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INVESTING IN EDUCATION

XXV—EDUCATION IN DENMARK

The Danes believe in education, in education of every grade, type, and variety, in education without stint or limit in private effort or public expense. Salvation by education is the first article in the creed of Denmark. The Danes indulge in no oratory about it. They do not often speak about it at all, they act on it as a deep-seated conviction born out of the ignorance, illiteracy, and poverty that chained down their fathers and forefathers for six hundred years.

It was a country school teacher who quoted Shakespeare to me on this subject. "Ignorance," said he, "is the only sin and knowledge the wings wherewith we fly to heaven." Whatever else a Dane believes, he went on to say, he believes that first of all. No argument is needed to win him over to education as a means of getting on and up in the world or as an investment in community and commonwealth development and defense.

Short Shrift for Ignorance

It was a country pastor, a Lutheran priest, who harked back to Isaiah in discussing with me the Dane's child-like belief in education as an indispensable agency of social regeneration. When the Danish peasants had a chance at free public schools under compulsory attendance laws in the dark days of 1813, said he, they easily understood what Isaiah meant when he cried in anguish: Israel doth not know, my people do not consider, therefore are they gone away into captivity, for where no vision is the people perish. When Frederick Sixth established his epoch-making Advisory Councils and gave the people a place and voice in the affairs of the nation, Bishop Grundtvig stirred the peasants from Gedser to Skagen. The King has called you into the councils of the Kingdom and you must not be as sheep, said he, you must stand erect like men who know what they need and what Denmark needs. The response to this prophet's pleading was instantaneous and universal and the results were fundamental and permanent.

Whatever the explanation, the Danes believe in education wholeheartedly. They have an ineffable scorn for ignorance and an ineffable pity for illiterates, for only the crippled-in-brain are illiterate in Denmark. As for able-bodied illiteracy they made short shrift of it long years ago.

A Dirt Farmer's Wisdom

What can you do for or with a man or a nation, they say, that does not know and cannot or will not think? Every time you don't know something you ought to know—I am now quoting a Danish farmer—you pay a penalty for it. You've got to know as much about important matters as anybody else knows, and you'll be wise if you know more. And if you think that what is best for your fellow man is not also the best thing for you in the long run, then you are a victim of the worst kind of ignorance, the ignorance of knowing something that isn't so. The farmers have got to know as much about legislation as the lawyers, as much about business as the bankers, and far more about public questions than the politicians. We've got to know about all these things from top to bottom, for the farmers run this government and we cannot afford to run it into a hole. Our parliament sits for six months every year and it's pretty expensive, but it takes time and plenty of it to sift state problems thoroughly and weigh them wisely. We are convinced that a long session every year saves Denmark from the mistakes of haste. We save public money in the end by going slowly. The deliberations of an open session are more effective, we think, than the counsels of legislative commissions. Open sessions give the farmers plenty of chance to know all about everything in state affairs. Parliament is the biggest and the best public school we have in political economy and political science.

The farmer I am quoting is what we call a real dirt farmer in America, a business man at the head of a large farm industry, a director of a farm co-

operative central, a member of parliament, a man of affairs, and a public servant of consequence. I have translated his broken English without doing violence to his utterances in any detail.

The Danes' Creed

And it is the farmers of Denmark who most of all believe in education—in public schools, long terms, and compulsory attendance laws, in private schools, church schools, and Latin schools, in scientific agriculture, book farming, farm schools and field instruction in farming, in trade schools, technical science schools, teacher training schools, college culture and university research, in books, book-shops, newspapers, magazines, and libraries public and private, in art schools, music schools, popular gymnastics and physical education, in educational conferences, ten-day lecture courses at the folk high schools and chautauqua programs in the home communities every year. The eagerness with which the Danes demand, establish, support and absorb all kinds of culture is unmistakable, and it is a convincing evidence of racial virility and vitality.

We believe in newspapers, books, and schools; the greater the variety, the wider the appeal and the greater the chance of stirring into life such genius and talent as we have in Denmark, for all flesh is not the same flesh and human spirits are infinitely variable; our young people like yours differ widely in aptitudes, tastes and capabilities, and they must have a fair chance to discover themselves and find their particular places in the scheme of things entire. So said a Danish preacher in a country vicarage, as he laid bare to me the soul of Denmark. And the meaning is that education in Denmark is a spiritual adventure and not a slavish surrender to educational machinery and mechanical grind. The Danes are not wholly free, said he, but they are unafraid of freedom and they are tolerant beyond all the people I know. We agreed that they very well illustrate both the dangers and the values of free self-determination and that the values far outweigh the dangers.

Their Daily Prayer

I say the farmers lead because no kind of education and not much of anything else could even begin to be in Denmark without their support. They believe with Thomas Jefferson that no ignorant people ever was or ever can be free. Their daily prayer uttered or unexpressed is, From petty passions and prejudices, from blue-sky artists in business and crafty politicians in parliament, Good Lord deliver us! And they believe with Benjamin H. Hill that ignorance and poverty ever were and forever will be one and inseparable, and that education is the one thing for which no people ever yet paid too much.

How It Is Put in Practice

These abc's of the farmers' creed explain the rapid development of Danish agriculture. They explain the ability of the Danes to solve the problems of farming as a business and as a satisfying way of life. Also they explain the place and power of the farmers in state affairs. They bother very little about courses of study and theories of teaching. They have little pedagogy and less methodology but they have schools in endless variety and they have them in the Danish way. That is to say, if a Dane has a notion about what a farm-life school ought to be he starts one upon his own initiative at his own expense and risk. Don't talk about it, the farmers say, don't call on the state treasury, and don't offer us a pig in a poke; go do it, and if it's worth while it will have plenty of support from the community and perhaps after awhile from the commonwealth; give us a chance to chew the bag and test the pudding. The folk high schools began in this way eighty years ago, and they exist as private institutions till this good day. And so it is that Denmark is at last breaking away from Swedish gymnastics and sloyd. The young man whose high school athletes are just now catching the attention of America

THE PATH OF PROGRESS

The highway of civilization is strewn thick with the wrecks of parties, but it is yet to be recorded that any party was ever wrecked on a program of progress in education.

is a country school teacher at Borup, a little country town in Jutland. He has a theory of his own about physical education and forthwith he establishes a school of his own to try it out. He starts in the usual way in Denmark, that is to say, with almost no resources except his idea, his energy and his courage. His community says to him, We don't understand what you are talking about, show us. And he has the wit and will to do it. If it satisfies the Danes and suits Danish conditions his idea will be supported as the folk high schools are supported, and will have a similar lease of life in Denmark.

Investing in Education

The farm cooperative societies are now and have always been on the same basis of private initiative and support. It is the way of the Danish farmer. They love freedom and they hate official interference. Their cooperative business organizations receive nothing from the state but sanction and protection. Their folk high schools receive upon an average less than fifteen hundred dollars of state money per year, the largest one of them receives less than eight thousand dollars a year. But agricultural education and promotion are another matter. They consider these the concern of the people as a whole because everybody and every business shares in farm prosperity. And education in general is a state concern, they say, because the safety of the commonwealth is based on intelligent self-interest. There can be no concert of wills for the common good and no cooperative democracy without intelligent self-interest. Unintelligent self-interest is disruptive and destructive. Class consciousness, class ethics, and class collisions are the inevitable consequence of stupid self-interest. The world is full of it, they say, and we still have too much of it in Denmark, but we distinctly want less of it. Fundamentally our hope lies in education. We have little quarrel about the forms of it, and the parliament votes state money in liberal amounts to public education and even to worthy private institutions—one and a half million dollars a year to the University, another million and a half to technical instruction in agriculture, mechanic arts, and normal schools, two and a half millions to public high schools, and twelve millions to public elementary schools. Altogether some twenty-two million dollars a year is Denmark's investment in public education of one form or another.

A Hot Fight for N. C.

So runs the story of Danish education, as told by two state officials. You think more of your university than we think of ours in North Carolina, I say to them, and more of your high schools, but we think more of elementary public schools than you do and spend nearly twice as much money on them. They promptly counter. Then how do you account for so much native white illiteracy in North Carolina? they ask. It is country illiteracy, I reply, ninety-five percent of it is in our farm regions. Are our country schools efficient? Do your farmers really believe in education? Do they believe in scientific agriculture? What are they doing to cure illiteracy? Are the country preachers attacking the problem? They fire a machine-gun fusillade of questions at me as I feel about for my hat.

Our farmers are making great headway in recent years. North Carolina is awake at last and the farmers most of all, I say. And much more to the same effect. In fact the shouting and tumult about North Carolina does not die until I close the door on the interview.

—E. C. Branson. Paris, Oct. 24, 1923.

TEACHER SALARIES

Irrespective of training or fitness to teach, the county a teacher works in has much to do with the salary she is paid.

The average white teacher in North Carolina receives a yearly salary of \$720.73. The highest and lowest salaries are paid by New Hanover and

Watauga respectively. In New Hanover the average salary paid white teachers per year is \$1259.15 while in Watauga the white teachers receive less than one-third as much upon an average, or only \$402.26 for a year's work. Other counties that rank at the top in teacher salaries are Durham, Montgomery, Avery, Wilson, and Scotland. It is interesting to note that in fourteen counties the average salary paid white teachers is less than five hundred dollars per year. See the table in this issue. With only two exceptions these are mountain and coastal counties.

Why High or Low

The annual salary of a school teacher depends upon three major factors. Probably the most important factor is the length of the school term. In some counties the schools are run a full nine months while in others the constitutional requirement of a six-months term seems to be the ultimate goal. A large number of counties run their schools only a few days beyond the constitutional requirement of 120 days.

A second factor is the quality of the teachers employed. In a few counties the bulk of the teachers hold high-grade certificates and since the grade of the certificate determines the minimum salary they are forced to work for, the average salary in these counties is high. Wilson, Durham, Scotland, New Hanover, Avery, and Montgomery are good illustrations of the influence of the quality of the teachers upon the average salary. In many counties the school authorities seem to be of the opinion that the cheapest teacher is the most economical. There never was a greater or more serious error. A county superintendent who employs a teacher simply because she is cheap is committing an unpardonable sin. He should not be allowed to retain his position. Yet there are a few such superintendents in this state and our people put up with them. Manifestly we cannot illustrate by naming counties, but they are known by school authorities. The most expensive part of a county school system is a poor county superintendent of public instruction. Our school system is so organized that the county superintendent

is the one person who is most responsible for the kind of education a county receives.

A third factor that determines the salary paid teachers is the amount locally raised by cities and counties to supplement the standard amount guaranteed by the state because of the certificate the teacher holds. Two counties, New Hanover and Wilson, have county-wide school systems in which every dollar of taxable wealth goes to support every school in the county. This should be the goal of every county. A large number of counties fail to supplement the minimum pay by voting local taxes. They are content to rely on the county school tax and the state equalization fund—and poor teachers. In ten counties less than ten percent of the school districts are local tax districts. In such counties the teachers are poorly paid. For instance Watauga ranks lowest in local tax districts and lowest in teacher salaries.

Honorable Mention

It seems to us that special praise in this study goes to two counties, Avery and Montgomery. Only two counties in the state pay their white teachers more than these, both of which have many times as much taxable wealth. Avery and Montgomery are amongst the poorer counties of the state in taxable wealth, but stand high in teacher salaries. Credit for such high rank is due in large measure to the good work of the county superintendents of these counties. They have brought poor counties into the highest rank. Both of these superintendents employ the best teachers they can afford. In both counties the school term is far above the state average. The quality of the teachers is high and the superintendents insist that their teachers improve their certificates.

Teacher salaries, then, depend upon the school term, the quality of the teacher, local wealth and willingness, and the county superintendent—and do not forget the superintendent. Good teachers mean good schools. A poor county can have good schools—if it has the right leadership.—S. H. H., Jr.

AVERAGE ANNUAL SALARIES PAID WHITE TEACHERS For the School Year 1921-22

Counties are ranked according to the average salaries paid white public school teachers for the year 1921-22.

In New Hanover county the white teacher received an average annual salary of \$1259.15, while in Watauga county the average salary per white teacher per year was only \$402.26. State average \$720.73.

The average annual salary paid by counties depends upon three factors: (1) the length of the school term, (2) the quality of the teachers, and (3) local supplement.

W. H. Holderness, Edgecombe County

Department of Rural Social Economics, University of North Carolina

Rank	County	Average annual salary paid white teachers	Rank	County	Average annual salary paid white teachers
1	New Hanover	\$1259.15	51	Sampson	\$643.07
2	Durham	1188.18	52	Orange	642.81
3	Montgomery	1169.72	53	Iredell	640.06
4	Avery	1157.33	54	Cleveland	639.66
5	Wilson	1070.96	55	Moore	639.58
6	Scotland	1015.26	56	Stanly	638.25
7	Mecklenburg	958.85	57	Pender	637.54
8	Buncombe	946.86	58	Bertie	628.03
9	Wake	929.95	59	Davidson	626.71
10	Gaston	918.36	60	Hertford	625.93
11	Forsyth	908.34	61	Anson	623.57
12	Craven	901.77	62	Martin	620.91
13	Guilford	901.63	63	Carteret	616.82
14	Nash	898.01	64	Jones	616.79
15	Edgecombe	896.06	65	Beaufort	615.64
16	Wayne	894.53	66	Harnett	613.64
17	Halifax	894.02	67	Camden	608.28
18	Pasquotank	863.72	68	Onslow	595.79
19	Cumberland	834.94	69	Clay	593.01
20	Rowan	823.56	70	Lincoln	589.32
21	Alamance	820.60	71	Gates	587.30
22	Richmond	814.05	72	Cherokee	587.08
23	Rutherford	813.39	73	Duplin	585.89
24	Hoke	809.62	74	Columbus	581.07
25	Pitt	808.67	75	Haywood	580.53
26	Washington	790.73	76	Graham	579.64
27	Lenoir	786.45	77	Bladen	575.16
28	Warren	781.35	78	Polk	573.63
29	Yancey	772.18	79	Jackson	569.96
30	Tyrrell	737.43	80	McDowell	561.90
31	Currituck	717.57	81	Randolph	560.90
32	Northampton	715.88	82	Caldwell	555.20
33	Johnston	713.14	83	Person	538.01
34	Granville	710.44	84	Chatham	533.64
35	Greene	708.18	85	Swain	526.93
36	Franklin	706.61	86	Dare	518.05
37	Rockingham	706.52	87	Macon	494.79
38	Robeson	705.82	88	Alleghany	490.63
39	Lee	694.93	89	Stokes	482.13
40	Chowan	689.83	90	Yancey	481.25
41	Alexander	686.49	91	Madison	479.79
42	Pamlico	681.00	92	Mitchell	476.40
43	Hyde	676.63	93	Surry	474.14
44	Catawba	667.04	94	Burke	468.71
45	Union	665.77	95	Yadkin	465.69
46	Davie	656.92	96	Caswell	459.64
47	Henderson	656.91	97	Ashe	425.88
48	Transylvania	653.66	98	Brunswick	405.02
49	Cabarrus	644.94	99	Wilkes	404.31
50	Perquimans	643.11	100	Watauga	402.26