

It's Elementary: 8/16 Men Teachers Are

By JAN BURNS

Dave Hutchinson is an outdoor type who owns a marina. What he wants to do is teach kindergarten.

Not many men share his ambition.

But, said Dr. Carroll Sawin, personal director for Lincoln public schools, "I think my attitude reflects the general opinion all over the country: we'd like to have more good, qualified men in elementary education."

"And salaries," he said, "are getting up to where a man can afford to consider elementary teaching seriously."

More men are entering the field, said Dr. O. W. Kopp, chairman of the University of Nebraska elementary education department, "but nowhere near as many as there ought to be."

In education ideals, men make up at least 25% of the elementary school faculty.

Lincoln's public elementary schools this fall will have only about 10 men classroom teachers but about half the 32 principals will be men.

'Some Contact'

Dr. Sawin said, "We try our best to provide some male contact in all the elementary schools. If we don't have a man classroom teacher, we have a man principal, assistant principal, physical education or instrumental music instructor. We can't always do as well as we'd like."

A sampling of men who've tried elementary teaching expressed enthusiasm about the job and the kids.

Dave Hutchinson, for one, wants to stay with kindergarten teaching, though there's some feeling that male skills fit better in the upper elementary grades.

When he decided to be a kindergarten teacher, "people said it 'wasn't done,'" Mr. Hutchinson recalled, "or that I'd just be zipping up coats and blowing noses."

"It really isn't that way," he contended — and as student teacher last semester at Mary O'Connor kindergarten, the new Nebraska Wesleyan University graduate proved his point.

"It was an interesting experiment," Dr. Sawin commented. "I think we came off quite well."



Sam Nelson . . .

Happy Pupils

Said Mrs. Gordon Yocum, Mr. Hutchinson's supervising teacher at O'Connor, the Huntington School annex, "The children were just overjoyed and the parents said they were 'so glad my child had a chance to have a man teacher this early.' There were no bad comments or embarrassing situations all semester."