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OUR AMAZING CROP WEALTH

NEW DEBATE BULLETIN

More than 2,000 North Carolina boys and girls in 250 high schools of the state are now at work in preparation for the 25th annual contest of the High School Debating Union.

The query which is to be discussed this year is: Resolved, That the United States should adopt a policy of further restriction of immigration. The preliminary debates will be held over the state on April 9th, and the final contest at the Aycock Memorial Cup will be held at the University on April 22nd and 23rd.

For the use of the schools taking part in the contest this year, the Bureau of Extension of the University has issued Extension Series No. 34, "Immigration Restriction." This bulletin, one hundred pages in length, contains a statement of the query, briefs on both sides, selected articles and arguments, and a bibliography, together with a brief history of the High School Debating Union.

The High School Debating Union was begun by the University and the high schools in the college year 1912-13. A great deal of interest is being manifested in the debates this year on the part of nearly all of the accredited high schools of the state.

THE CHEAPEST BUT ONE

According to figures just published by the federal census bureau, North Carolina is the cheapest state in the Union save one—South Carolina. We spend in North Carolina, for instance, 68 cents per inhabitant per year for public education. New Jersey spends more than \$3.50, and Texas more than \$2.50. If we were to judge by figures alone, it would be evident that North Carolina boys and girls are worth only a third as much as the children of Texas, only a fifth as much as those of New Jersey.

The figures were printed by the University News Letter. They show that the entire cost of government in North Carolina is \$2.22 per inhabitant—the cheapest in the country, with the single exception of South Carolina. Did this represent true economy, it would be a fine showing; but it isn't economy—it is parsimony, miserly penny-pinching that is depriving the people of the state of the benefits they have a right to expect from their state government. For instance, the state spends the magnificent sum of two cents a year per inhabitant for highways and public recreation. Think of it—the price of a postage stamp every 12 months to build roads in North Carolina! That, of course, does not include the special automobile taxes; it is only what the average taxpayer, who does not own a machine, pays towards the development of the state's highway system.

The Tight-Wad Habit

The operating expenses of the state government amount to 10 cents on the dollar of taxes paid, or a trifle over 20 cents a year for each inhabitant. This is the one item of which the state may justly be proud. Out of every dollar paid in taxes, 90 cents goes back to the taxpayers in the form of some benefit—education, care of the old soldiers and the insane, protection of persons and property, public health work, etc.

However, a state that spends only \$2.22 a year for its state government is going to get only \$2.22 worth of government. If North Carolina insists on staying behind 46 other states in her expenditure, then she must necessarily stay behind 46 other states in the benefits she receives from her government. The poverty stricken state of our schools is a disgrace. The stinginess of the state toward its afflicted, and toward its wayward children, discredits the good name of North Carolina. Time was when North Carolina was behind nearly all other states in wealth; but that time is past. The state is now enormously rich. The next census will show her well up toward the middle of the list, perhaps above the middle, in her wealth. But having acquired, in her days of poverty, the tight-wad habit, she finds it hard to shake off. It is doubly hard when demagogues go about the country with the effrontery to howl about the wild extravagance of the stingiest state in the Union, South Carolina alone excepted.

It is a humiliating disclosure that the federal census bureau has made, but per-

haps it will serve to help awaken our people to the true state of affairs. If North Carolina can ever be spurred into action, she is able to accomplish well-nigh anything she takes it into her head to do; but she will do nothing as long as she hugs to her breast the delusion of her misery.—Greensboro News.

CONSOLIDATING SCHOOLS

North Carolina has generally accepted the principle of rural school consolidation, but we have not yet practically applied the principle as extensively and as wisely as the needs seem to require. It appears, however, that thoughtful school boards and superintendents are beginning to take seriously the subject of making the rural school more effective and to that end are looking to the consolidation of weak schools and the transportation of pupils as an outstanding means by which it can be done. To those officials who are planning to give attention to this important work, the suggestions given below are offered for whatever they may be worth.

Too often we have been inclined to consolidate with reference to the desires of localities rather than with reference to the needs of the county at large. For that reason it appears necessary for the county board and the superintendent to look at the county as a whole rather than at its various parts or local districts, if intelligent consolidation is to be made throughout the entire county. By viewing the county as a whole the officials and the people are enabled to cooperate and to act more intelligently in re-districting the county and in planning for a permanent school system. To get such a view, adequate and complete, it would seem well that the board and the superintendents be in possession of information such as the following:

1. Information concerning the general external and internal school conditions of the entire county is needed. This can be had by an impartial, sympathetic, fair, and accurate statement of actual facts, both statistical and informational in character. Such a statement can of course be best prepared by the superintendent, though it may sometimes be necessary to have assistance with the details. The statement should be prepared in full and in writing and so made as to be easily and intelligently understood by the board and by the average citizen of the county. Technical terms and the so-called survey terminology should be avoided, as well as the attitude that often appears in the so-called survey. The statement should above all be sympathetic rather than critical.

2. On such a statement, helpful, practical suggestions and recommendations for improvement should be made. These should also be in writing and so stated as to be easily and intelligently understood by both the board and the average citizen.

4. An adequate up-to-date map of the county should be prepared and used, because graphic illustration conveys definite ideas more readily and safely. On such a map information such as the following should be shown:

- (a) The boundaries of the present school districts.
- (b) The location of each school house.
- (c) The location of each home, with the number of school children in each.
- (d) All roads should be shown. The present condition of the roads should also be indicated, and all road-building projects in process or in contemplation by the county and the state highway commission should be taken into account in this connection.
- (e) All natural barriers such as rivers, creeks, swamps, mountains, etc., should be shown.

4. Information should be had concerning:

- (a) The general school interests of each school district.
- (b) The size of each school district and the number of children in it.
- (c) The size of each-school house.
- (d) The school population, the enrollment, and the average daily attendance of each school district.
- (e) The general attitude of the people of each school district on the subject of the consolidation of schools and the transportation of pupils. This can be gained only by tact, patience, and without undue agitation, and by innumerable per-

THE FARMER'S WIFE

It is especially important that whatever will prepare country children for life on the farm, and whatever will brighten home life in the country and make it richer and more attractive for the mothers, wives, and daughters of farmers should be done promptly, thoroughly, and gladly. There is no more important person, measured in influence upon the life of the nation, than the farmer's wife, no more important home than the country home, and it is of national importance to do the best we can for both.—Theodore Roosevelt.

sonal interviews. In most cases it will be gained very slowly.

With the information called for above properly in hand and properly digested by the board and the superintendent, a tentative plan for re-districting the county can be made with a view to wise consolidation. After such a plan is worked out, another map could be prepared showing the proposed new districts, as well as the old districts to be retained. The board will of course be prepared to give sufficient reasons for any and all changes proposed and, if occasion should require, to set forth convincingly the advantages of the proposed changes and to meet the objections to them.

Meantime, there should be carried on a systematic policy of intelligent publicity throughout the county, through the newspapers, the motion picture service, a county school newspaper, extension work through community meetings, or regular communications from the board and the superintendent to the people. For this purpose an up-to-date mailing list of the active citizens of the county should be kept in the superintendent's office.—E. W. K.

EMPTY SCHOOL HOUSES

Further evidence of the serious situation created in the public school system of the country by the failure to pay teachers adequate wages was disclosed in a conference of Commissioners of Education of several Eastern States held in New York recently.

A thousand rural communities in New York State have been forced to close their schools because of the death of teachers. More than 400 schools in West Virginia, and more than a third of the schools in six southern states are empty because teachers cannot be obtained. Attendance at state normal schools has fallen off from 25 to 50 percent throughout the East.

Secretary Lane has announced that 143,000 teachers resigned last year to accept more lucrative positions. This is nearly one-fourth of all the teachers employed in the common schools of the country in 1914.

The dangers of the situation and the disaster it threatens are too obvious to be recited. The cry of the day is Americanization, and the school, pointed to as the most potent influence in counteracting alien discontent. Yet the wages paid are so low that women find it more profitable even to run hotel elevators, as one former teacher in West Virginia is now doing.

There are no endowment funds for the relief of public school teachers. State and local communities must meet the necessities of the situation or the nation faces a very serious deterioration of public education. Wages should be high enough to attract not only sufficient teachers, but high quality teachers, and the haphazard selection which has so long been prevalent in our rural communities, where one of the principal qualifications for a primary teacher has been that she needed a few dollars while waiting to be married, should no longer be tolerated.—Commerce and Finance.

OUR AMAZING CROP WEALTH

Six hundred and eighty-three million dollars! That's the value of the 1919 crops of North Carolina, as estimated by the federal department of agriculture.

The total taxables of the State in 1918 were 942 million dollars. But in a single year our farmers create a volume of crop wealth equal to two-thirds of the property values we have been able to accumulate on our tax books in 250 years.

When the values created by our forests, factories, foundries, mines, and quarries are added, the total of primary wealth created in North Carolina in one year overtops the taxable wealth of two and a half centuries by many million dollars.

Moving Toward The Top

Ten years ago eighteen states stood ahead of North Carolina in total crop values. In 1914 and 1915, our rank was 15th. In 1916 and 1917, it was 11th, in 1918 it was 5th, but in 1919 only Texas, Iowa, and Illinois stood between us and the top of the column.

Ten years ago our total crop values were 143 million dollars; last year they were 683 million dollars—which is nearly a 5-fold increase since 1909. Our tobacco

crop alone represents a 12-fold increase in value, our cotton nearly a 4-fold increase; corn, wheat, and potatoes a 3-fold increase each, with hay and rye each a 6-fold increase in value.

All told the farmers got three and a half times as much for their food and feed crops, and six times as much for their cotton and tobacco crops as in 1909. The general average increase in value of what the farmer had to sell was 5-fold in the ten years. Not even the farmers will contend that what they have to buy has increased 5-fold in price. Which means, that the farmers of North Carolina have more money today than ever before in the history of the state; and they do not have a single cent more than they are fairly entitled to.

Less Labor, Larger Crops

We have had less labor on our farms the last two years than ever before in the last fifty years—fully a third less, due to the exodus of negro labor northward, the drift of small farm owners and white tenants into our own mill villages, and the war service of 47,000 Tarheels in the camps at home and overseas. Many of our soldier boys have not yet gotten back into service on our farms—most of them will never go back. It is the immemorial fashion of war to dislocate farm populations.

Nevertheless, with less farm labor than ever before in the last half century, our farmers more than doubled our tobacco crop in pounds in ten years. They raised 275,000 bales of cotton more than in 1909, twenty-one million bushels of corn more, four million bushels of wheat and potatoes each, and one million bushels more of oats. We lost our primacy in sweet potatoes and peanuts, to be sure, but on the whole the gain in the quantity of food and feed crops is amazing, labor conditions considered.

Labor in the industries of the country-at-large is reported to be working on a 60-percent level of production, and on an even lower level of efficiency in our transportation service; but the productive efficiency of our farmers has been one hundred percent plus.

Whatever may be true of other producers, the farmers are no slackers. They have been at work like heroes feeding and clothing the nation and the world. They have been richly rewarded, and they have deserved every dollar they have received.

The middle-aged men, the old men, the women and children have toiled in the fields as never before in fifty years in the South. And there is little hope of any substantial increase in farm labor in any state for long years to come. A very serious question is the effect of farm labor shortage upon country school terms and attendance, country culture and civilization in general during the coming quarter century.

A Look Ahead

In areas of decreasing farm labor one or the other of two movements sets in with tidal wave force:

1. Intensive farming, which means, in the common phrase, less land better cultivated. But also it means an increase of untilled acres, fewer meat and milk animals, more hand farming and less machine farming, larger yields per acre and

smaller yields per worker, excessive labor costs of production, minimum net profits and small per capita wealth in farm areas. Intensive farming inevitably means therefore lower standards of living, unless—and here's the rub—it is reinforced by scientific knowledge, technical skill, and cooperative farm enterprise, as in Denmark, Holland, and France. Without such a reinforcement, it means at last dire poverty, as in Belgium, India, China, and Japan, where they grow large crops and amazing poverty per acre.

2. Or expansive farming, with minimum hand labor and maximum horse power and machine on larger farms or on a larger scale of farm operations; more land in pasture, with more work stock, milk and meat animals; smaller yields per acre but larger yields per worker, minimum production costs, maximum net profits, and larger per capita wealth—as in Iowa, say, where per capita crop production in 1919 was \$114 greater than in North Carolina. And Iowa, mind you, does not raise a pound of either cotton or tobacco, or barely more than a handful of each.

If the scarcity of farm labor and the high price of farm products mean an increase of small-scale farming, fewer domestic animals, and more wilderness acres in North Carolina—we have 22 million such acres already, then we are moving into diminishing, disappearing social values in our country regions; inevitably so, unless scientific farming, technical skill, and cooperative farm enterprise intervene to save us, as in Denmark. It is well to remember that there is less illiteracy among the Danes than among any other farm people in the world. Illiterate farmers are only two in the thousand in Denmark; they are 190 per thousand white and black, in North Carolina.

The Small Farm Danger

Our re-adjustment problems in southern farm areas are two: either smaller farms better cultivated by home-owning farmers with better cultivated brains, or larger farms, more livestock of all sorts, more labor-saving, profit-producing machinery, owned and operated by greater ability and skill in farm management problems.

Lacking these conditions, we shall have increasing areas of static or stagnant agricultural life with a hopeless social outlook.

Tremendous issues are involved in the phrase "smaller farms better cultivated". No really thoughtful person—farmer, merchant, or banker—will fail to think it through to the end. Neither the apparent nor the real prosperity of our farmers these days ought to blind us to the character of the fateful economic forces that are spelling destiny daily.

We add in conclusion that cotton and tobacco farming by owners on a home-raised bread-and-meat basis is the only safe farming anywhere in the South. Farming of this sort sidesteps all the pitfalls we have tried to indicate in this brief analysis of our 1919 crop. A self-feeding farm system would hold down in North Carolina the 250 million dollars that will this year be sent out of the state for hay and forage, bread and meat alone. A full half of our cotton and tobacco money can be found in the pockets of the grain and livestock farmers of the middle west.

TOTAL CROP VALUES IN 1919

Based on the Report of the Federal Bureau of Crop Estimates, December 1919.

MISS HENRIETTA R. SMEDES
University of North Carolina

Rank	State	Crop Values	Rank	State	Crop Values
1	Texas	\$1,076,163,000	25	South Dakota	\$321,292,000
2	Iowa	861,338,000	26	North Dakota	270,981,000
3	Illinois	813,164,000	27	Louisiana	231,506,000
4	North Carolina	683,168,000	28	Colorado	204,576,000
5	Kansas	631,784,000	29	Washington	196,461,000
6	Georgia	613,240,000	30	West Virginia	152,071,000
7	Ohio	567,643,000	31	Oregon	139,060,000
8	Missouri	549,105,000	32	Maryland	132,743,000
9	Nebraska	543,482,000	33	Idaho	114,430,000
10	Oklahoma	522,565,000	34	New Jersey	105,303,000
11	South Carolina	520,522,000	35	Maine	99,200,000
12	Indiana	503,940,000	36	Florida	91,893,000
13	New York	498,179,000	37	Montana	81,991,000
14	Minnesota	497,736,000	38	Massachusetts	76,191,000
15	Mississippi	494,192,000	39	Connecticut	68,012,000
16	Kentucky	476,863,000	40	Vermont	63,318,000
17	California	475,251,000	41	New Mexico	63,098,000
18	Pennsylvania	467,351,000	42	Arizona	56,248,000
19	Wisconsin	433,039,000	43	Wyoming	56,237,000
20	Michigan	415,615,000	44	Utah	48,476,000
21	Arkansas	395,226,000	45	New Hampshire	40,260,000
22	Alabama	385,791,000	46	Delaware	26,339,000
23	Tennessee	355,912,000	47	Nevada	20,622,000
24	Virginia	341,052,000	48	Rhode Island	8,660,000