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William Ritchie to Mr. Meredith (5 October 1962)

William Ritchie

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Answered 11/29/62

The Board of Education for the Township of Scarborough

PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE

SCHOOL West Hill Public School,

ADDRESS Scarborough, Ontario.

DATE Oct. 5, 1962.

Dear Mr. Meredith,

I have intended to write to you for some time now to express my gratification for the task you have taken upon yourself and hope this short note may help lighten somewhat the terrible burden that rests upon your shoulders. I am very proud of you and the way you have conducted yourself throughout the ordeal thus far and knowing that you possess a great inner strength and a consciousness in the service you are rendering, not only to your own race, but for all of us who consider ourselves members of the human race, am confident that in the end will make not only Mississippi a better place to live, but also the whole of your country.

I have travelled fairly extensively throughout the south and have met many, many people from both sides, so that for a Canadian, I feel I have a pretty good picture of what it must be like for you. One of my best friends is Russ Fincham of Manassas, Virginia, a school principal like myself. Russ and I have sat over a number of nights hashing and rehashing this whole question and as Russ is coloured, I have a picture of his side of things that few whites have. As I have said to him many times, he thinks too much, meaning that he gets himself worked up into a dither by fretting over the problem constantly. It is going to take more courageous people like ~~you~~ yourself to completely knock this thing over, so that guys like Russ, and Charlie Robinson, and a dozen others I know, who don't possess the courage you do, may see a better chance for their children. Also, I can see that the coming generation of young Negroes are just not going to take this nonsense too much longer and it will be Russ' kids, and Charlie's that will eventually take the bull by the horns and settle it once and for all.

May I once again tell you how proud I am of you and wish you all the success in the world in your struggle. May I add just one more thing? The whites who struggled so hard against your admission to "Old Miss" are to be pitied rather than despised for they are only "half-people", seeing the world, or half of it through "colour-blinded" eyes. Thanks for being so patient and if you have any problems at any time, or wish any help, write me in care of the above address.

Note

Tours truly,
William S. Ritchie
Principal, West Hill Public School
Scarborough, Ont., Canada.

P.S. Please note that, as you can tell by the typing, my secretary was absent to-day.