

NCEA Has Made Progress In It's 100-Year History

Ask the man on the street what the NCEA does and the probable answer will be, "That's the organization trying to get a raise for teachers." He's correct, but there's more to the NCEA than teacher-raises.

Activities of the Association which seldom reach the public-eye outnumber those which do. These behind-the-scenes activities have marked the NCEA since its beginning.

The musket and the duce cap were commonly accepted 100 years ago when a group of educators met at Warrenton on June 30, 1857. This group adopted a constitution and chose a name for their group, "The Educational Association of North Carolina." Thus began North Carolina's professional white teachers

organization, known today as the North Carolina Education Association.

That first meeting in Warrenton was attended by 143 delegates from 30 counties. The 73rd Annual NCEA Convention, held March 21-23, in Wilmington was attended by over 4,000 members. From less than 200 members in 1857 the largest educational opportunity for all children, and the throes of depression. After 1861 the annual meetings were discontinued as the agony of the Civil War gripped the state. So bleak was the picture during these dark days that the Association itself was abandoned.

It was not until 1883 that Eugene G. Harrell, publisher of The North Carolina Teacher, suggested the organization of a "Teacher's Chautauq." From this suggestion a meeting was held in Haywood County in 1884 and the history of the NCEA has continued uninterrupted since that date and that meeting.

The North Carolina Education Association has attracted attention many times. Much of the attention has been focused on issues concerning teacher-welfare. Today the initials "NCEA" are linked by many with matters of teacher salary, clerical assistance, retroactive pay, reduced teacher load, extended term and other similar issues dealing with public education.

While these goals are important issues being sought by the NCEA they are actually only parts of the objectives of the organization. The two stated objectives of the NCEA are: (1) The advancement of the cause of education in North Carolina, and (2) the professional improvement of its members. Though many NCEA functions constantly seek these objectives, usually the controversial subject of salary is of greatest public interest.

Public interest in the legislative program of the NCEA has also served

ed to cause citizens to become aware of the professional accomplishments of the organization. The centennial theme, "A Century of Progress through Education," points out not only past achievements, but serves as a prediction of the role of education in the next one hundred years. Schools may not have desks in 2057; they may have individually air conditioned versions of isolation booths. Electronic, atomic charged individual writing pads may score tests in the future; automatically record the results in a master file; compute the pupil's grade in accordance with his predetermined ability; print his report card; and not only specify the pupil's future vocation, but predict his life time earnings and contributions to society. Though these innovations may become reality in our public schools during the next century, it is difficult to imagine a substitute for good teachers or for public education.

In this centennial year the 27,000 NCEA members point with pride to some of the outstanding accomplishments in which the NCEA has served as a leader and of which it rightfully claims a considerable share of the credit. Some of these achievements: the 9th month; the 12th year; improved bus transportation; the school health program; free textbooks for elementary children new concepts for school construction some reduction of class size high professional qualifications for teachers the establishment of the Retirement System in 1941 and liberalization of the system in 1947; an amendment to the State Constitution safeguarding the retirement fund; and leadership in the organization of the United Forces for Education groups in the State.

Many of these achievements were, considered radical and too far sighted. Many of the goals of the NCEA could never be accomplished if the Headquarters Staff in Raleigh were not free from entangling alliances and ties with other groups in the State. Members of the Headquarters Staff answer to no legal agency, nor do they or the 27,000 members serve in a political capacity.

The elected leaders and staff answer only to the membership, thereby giving them a peculiar freedom in legislative and political matters at the very door-step of the Capitol.

Perhaps it is a paradox with educators that attacks and criticisms fall into two conflicting areas. The first area centers around charges that school-people are slow to change, slow to accept new ideas, and hesitant to look ahead and experiment. The second area of criticism contradicts the first, for in this area the same persons may charge that schools are too modern, that teachers "don't teach the good old way," and that schools have given up everything good in the past for new fangled ideas and methods that don't educate children at all.

Included in the last group of charges is the charge by some folks that teachers aren't concerned with the welfare of the child. NCEA leaders have only one answer for such thoughtless charges. "If the good teachers of North Carolina were not dedicated to their task and if they were not concerned with the welfare of children, then they would have long ago left the profession for better-paying, more secure positions."

It is this dedication to the children of North Carolina which prompts teachers to join the NCEA. Teachers readily admit the Association seeks teacher welfare, but they are quick to point out that this goal is not the primary goal. The first goal is professional improvement. Much of the work of the Association directs itself toward this improvement. A glance at the committees vividly points this out. The Professional Services Committee serves to maintain and improve teacher preparation and professional standards; the Board of Editors seeks excellence in the quality of the publications on a high professional basis; the Ethics Committee strives to maintain a strict code of ethics for all members of the teaching profession; the PTA College and

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other landowners depend on their timber crops or income, the chairman said, and sawmills, pulp and paper mills, along with other forest industries, must have wood as raw material for their operations.

"The importance of the wood-using industry is exceeded in importance only by tobacco and textiles in North Carolina's economy," said Gibson. "We must keep North Carolina green. Trees as a crop mean a regular income as long as they are protected and harvested wisely."



A Century of Progress through Education



Dry Spell, Winds Brings Fire Danger Says Industry Man

Danger of forest wildfires from spring drought and high winds brought a warning today that North Carolinians should use extreme caution with fire in or near the woods.

Recent beneficial rains have curbed the danger somewhat, according to Carr Gibson of Lumberton, chairman of the North Carolina Forest Industries Committee. But he said a few days of spring winds could create a dangerous condition before green growth overtakes inflammable vegetation.

"The timber crop is so important that North Carolina cannot afford to lose it," said Gibson, whose industry committee sponsors the High School Advisory Committee assists in planning and carrying out the program of these groups and promotes recruitment of qualified young students. In recognition of NCEA efforts during 1956, North Carolina was named the Banner State in FTA work for that year.

The NCEA-FTA Committee seeks the common objectives of both organizations; the Scholarship and Student Loan Committee provides scholarships and loans to deserving young people planning to enter the teaching profession; and other committees and commissions continually study and evaluate the NCEA and the public schools and suggest various methods for improvement.

Structurally the NCEA begins with the individual member and the local unit. The NCEA local unit is the basic group and today there are 191 such units. Each local unit elects officers and functions with committees similar to those of the state level. Local units to the Annual Delegate Assembly an official delegate for each 10 members, and there the delegates formulate policies and carry on the business of the Association.

Between sessions of the Delegate Assembly the NCEA Board of Directors conducts business within the framework of policies as outlined by the delegates. The Board is comprised of 11 members; one from each of six districts, the president, vice president, immediate past president, NEA Director, State Superintendent of Public Instruction; and the executive secretary serves as secretary to the Board.

Looking back over the 100 years between 1857 and 1957 such names as Calvin H. Wiley, Charles Duncan Melver, J. Y. Joyner, Charles B. Aycock, and Dr. Clyde A. Erwin stand out as leaders in the activities of the Association. Many others have contributed greatly to educational progress of the Tarheel State; many others will contribute greatly to educational progress in the next 100 years. To such individuals the citizens of North Carolina should pay tribute, but in this Centennial Year of the North Carolina Education Association tribute should be paid to the thousands of nameless members of the teaching profession who by their collective efforts have brought to pass "A Century of Progress Through Education."

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North Carolina Tree Farm program. As was pointed out during the foreman's conference on fire prevention last fall, North Carolina's forests are now so important that any serious outbreak would cripple the economy of the entire state, the industry man said.

He pointed to the disastrous blazes which swept the Coastal Plains region in the spring of 1956 to stress the fact that spring is the worst time of the year for forest fires. Hundreds of small farmers and

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