

Echoes in the

By John Stove

Saginaw Arthur Hill's action in deserting the Saginaw Valley Regional to compete at Birmingham, and thereby qualify more men for the State track meet aroused enmity in certain quarters — particularly in Battle Creek.

A Battle Creek Enquirer-News clipping charged that the Hills' action "deprived many athletes in the Birmingham area of chances to go to the State meet," and argued that "such practices are not in keeping with the spirit of Americanism which is predicated upon the motto of 'live and let live.'" The Battle Creek scribe urged the State to take action to define the rights of teams to select their own competitive fields.

If the State track meet is designed solely to encourage good fellowship, then the Hills unquestionably did the wrong thing—and Pontiac is also to blame since it has for years competed in a Regional separate from the Valley Conference. But we understand that regional meets are held to reduce the field and qualify the best boys for the State meet—so we say that if the third-place and fifth-place teams in the Valley feel they can win Regional titles elsewhere, more power to them.

That is just what happened. The Hills and Pontiac both captured Regional headpieces, after placing third and fifth in the Valley meet. Four Valley schools placed in the first six in the State indoor carnival and they had no desire to kill off each other until the State outdoor finals.

The fact is that Coach Bill Kelly sought to enter the Five-A Regional but was told it was closed to conference teams. Battle Creek edged Ann Arbor in the Five-A, so perhaps the Cereal City's attack on Arthur Hill was partly due to a fear of tougher competition in the State finals.