

VICAR ANSWERS SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT CRITICISMS

Cainscross concern at church 'obstructionism'

THE members of the Parent-Teachers' Association of the Cainscross Church of England school are in critical mood. They are puzzled by a proposal to buy a new vicarage and by the closing of the road from Church-road to Victory Park and are wondering why schemes for improvements at the School have not been brought into being.

In a letter to the Editor of "The Citizen" forwarded by their secretary (Mr. H. W. Collins), the Committee writes: "We have read with astonishment your report dated January 27 that Cainscross is to have a new vicarage. In view of the constant plea of the Church that no money is available for various essential works—repairing the surface of the road to the School, for instance—we find it incomprehensible that a new vicarage has been purchased at the present time.

Defy description

"We note also from your report that extensions are to be made at the School, yet the incumbent, the Rev. H. G. Wicks, at the School prize-giving on January 26 expressed his opinion that since a new school is proposed at Cashes Green no extensions at Cainscross are likely or, indeed, desirable. We should be curious to know if these views are endorsed by his superiors.

"Furthermore, sanitary arrangements at the School are ridiculously inadequate and a menace to health and the canteen facilities are ludicrous. We note that the Church in-

tends to erect a new church hall 'well appointed with lavatory accommodation' but in the meantime our children attend the Church School in conditions which almost defy description.

"The Church will tell us, as so often in the past, that it is no concern of theirs, but they must forgive us a certain degree of scepticism over this. After all we have been promised a new canteen since 1949, to mention one item alone.

"Again the Stroud UDC have agreed to arrange for the Victory Park pavilion to be used as a temporary canteen but the Vicar has closed the road to the Park and refuses to allow its use. In his speech at the prize-giving he said the UDC would have to find their own access.

"Finally, may we say that there is a growing concern in the parish over the persistent 'obstructionism' shown by the Church in its dealings with these (and other) matters, and we should appreciate it if this Committee's views could be afforded some publicity through the courtesy of your paper."

Mr. Collins told a "Citizen" representative that his Committee understood that one of

the difficulties in regard to the erection of the canteen was that the Church or Vicar would not agree to its use for any other purpose than for meals.

"In view of the ridiculously overcrowded conditions at the school, a situation which cannot be immediately relieved if it is decided to build a school at Cashes Green, it appears to us it is a condition which the Ministry will not accept" he added.

Only temporary solution

Interviewed by a "Citizen" representative on the points raised, the Vicar commented that the Parent-Teachers Association was not in any way concerned with the management of the School but, as an unofficial body, was mainly interested in matters relating to the welfare of the children.

The provision of a new vicarage, he stated, had nothing to do with the Church but was the concern of the Church Commissioners although at a later stage it was possible that the Parochial Church Council might be required to raise a portion of the cost.

"As regards the question of school extension, all the information I have is that which appeared in a report in "The Citizen" to the effect that the Minister of Education proposes to erect a school at Cashes Green and that the suggested extensions at Cainscross and Ebley will no longer be necessary," said the Vicar.

"I did say at the Parent-Teachers meeting that it was wrong, in my opinion for little children to have to be brought all the way down from Cashes Green to Cainscross to school and also that the proposed additional classrooms here would not solve the problem because statistics prove that the population will be too large. Additional classrooms here would only be a temporary solution."

Questioned regarding the proposed canteen, the Vicar said he had provided land from his glebe for the site of a canteen and the managers had passed the plans.

May be re-sited

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Answering questions regarding the closing of the road leading to Victory Park, Mr. Wicks said that was a matter which involved the Parochial Church Council and the Diocesan Dilapidations Board.

The road, he explained, was a private one and had only been closed to vehicular traffic, pedestrians still being allowed to use it without let or hindrance. The step was taken with Diocesan approval.

"The road is ecclesiastical property and no contribution has been received by the church from any source towards its maintenance," he said.

Unreasonable

"To put the road in good order would cost a large sum and while the Stroud UDC would no doubt be prepared to pay a portion of the cost the Church Council is not willing to raise money for repairs since the vehicular traffic that passes over the road on Church business is negligible," he remarked. The Church Council, Mr. Wicks commented, was constantly committed to raising money for Church fabric repairs and it was unreasonable to expect them to provide money for the maintenance of property used and damaged by others.