname for the basketball team. At first, the student council voted that it be the Rockets, but after some complaints the name was changed to Rebels.

Father Obmann was especially delighted in the basketball team's first victory over the Laboure freshman squad. The reason: the priest was administrator of Laboure High School prior to his new assignment.

"We have most of the activities that any other high school has," he said. "We have all sports except football."

The school officials were surprised that the students liked the cafeteria food so well. "We expected to have all sorts of gripes," the administrator said. "Instead, there was nothing but praise for the food."

Another problem that never materialized was the formation of a parent-teachers' association.

"We thought it would be difficult to form such an organization because the students come from seven parishes," Father Obmann said. "But almost all of the parents showed up at the first meeting we called for this purpose."

The school mascot is a dog named Prince. Since the convent is located in the school, the dog also protects the nuns at night.

"I don't know what Prince would do if he saw a burglar," Father Obmann said, "but I know one thing, he sure hates me."

In addition to his job as administrator, Father Obmann is assistant superintendent of the Catholic schools in the St. Louis Archdiocese and assistant pastor of Ascension Parish in Normandy.

Next year he expects an enrollment of 450 students. About 250 students will be freshmen. Of course, this won't be near the school's capacity of 1,000, but the way the north county is growing it won't be long.