EDITORIAL

When the JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL THOUGHT began publishing in 1967, few educators thought of questioning the traditional relationship between school boards and teachers, and between school boards and parents. But as we enter our fifth year of publication, we find these traditional relationships under attack as never before. Indeed, some observers have questioned the very survival of public education.

It seems safe to predict that "teacher power" and "parent power" will be two of the major challenges facing public education during the 1970s. Teacher power surfaced in the late 1960s with strikes and the threat of strikes in many areas of North America. The desire for a say in decisions affecting curriculum and working conditions lay behind the economic demands made by these increasingly militant teachers. Professional status may replace salary demands as the major issue in teacher bargaining during the 1970s. But if education is a professional function, it is also a public function. And parents are beginning to get into the act. This is only partially attributable to growing taxpayer reaction to rising educational costs. Far more important may be increased parental awareness of the socialization role of the school. Related to this is the growing trend towards participatory democracy. No longer is the public willing to entrust decisions solely to the "experts"; everywhere people are demanding a say in shaping the decisions that will affect their lives. The schools in the 1970s will find it increasingly difficult to shield themselves from this phenomena. Parents are demanding a say in shaping the school program that affects their children.

Advocates of increased teacher power are placing their hopes in models such as the public trust, first advanced a decade ago by Frank MacKinnon. He urged that individual schools be organized as public trusts (on the model of crown corporations), with financing from the public purse but with curriculum and working decisions made by the school's own staff. The plan would undoubtedly increase the professional role and status of the teachers, but it would still leave parents on the outside. On the other hand, the community control model would give parents, not the local school board nor the teachers, the major responsibility in deciding such issues as staffing and curriculum. This type of school has emerged in black neighborhoods of many American cities, because the traditional type of public school organization was charged with failing to meet the special needs of its clients. This plan pleases the advocates of parent power but leaves the teachers with their greater knowledge of education, in a subordinate role.

More recently, educators have begun to search for compromise organizational patterns so that the interests of increased teacher profession-

alism and increased parental responsibility may be brought together and harmonized, rather than work at cross purposes to the potential detriment of public education. Both the voucher system and the abolition of school attendance boundaries have been suggested as possibilities. Both allow parents and students some choice of schools, while at the same time providing opportunities for teaching staffs to plan their own programs in the competition for clients. Ian Paterson's article, "Education Vouchers: An Administrative Challenge?" first introduced JOURNAL readers to the voucher idea in April 1968.

The editorial committee of the JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL THOUGHT invites readers to speculate on the future organization and administration of public education. Will increased teacher and parental militancy act as a threat or a stimulus to schools in the 1970s? Can these two seemingly opposing forces be harmonized for the good of the public school or will they tear the school systems apart? Indeed, is our traditional concept of public education viable in the post-industrial age?