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ACUTE NEW ERA PROBLEMS

COUNTRY LIFE PROBLEMS

Two conditions profoundly revolutionary in the country life of the state and the nation have been created by the Great War; (1) the decrease of farm labor, and (2) the increase of food values. The results immediate and remote are almost infinite in variety and they affect life and business in town and country regions alike.

The farmer-soldiers in the camps at home and in our armies overseas are one and a half million men. Another million and a half have swarmed out of the country regions into our industrial centers. The farm areas of the United States have lost three million workers in the last four years. They are a full fourth of the effective labor strength of the farms of the country. The loss threatens to be permanent. It is the fashion of wars to dislocate farm populations.

As for food values, we can look for no great decrease in the famine price of foodstuffs for some years to come. It will take at least six years, says Mr. Hoover, to stabilize the food stocks of the world; and even longer perhaps to control in righteous way the agencies of distribution. We have come into an era of excessive production costs in farm regions and unbearable living costs in city centers. Both conditions are sources of economic upheaval.

A Look Ahead

What effect will these two causes in combination have upon the country life of the state and the nation? Shall we have an increase of wilderness areas in North Carolina, and a dwindling, disappearing agriculture? Already we have 13 million acres, once cleared and cultivated and now abandoned to blackjacks, scrub pines, mullein stalks, and sassafras. Or will this vast domain be reclaimed for food crops produced by abundant horse and machine power, and for livestock farming on a domestic scale, a few meat and milk animals on every farm?

The first effect will surely follow unless our farmers have, or can thriftily accumulate from the present high price of foodstuffs, enough capital to establish cotton and tobacco farming on a bread-and-meat basis. But we can hardly hope for any radical change in our agriculture, without a tremendous increase in country intelligence, and in organized production, purchase, salesmanship, and credit in our farm regions.

At present 95 per cent of our white illiteracy and near-illiteracy is in the countryside. Are our country people equal to an increase of two and a half million dollars raised by local taxation for six months' schools? If not, our sparsely settled country dwellers are fore-doomed to a static or a stagnant civilization.

In which event, the cityward drift of country people in North Carolina will be immensely accelerated; farm lands will decrease in value or farmland sales will cease, and we shall be "land-poor" once more; aspiring, alert country people will move into our 500 villages, towns and small cities, while the unalert will remain on the land; country homes will be dreary and lonely, country schools will be lifeless and uninspiring, and country churches will decay.

A Countryside Job

Here in brief are acute after-the-war problems that North Carolina now faces, and which must be solved in the main by our country people themselves. Never before in the history of the state and the nation have native, home-bred leaders been more critically necessary in our country regions. And I may add that, in my opinion, it is the business of colleges and universities to develop the intelligent, consecrated leadership that country life everywhere needs. Herein lies the importance of the rural social science courses that have lately found a place in the academic culture schemes of the country.

Rural life problems are social as well as occupational. They concern culture as well as agriculture—the farmer's home and children as well as his crops and barns, farm animals and bank balances.

Can country life be efficient, satisfying, and wholesome? Will the exodus of

country people out of our farm regions into towns and villages be increased by after-the-war conditions? Will the civilization of our open country move forward, mark time, or fall back into hopelessness in the great new era? The answer depends on our country dwellers mainly.

Excessive Ruralism

Must our country civilization be increasingly individualistic—more and more socially aloof, and less and less organized for business enterprise, culture purposes, and wholesome civic order? If so, then illicit liquor making in which we lead the nation, homicides in which we lead the states of the registration area, lynching and inability to deal with lawlessness in our courts, and excessive illiteracy white and black, are problems that we can never hope to solve in North Carolina. We are a rural state, nearly exactly four-fifths of our people live in the open country outside villages and towns of any size whatsoever. And these are ills that curse excessive ruralism everywhere. Primarily they are rural problems all. They hinder and retard or render impossible every progressive move forward and upward of every sort and kind. If we cannot or will not make up our minds to attack them courageously and end them utterly, then we must be content to trail the rear in the forward march of American states. Essentially they are rural ills but they menace every worth while agency and institution the whole state over.

They can be cured, and North Carolina—I am fain to believe—has the intelligence, the civic courage, the vital religion, and the lofty patriotism that are necessary for the task.—E. C. B.

OUR NEW UNIVERSITY HEAD

The trustees of the University of North Carolina authorized Governor Bickett, ex officio chairman, to name a committee of five trustees to investigate and report upon the fitness of persons suggested for the presidency of the University to succeed the late Dr. E. K. Graham. The committee will not nominate, but will simply ascertain facts concerning the qualifications of the various candidates and lay them before the Board. This will be done as early as possible and when the committee is ready to report, the Governor will call the trustees together.

The trustees provided for the vacancy created by the death of Dean M. H. Stacy by the election of Dr. H. W. Chase, who has been acting Dean of the College of Liberal Arts, as chairman of the faculty, with powers and duties of the president.

Dr. Chase is a native of Massachusetts, and a graduate of Dartmouth college. He formerly did high school work in Massachusetts and directed the clinic for sub-normal children at Clark University where he took his degree in 1910. Since then, he has been professor of psychology at the University.

A Woman's Building

In addition the trustees heard the recommendations of Dean Stacy and gave their approval. Included in the list of recommendations are the proposal to establish a School of Commerce at the University; a director of music for the development of musical talent among the students; a publication editor to have charge of all periodicals and be responsible for the news service of the University; and the erection of a woman's building to provide for expansion of the University in its appeal to the women of the state.—News and Observer.

THE COUNTRY EXODUS

The Cityward Drift of Country Populations in Carolina is the first of a series of studies in "Carolina: Industrial and Urban", undertaken by the North Carolina Club at the University this year. The Club program in full detail appeared in the University News Letter of Feb. 12. The Country Exodus in Carolina was presented in brief outline on Monday evening, Jan. 27, by E. C. Branson of the University faculty. The debate that fol-

KEMP PLUMMER BATTLE

Dr. Kemp Plummer Battle was given to us out the civilization of the old south and was to us the tie that bound the new, aggressive, aspiring south of today to the sweet, the calm, and radiant era of his youth.

He carried with him into the troubled times of reconstruction the gentle feeling that grew up naturally from the soil of a golden, romantic past. Re-acting heroically to the challenge of the new day, and keeping his contacts with the strenuous hours of our beholding, the precious idealism of pre-war history still made its home in his heart; and looking upon him, somehow we felt that through him our lives were blessed and that in our world of planning and doing we had a higher pedigree than our surroundings and a nobler mission than our activities could expose.

To think happy thoughts, to live simply, to have and to merit the dear affection of friends, to be interested in life and wish the happiness of others, to have a heart for the tender, opening things of springtime and all the splendor of the varied, fourfold year, amidst the jarring forces of our life to cherish the serene confidence that all is well, to love to work, to do ones work as a sacrament and without fretting, to achieve honor without pride, and above all to endure as a child of God—that is the legacy our good comrade has left us. In that legacy we are rich and in it we have encouragement to know ourselves as masters and not slaves and to enjoy support in the hour that tempts to weakness of any kind.

And so our dear friend though gone from us is still a living reality in our midst and will abide with us forever. "The witness of his own immortality", his spirit bears witness in our spirits that our destiny is also assured.

Such lives so permeate the community enriched by their presence that at last they are an integral part of all they have touched. In Dr. Battle Chapel Hill has lived and moved and had its being down through the years, and now that the earthly house of his tabernacle is dissolved the house not made with hands abides.

He will go on with us into other days and amidst "the weariness, the fever, and the fret, here where men sit and hear each other groan", we shall feel the quiet sense of eternal values, and through him we shall see Him more clearly as He is.—William D. Moss, Pastor Chapel Hill Presbyterian Church.

lowed concerned the question, Is the cityward drift beneficial to the State as a whole? The discussion was led by E. S. Merritt of Craven in the affirmative and S. H. Willis of Guilford in the negative, and is given compactly in the paragraphs that follow.

A Rural Civilization

North Carolina is and has always been excessively rural. Our towns and cities have been few and small—so actually and relatively. In the census year nearly exactly four fifths or 79 per cent of our people were dwellers in the open country, outside villages and towns of any size whatsoever. They numbered more than 17 hundred thousand and, as elsewhere in America, they dwell in widely scattered farm homes thirty-nine people to the square mile—in eleven counties fewer than twenty to the square mile, counting both races. All of which means that North Carolina is dominantly rural. The character of the culture of our country

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DEMOCRACY IN SCHOOLING

If we are to accept the idea that the bulwark of democracy is to be found in universal education and that the essential tool of universal education is the public school, we must naturally look to the public school to be itself a democracy. Have we stopped to consider what such a theory implies?

What it Means

It means, first, that an equal chance to go to school must be given to all children. It means, second, that the terms of school in city and country must be equal. It means, third, that all schools must be equally well equipped with adequate teaching apparatus—not forgetting that the teacher is a very essential part of such equipment. It means, fourth, that an equal chance must be given all children to have their health cared for and their bodies built up. It means, fifth, that no pupil shall be deprived of his chance to grasp these opportunities because some indifferent or ignorant parent commandeers such pupils' time or energy either to work directly for the parent, or to work for a manufacturing plant and turn the results of such labor over to the parent.

people is both the mainspring and the measure of our civilization. As the countryman thinketh in his heart so are we in Carolina, as the politicians know full well. The level of our country culture is the level of North Carolina—the real level; a foundational fact directly related to business, law and order, religious consciousness, progress and prosperity. Both the best and the worst of us as a people lies in the fact that North Carolina is fundamentally a rural state. Our town and country civilizations are not safely balanced, as in France, Denmark, Holland, and Switzerland. Establishing and preserving a sane, safe balance between town and country civilization is the most important problem in any state or nation. Our civilization in North Carolina is out of balance—has always been so, the best interests of the state considered. We need to be more urban and less rural. Illiteracy, blockade liquor making, excessive homicide rates, lynching, inability to deal effectively with crimes of violence in our courts, repugnance to taxation, opposition to stock and dog laws, are peculiarly rural problems—so in every land and country. They disappear as a people becomes more and more urban. We need an immense multiplication of small villages and towns, our larger towns need to grow rapidly into larger centers of manufacture, trade, and credit. At present the producers of country wealth outnumber the city consumers nearly five to one in North Carolina. Our farmers need a larger consuming public, more nearby markets and better, a larger opportunity to convert country products into ready cash at a fair price and profit, greater wealth and a greater willingness to invest in country schools and libraries, country churches, country health, and country highways. The cityward drift in North Carolina is not altogether deplorable, said the speaker; it is all in all a drift in the right direction, provided the population left behind in the country regions draws together in farm village groups for social advantage, and provided further that both our town and country civilizations can be efficient, satisfying, and wholesome through and through.

Rapid Urbanization

And what North Carolina needs is coming swiftly to pass. Our civilization is being rapidly urbanized. The cityward drift in Carolina during the last census period was more rapid than in 36 other states of the Union, our city increase in population being four and a half times our country increase. The country exodus was most pronounced in fifty counties—mainly in our developing industrial area, which stretches like a reap-hook from Durham along the Southern Railway to Charlotte and westward into Gaston and Rutherford. Ten counties actually lost country population—Durham one-eleventh and Mecklenburg a ninth! In forty counties more the increase of

Are We Ready?

Are we ready to guarantee such a democracy in education to the children in our nation? Are we willing to provide these equalities in educational opportunity? Are we prepared to open our pocket-books and pay the taxes which such a program will and does demand? Has the war for democracy so got into our very life that we can see such a policy in the light of an investment for our children and for our state and nation?

City and Country

The folks in our cities long ago began to see the light but the country districts are still content to sit in darkness. Yet the city folks have only caught a partial glimpse of the great blazing light of learning. The crowded school room with 40 or more pupils to a teacher is not confined to the one-teacher country school. The narrow and fixed course of study and rigid systems of promotion are found in city as well as in rural systems of education. The same can be said as to insufficient and inefficient supervision, inadequate and dilapidated teaching equipment, neglect of the necessity for regular attendance, failure to care for pupil health, etc., etc.

Are we ready to provide and pay for schools adequate to a democracy?

country population was less than the natural increase due to the excess of births over deaths, which in North Carolina is around 12 1-2 per cent in ten years. In 9 counties the city increases ranged from 8 to 25 times the country increases in population, as follows: Caldwell, Edgecombe and Lenoir 8 times, Iredell and Rockingham 9 times, Granville and Nash 10 times, Wilson 12 times, and Beaufort 25 times. The causes are two in the main: (1) The lure of collective life in our rapidly multiplying factory and trade centers, and (2) the expulsive force of loneliness in our sparsely settled country areas. Which is merely to say that Carolina is sharing in the world-wide effects of modern industrialism. North Carolina is far and away the best developed industrial state in the South and therefore is being urbanized more rapidly than other southern states. We now have nearly 600 towns smaller than the census city (2500 inhabitants). Many of them like Carrboro were not on the map in 1910. During the last eight years such towns in North Carolina have sprung up by hundreds like mushrooms overnight. Think of it: not a town of 2500 inhabitants eight years ago in Haywood, Johnston, Lincoln, Richmond, Robeson, Rutherford, Scotland, or Stanly! It is safe to say that our urban population has been more than doubled since 1900, and that the rate of increase has been ten times that of our country increase in the new century. In addition there is the loss of country people who have swarmed out of our farm areas into the centers of war industries north and east—a full 100,000, and the draft of 60,000 of our country boys into the camps at home and overseas—all told, around a fourth of our effective farm labor. And the chances are that these country people will not return to our farm areas. It is the fashion of war to dislocate farm populations.

These statements barely hint at the most tremendous single fact of social transformation in the entire history of the state. Whether it bode good or ill for North Carolina, depends upon how well we consider it, and how swiftly and wisely we adjust our changing civilization to it. It would be inexcusably stupid in us to be unaware of it. We need to address ourselves promptly and competently to the problems of progressive readjustment in these days of profound social changes. Herein lie our after-the-war problems in North Carolina—better schools and minimum illiteracy—vocational education in farm and factory regions—better church support and a larger measure of applied Christianity—greater attention to public health and public highways—the decrease of our landless, homeless multitudes town and country—responsible, intelligent citizenship and a higher level of law and order—cooperative enterprise and social integration in our countryside—and the reign of economic righteousness everywhere.