

PRAYER UNCALLED FOR.

**Attorney General Walker Decides That It
Should Not Be on the Programme
for Teachers' Institutes.**

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo., July 7.—[Special:] The question raised by Father McLaughlin was considered of sufficient importance by the department of education to warrant securing the opinion of the attorney general thereon. The opinion has been secured, as is evidenced by the following letter:

CITY OF JEFFERSON, July 5.

To Hon. L. E. Wolfe, Superintendent Public Instruction.

DEAR SIR:—You request my reply to the following inquiries:

“First, has the county institute board any right or do they have the power to say whether the conductor shall open with singing and prayer each morning?”

“Second—Is it unlawful to open each morning with singing and prayer?”

“Third—Can a school board permit the use of a public school building for religious purposes?”

First—The county institute board selects the conductor of each institute and they are subject, within the provisions of the law authorizing their appointment, to such boards. The purpose of the creation of such boards and the holding of institutes is to provide a uniform method for examination of teachers for the public schools. Such teachers, besides their qualifications in the branches to be taught, must possess good moral characters.

Second—While it is in violation of no express statute to open an institute with singing and prayer, it is no part of the regular exercises of such body. Institutes are purely creatures of the statute, as such, their proceedings must, in accordance with both the letter and spirit of the federal and state constitutions, be secular. Any other course would subject those in attendance, no matter how diverse their religious beliefs, to the spiritual direction of the conductor then in charge.

While the state spreads its protecting arm over every citizen, irrespective of his faith, and extends ample aid for the education of his children, it has in its organic law expressly forbidden the recognition of any religion or form of worship.

Third—A public school can only be used for the purpose for which erected, viz.: The holding of public school therein, unless such other use has been authorized by a majority of the voters of the district voting at an annual or special meeting. Respectfully,

R. F. WALKER.