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# THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA NEWS LETTER

Published weekly by the  
University of North Carolina  
for its Bureau of Extension.

JANUARY 15, 1919

CHAPEL HILL, N. C.

VOL. V, NO. 3

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Entered as second-class matter November 14, 1914, at the Postoffice at Chapel Hill, N. C., under the act of August 24, 1912.

## BIG-SCALE SCHOOL POLICIES

### LOCAL SCHOOL INTEREST

Have you ever thought about our public school system and its place in our scheme of life? Oh, yes! I know you have given your school an occasional passing thought and then have immediately gone on thinking and planning about your crops, or your new shipment of goods, or your next case in court. What real, downright, serious thinking have you done, though, about our whole plane of public education as a plan for citizen making, as a means of growing up a race of intelligent, energetic, thrifty, well-set-up, straight thinking and hard hitting world citizens? Do you see the public school as a great and powerful institution of society the success and efficiency of which makes or unmakes civilization, or is it to you simply and solely the place where the kids are taught to read, write and cipher?

For long years we thought that whether or not our boys and girls knew how to read, write and cipher was our own personal business, and every man was responsible for the education of only his own children, but we slowly came to see that a neighborhood where the children had been taught was a more desirable neighborhood in which to live than was the one where the children had not been taught. If you doubt this statement turn to any one of your daily papers and read the advertisements of farms or cottages and see how many of them mention the nearness of the property to good schools as a desirable feature. So we were willing to agree to the establishment of a school for all the children and pay our share in supporting it. If we could not raise money enough by ourselves we felt that the county ought to help us out. Now why? Clearly we felt that we were educating our boys and girls not alone for our own community but we were at the same time making our own neighborhood and the entire county a better place to live in, therefore, the county as a whole ought to help pay for our schools. So far, so good.

### State-Wide Policies

Then, the state governments took to having a look at our efforts and they found certain inequalities of educational privilege for the children, like poor houses, short terms, poorly prepared teachers, and the like. It was inevitable that this should be so for some districts and some counties were poorer than others and were unable to do, perhaps, all they would have liked to do. Realizing this and realizing that the best interests of the state at large demand as high an intellectual status of its people as possible the state has decreed that it will come in with its state funds and aid those communities less able to supply their own needs providing the folks there will themselves try to do a little more in a financial way. So there grows up the idea of co-operation between district, township, county and state in the effort to provide sufficient funds for universal education.

But why were our state governments so greatly interested in the education of all the children? Did you ever stop to think how few of the boys and girls who are educated in any given community ever stay there and live out their lives in the town or community of their birth? The state realized this and it saw how these inequalities of educational privilege tended to spread poorly and partially educated citizens over the state. The communities which had become desirable because they had provided schools for their children were a center toward which the uneducated were drawn and what had been desirable localities because of the high intellectual status of their citizens became less and less desirable because of the influx of the uneducated. The state realized that it had a duty toward the more intelligent and better educated centers to protect them in their efforts to produce a worthy type of citizens. Therefore, it considered itself justified in giving financial encouragement on a co-operative plan to the less able communities. In this way the state governments hoped to be able to make all parts of their respective states desirable and attractive places of abode.

Then, too, the states looked upon the plan of helping to provide more adequate

educational advantages as a good business investment. As time went on it became evident that as the cost of schools went up the cost of criminal prosecution went down and it was a good investment in terms of dollars and cents to aid an institution which would so manifestly help to reduce crime and at the same time produce a worthy type of young citizen who would contribute to state progress and welfare.

Finally, in some of the states (among them North Carolina), the Bill of Rights declares that it is the right of all citizens to receive an education and therefore the state governments are in duty bound to protect the citizens in their rights; and if local communities will not or cannot give the children their rights to an education, it is the solemn and manifest duty of the state governments to secure these rights to the children. Our forefathers made it incumbent on us to provide adequately for the instruction of their children's children.

### A Nation-Wide Policy

So now our national government for much these same reasons is convinced that it, too, has a part to play in cooperating with the states and local communities in helping to provide adequate opportunities for an education to all the children. For long years it has been a fixed policy that the national government should have no place in the management of our public schools and should not contribute to their support and we have rigidly adhered to the policy. Of late years, however, nation-wide interests—like agriculture and highway building, for instance—have sought the aid of the federal government in several different ways and among these ways has been that of aiding in the education of agricultural experts, dairymen, foresters, horticulturists, and the like. The great national government has gladly rendered such assistance as lay in its power to those interests seeking it. Now it has finally come to see how necessary it is that in other lines of educational endeavor it have a part and a voice. Realizing how much it can do and how sadly some sections of our great country need its aid it has awakened to the dawn of a new day and seeks a means of co-operating with state and local governments in their struggle against ignorance, illiteracy, alien populations, disease, poverty, and despair. The national government wishes to be an ally with the state and local governments in their war against intellectual indifference.

### The Smith Education Bill

With this idea in mind Senator Hoke Smith of Georgia has introduced into Congress a bill intended to secure national co-operation in affairs of public education, the bill known as S. 4987. In brief, these are the provisions of the bill:

1. That Congress shall appropriate annually the sum of one hundred million dollars as a federal fund for aiding the development of certain features in public education.
2. That seven and one-half millions of that fund shall be used for the elimination of illiteracy.
3. That seven and one-half millions shall be used for the Americanization of foreigners.
4. That fifty millions be used to help in equalizing educational opportunities throughout the United States, particularly in the village and country schools.
5. That twenty millions be spent for health education and recreation.
6. That fifteen millions be spent to aid the several states the better to prepare teachers for the schools, particularly in the country.
7. That a United States Department of Education at Washington be created with its Secretary a member of the President's Cabinet.
8. That any state in order to get any part of this federal fund for any one or more of these purposes must itself appropriate a like sum out of state funds for the same purpose or purposes.

This is without doubt the most far-sighted, far-reaching, and forward looking bill that has ever been introduced into Congress in the interest of education. It recognizes a national duty toward the children of our nation. It places the em-

### THE FARMERS' VIEW

Education is the basis of all progress.

Rural education sets the solid standards of our citizenship and our patriotism. It is here the ideals of American government find their bulwark.

New and higher standards of citizenship must be set up in our rural schools to meet the test of the new international ethics that herald a new dawn for all humanity.

Only as the rural citizen of the future learns his true relationship to industry as a whole, to his own country, and to his fellowmen in other countries, can we hope for the solid upbuilding of our rural life which is the mainstay of our civilization.—The Farmers' Open Forum.

phasis of educational effort on the places most needing attention. It demonstrates the willingness of the national government to co-operate with states and local communities for pupil and citizen welfare. It realizes that the children are "the hope of the world," as Herman Hagedorn says, and it provides that the hope shall not end in hope alone but in a realization of the rich promise which these boys and girls in our country schools give.

### Our Share \$2,578,000

Now you are asking about how much North Carolina will get under the provisions of such a bill. For the elimination of illiteracy the annual income from the national fund would be \$575,253. We would put in a like sum and that would give us a total fund with which to fight illiteracy, of \$1,150,506 almost \$4 for each illiterate.

Perhaps you think we have no immigrants in North Carolina and so would get nothing on the score of Americanizing the foreigner. As a matter of fact we had in 1910 over 6,000 alien immigrants. That would give us a right to \$3,381 from the federal fund. We would raise an equal amount and have a total of \$7,762 annually with which to help in educating the foreign born.

To improve our public schools of less than college grade we could have \$80.34 per teacher employed. We now have 14,550 teachers employed and so would get \$1,168,947 from the federal fund as an equalizing fund. We would have to raise an equal amount and so our total equalizing fund for this purpose would be \$3,337,894. Fortunately we have just recently voted a six-months' school amendment to our constitution or we could not benefit under the provisions of this section of the bill, since to get any of this money a state must provide 24 weeks of school in each district, enforce an adequate compulsory attendance law, and use only the English language of instruction in the common school branches.

To aid in the effort toward teaching pupils and parents how to secure and maintain better physical health North Carolina would receive \$479,867 each year. Double it and our total fund available for physical and health education would be close to a million dollars annually. It seems strange that an agricultural people should have to concern themselves about health for the country is the healthiest place in all the world. Wait a minute! Is it? Vital statistics do not prove that but rather the contrary—the cities and towns have a lower mortality and sickness rate than do country districts. We do need education in the care of our health.

Most of all we shall need more money to train teachers for elementary and high schools. From the federal fund we would receive \$350,656, and we would add as much more to it giving a total of \$701,300 every year for the express purpose of better preparing teachers for our country and small village schools.

So far as North Carolina is concerned, therefore, we would receive from the federal government as a fund with which to carry on special types of educational endeavor a total of \$2,578,103. To get this we would have to add a like sum from our state treasury, and the total available fund with which to combat illiteracy,

Americanize our immigrants, equalize educational opportunities, provide for physical and health education, and better prepare our teachers, would amount to \$5,156,206. What an opportunity is here offered us to show how devoted we are to the cause of providing an equal educational opportunity for all the children of all the people!

### After All, Why?

But someone may ask why we ought to put forth any special effort to attend to these matters. Are we not attending to them pretty well even now? Why raise all this fuss and feathers about these questions?

The story of the illiterates in North Carolina has become altogether too familiar. We all know that the illiterate is neither an effective citizen nor an intelligent soldier. The good citizen must be able to get for himself information about laws, about events, about national policies, and about the thousand and one things that make up successful living and not be obliged to take anyone's say-so or accept anyone else's opinion. The illiterate cannot do this and we had nearly 300,000 of them in this state in 1910. There can be no argument as to the necessity for us to give illiteracy immediate, extensive and concentrated attention.

To be sure our immigrant problem is not a large one but it is of increasing importance. The immigrant, the foreigner, who cannot read our language and think in our terms cannot catch the spirit of our great national ideals. He cannot be in truth one of us. There must always be the barrier of an unknown tongue between him and our Americanism. The foreigner can participate freely in our democratic government and that participation should be intelligent, self-directive, not the blind following of unscrupulous partisan leaders. Moreover, our foreign-born ought to contribute something of value to our civilization and unless they are given training in our habits of thought and in our mode of expression, they will be unable to make such a contribution. The immigrant, too, has a right to demand that we provide him with the tools of a good citizen in a democracy, and it is our duty to furnish such tools to him.

The inequalities of educational opportunities throughout our country are notoriously familiar. Taxation systems differ, the amount of available wealth differs, the density of population varies, and so it goes. This special fund allotted for the purpose of lengthening terms, providing more teachers where necessary, effecting consolidation where feasible, etc., will be most valuable in helping us to meet the needs of our school children.

Under the first Selective Draft 29 percent of the actual number of registrants examined by the Local Boards were rejected because of physical defects. Very nearly one out of every three of our young men who ought to be in the pink of condition are physically unfit to be soldiers! When we call to mind the deaths in this state from typhoid fever, tuberculosis and other perfectly preventable diseases, we begin to realize how very necessary it is that our boys and girls be informed and well-informed about the care of their health. This is a national as well as a local loss, and therefore we must recognize the justice of federal co-operation in providing physical and health education.

Does anyone need to have it proven that our public school teachers are not well-trained and well-prepared for their work? Out of 522,000 teachers in the public schools of the United States over 100,000 are nineteen years of age or less; more than 50,000 have had no education beyond the last year of elementary school. Over 100,000 teachers begin teaching each September for the first time and less than one-third of them have had so much as one day's special preparation for their work. But why go on! We all know the old song and dance and we know only too well that the condition is a disgrace to a great, rich, prosperous country like ours. The situation is national in scope and importance.

To administer these funds calls for judgment, discretion, knowledge, and executive ability. It ought to be carried on appropriately to the nation's interest as well as to the welfare of the children concerned. It is a great national business and ought to be carried on in a great

national way. For that purpose the director of the plan ought to be a Cabinet Officer and the Bureau should become a Department on a par with War, Navy, Labor, Agriculture, and the like.

### It Has Been Said

Fear is expressed in some quarters that such a bill if enacted into law would result in Prussianized education. How can it? The administration of the funds, the methods by which the illiterates are to be taught, or the immigrants are to be educated, etc., are not specified in the bill, in fact are expressly left to the several states to administer. If management of schools by the individual states is Prussianized education, then we have it already and need to change our whole public school system from title page to index. Our national leaders of education see how unequal are the educational opportunities as now provided for in our several states and with the sole thought of devising some just, fair and effective way by which the present inequalities may be adjusted they have drawn up this bill as introduced by Senator Smith. As the bill now stands there is no more danger of its Prussianizing our system of public schools than there is of Prussianizing our system of farming by the Federal Agricultural Extension service and the Federal Vocational Education Board. The fear that such a law would Prussianize our public schools is without foundation in fact; it is a clever bugaboo with which to frighten the timid and anaemic mind, but careful analysis will not reveal so much as a lurking trace of fact to substantiate the fear.

But someone has said that Germany had a nationalized and centralized system of schools and that she used the schools in such a way as to make Germany a menace to the civilization of the world, and therefore, mind you, therefore a national system of schools for the United States will necessarily develop a menace to our civilization! Can you follow that argument? It strikes us that there is a bit of unusual logic in such a train of thinking. Isn't such an argument about like this? The United States has a national system of currency and used it in such a way as to aid in the defeat of the German army, therefore, a national system of currency is always a menace to all armies.

Such an argument will not hold. The trouble is not with the national system of schools or of currency but with the end to which it is put and the method or methods by which the system is administered. It was not because Germany had a national system of schools that she became a world menace, but because she devoted that wonderfully fine machine to a base purpose. Now, therefore, there is always the chance that a fine instrument may be put to wrong and selfish purposes—does it therefore prove the instrument to be wrong and bad? The answer is too obvious.

### Where It Leads

Even those who use this argument do not see where it leads them. For instance, a brilliant Southern editor quotes Rev. W. J. McGlothlin on the German school system and arguing from his statement concludes that a national system of education would be a menace. But he entirely overlooks the pulp in Professor McGlothlin's statement. Speaking of Germany, Professor McGlothlin says, "The highest pretensions and the most loathsome actions of the government have been justified and even glorified in lecture-room and pulpit throughout the land."

The argument as set forth condemns a national system of education because Germany had a national system and used it for a wrong purpose. But Germany also used her pulpits to justify and glorify her pretensions and loathsome actions. Does it therefore follow that the church is a menace to civilization? Is it the church and the school or the unworthy use of churches and schools that menaces civilization in Germany or any other country?

### Do It Now

Every last one of us who believes in the intent and purpose of this bill ought to sit down right now and send a letter to our Senators and Congressmen urging them to work and vote for its passage. Chambers of Commerce, Boards of Trade, Manufacturers' Associations and the like, ought to meet and memorialize our representatives in the national Congress, urging them to stand by the bill. Every institution of learning, every organization in North Carolina which believes in children and their welfare ought to proceed at once to inform our national legislators as to where we stand. We must show our colors on this measure. It must never be said that our state, which has much to gain under its provisions, was lukewarm in the matter. The voices of Wiley, Aycock, McIver, Graham, call on us to render an account of our stewardship as trustees of their legacy to North Carolina children.—L. A. Williams, University School of Education.