



PUBLISHED EVERY THURSDAY
BY THE UNION FARMER PUBLISHING COMPANY.

Subscription Price: One Dollar a Year.

All subscriptions are payable in advance, and the paper will be discontinued when the time expires, unless renewed. The date on the tag which bears the name of the subscriber indicates the time to which the subscription has been paid.

J. Z. GREEN, Marshville, - - - Editor
MRS. E. D. NALL, Sanford, - - - Home Department
C. A. EURY, - - - General Manager

ADVERTISING REPRESENTATIVES

JOHN D. ROSS, 812 Hartford Building, Chicago.
L. E. WHITE, Tribune Building, New York.

Entered as second-class matter March 21, 1912, at the Post-office at Raleigh, North Carolina, under the Act of March 3, 1897.



Raleigh, N. C. - - - January 30, 1913.

EDITORIAL COMMENT.

BETTER RURAL SCHOOLS.

A good school is the best asset any rural community can own. The best place to educate, the cheapest place to educate, and the only place where it is possible for the masses to be educated, is at home—in the district school. To constantly raise the standard and improve the efficiency of the district school should be the purpose of every rural community. What it will cost to maintain a good school is a mere trifle compared with what it will cost a community not to maintain a progressive school. Commenting upon the decline of the country school in some localities Farm Journal says:

"It is an evil day for any rural community when its district schools decline. They should be maintained at all cost, even though it be necessary to sacrifice a few battleships or the pay of a few major-generals in the army, for it is upon the 'little red school-house' that in the last analysis our whole political and social fabric rests. If some parents persist in having childless homes, and the school population of a neighborhood is for any reason sparse, let the deficiency be remedied by the establishment of consolidated schools, to which the children may be conveyed at public charge. Far better this expense than a country neighborhood without proper school facilities, with the excuse to send children to town schools to be taught, among other things, a contempt for simple, wholesome, country ways."

LOCAL TAXATION THE IDEAL PLAN.

Of all methods of increasing the efficiency of rural schools, none is, perhaps, quite as good as the local-taxation plan. While it is, first of all, the duty and the business of the State to educate, the present State tax fund is not sufficient to provide ample means to run a good school in each rural district, unless there should be inaugurated a campaign for such retrenchment and reform in North Carolina government, State and county, as would put it upon an economic business plane by avoiding unnecessary duplication of offices and eliminate needless expenditures, which any good business man or corporation would eliminate, if left to them as a business proposition. As there has been no campaign for this sort of reform, it can not be expected that anything will be accomplished soon in that field of action. The point we wish to emphasize is that after every dollar available from the State funds has been appropriated, it still leaves the rural districts with only about half as much public school funds as are needed to run a creditable school; and here is where local taxation gets in its splendid work. Under the law any school district may vote upon themselves a special tax not exceeding thirty cents on the hundred dollars' worth of property

to supplement the public school fund appropriated by the county and State, to make the school of longer term and more efficient in its work.

LOCAL SCHOOL TAX IS AN INVESTMENT.

In his letter last week Prof. Wright is right in contending that if the proposition of a local tax for the district school could always be advocated as investment rather than a tax, and the citizens of a community could be made to see it in that light, the idea would gain favor much more rapidly. We can conceive of no investment that pays better dividends in form of better and more efficient farmers and citizens in a rural community, and in form of permanent enhanced community values of the landed assets of the community, than the local tax investment which gives to the district a creditable school. It makes the assets of that vicinity safe and lasting because it attracts good men's attention and approval. Not only this, it prevents the moving away from the community the most progressive farmers in it, who would otherwise move to some other community to get advantages of what the home district failed to provide. Thousands of rural districts in North Carolina have lost their most progressive and successful farmers, because these public-spirited, progressive men, after heroic and persistent effort, failed to line up enough of their neighbors to establish a good school at home, and they felt that they could not sacrifice their children longer, and acting upon the stern duty to educate them, they moved away to some locality that had a good school. The paramount question with every rural district is not what it will cost to make the local tax investment, but what will it cost not to make it!

ONE-TEACHER SCHOOLS SHOULD GO.

There should be no more old, unproductive, out-of-date one-teacher schools in North Carolina. By local tax and by consolidation and by every other available method, the one-teacher cabin should be eliminated. The best teacher in the world can not conduct a successful one-teacher school which includes all grades from the youngest to the oldest. It does not lie within the range of human possibility for one teacher to classify all grades and hear all recitations in such manner as to produce anything else but results that are disappointing. Viewed from the standpoint of results produced at least cost, the local tax would be a good economic investment, even if there should be no lengthening of the term, but merely the elimination of the one-teacher schools and the better classification that increases efficiency a hundred per cent, and prevents the useless waste of valuable time in the child's life.

LOCAL TAX IS CO-OPERATIVE SELF-HELP.

Another strong feature in that provision of the school law which gives to every community the opportunity to make the local tax investment is that it provides an ideal way for co-operative self-help. There are men who produce good argument that it would be a waste to pile down large amounts of money to a community that did not have enough of the progressive educational spirit to make an attempt to help itself. As we have previously remarked, the State and county has appropriated to the limit of their available income to the districts. This leaves every district to prove the kind of stuff its folks are made of. If they want longer terms and better schools, the local tax investment plan opens up an ideal way to get them through co-operative self-help. If you eliminate the principle of self-help from the fields of human endeavor the wheels of progress will turn backward. In the local tax idea for schools we have the embodiment of the principle of self-help in its finest form, and the twelve hundred or more local tax districts in North Carolina, with new ones being added every week, is a gratifying demonstration that the local tax investment plan

is an eminent success and is a means of providing better schools in rural communities about as fast as the people are ready to sustain them. If it seems slow, we must remember that things that come through education and a change of public sentiment, must of necessity come slowly, but growth of that kind is permanent.

FOR DISCUSSION IN LOCAL UNIONS.

Methods of improving the district school should always be open for discussion in Local Unions. Of course the discussions should be free from personalities, in the proper spirit, and always upon the merits of the subject. Education is fundamental and is always of first importance. Ignorance, in all ages, has been only another name for human slavery. Superior intelligence has always taken advantage of ignorance and it always will do it. There isn't any remedy for industrial slavery that can be applied by ignorant people. We may not feel like we are ready for compulsory education yet, but compulsory education is mighty good compared with endless compulsory industrial slavery. The pioneers of the Farmers' Union were fortunate in the selection of the name—The Farmers' Educational and Co-operative Union. The educational part comes first. It will always rank first in importance, and the Local Unions that recognize this fact, and act upon it, can never be defeated. In educating your members in principles of better farming and better marketing and better business methods, keep it in mind that all social, moral and material interests of your community, and the future usefulness of your children, depend upon the kind of school you have in your district.

"Schools for the Discontented."

The United States Bureau of Education has issued a special report touching experiments made in Kansas City, Missouri, in connection with school children above fourteen years of age who have lost interest in school work and whose advancement under ordinary school conditions is apparently impossible. It is stated that educators have found many children who seem fitted by nature to absorb only a certain amount of knowledge. Out of this condition grew the establishment of "The School for Discontented Children" in which most of the time is given not to the usual educational intricacies, but to instruction in useful trades, looking to self-support. Commissioner Claxton is quoted as saying that this type of school will solve a vexing educational problem, "because schools of this kind are designed to meet the needs of a large class of boys and girls to whom sufficient attention has not heretofore been paid."—Biblical Recorder.

Wrote John Ruskin: "To be despised may be no ill fortune, but the real ill fortune is to be despicable." The one who takes care that he does nothing to earn the contempt of men may have to suffer unjustly from that contempt for a time, but in the long run he will win the respect which is his due.—Selected.

The Issue in Japan.

The Imperial University of Japan in Tokio has more than 4,600 students. According to a religious census recently taken these students were classified by religions as follows: Shintoists, eight; Buddhists, fifty; Christians, sixty; atheists, 1,500; agnostics, 3,000. These figures are as significant as they are appalling. They show beyond a peradventure that Shintoism and Buddhism have lost their influence upon the educated classes of Japan. Something higher and better, something more satisfying to mind and heart must be presented to them. And it has well been pointed out that the issue in the Sunrise Kingdom is no longer between Christianity and Buddhism, but between Christianity and nothing. Shall not Christianity, therefore, be given a fair chance at "the Yankees of the East?"—Biblical Recorder.