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NEWS LETTER

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COUNTRY WELFARE IN CAROLINA

IREDELL IN THE WAR

The Statesville Landmark of July 2 devotes its entire space to chronicles of Iredeell County and her sons and daughters in the Great War.

It tells in detail what the home folks did. The little child who knitted a sweater for a soldier is honorably mentioned, along with the selfless men who made the whole county ring with their fervor. It celebrates the hundreds who gave and gave and gave that Iredeell's quota of foodstuffs and of dollars might be raised and over-raised.

It gives a list in full of the men who volunteered and the men who went to the colors no less cheerfully through the selective service draft—nearly 1,000 of them.

It gives a sorrowful paragraph each to the half hundred who laid down their lives in the service of their country.

It gives full accounts of the doings of the 105th Engineers, the 115th Machine Gun Battalion, the 30th and the 81st Divisions—of their valiant deeds as road builders, as Hindenburg line breakers, and their bravery on the Meuse and in the Argonne.

Iredeell has here a definite record of her loyal devotion. When book history comes to be written there will be no room for doubt about the rightful place of Iredeell people on the scroll of fame.

Iredeell is gathering her war records together. So, too, is Wilson. What other Carolina counties have done as well? We should like to know in order to do homage to them in the News Letter.

It is work that should be done now. It is fitting work for the Daughters of the Confederacy and the Confederate Veterans. Or for women's organizations, or for somebody. It should be done in every county in the state and it should be done at once.—E. N.

THE CAROLINA PLAN

I am not meaning to be impertinent when I say to the Local Community section of the National Social Work Conference that the welfare problems of 44 million people in the United States are not industrial and urban but agricultural and rural. The multitudes that dwell in the vast open spaces of America beyond our city gates have not yet had their day in court. These country multitudes have problems, they are of pressing national importance, and they must be fully considered at some early day if we are to keep our town and country civilizations in sane, safe balance. No problem more important than this challenges the statesmen of any land or country. It may not be amiss therefore to fix the attention of this conference for a little while upon the country end of our national life.

Countryside Well-Being

I have been asked to present to you the North Carolina Scheme of Rural Development. The phrasing of my subject is not my own, which gives you a chance to acquit me, if you will, of what a Cracker friend at home calls "toploftical assu-macy."

North Carolina is a rural state, like all the rest in the cotton and tobacco belts of the South. Our industrial bread-winners are a larger proportion of the entire population than in any other Southern state, but in 1910 they were only 133,000 all told, or less than one-seventh of the total number of persons engaged in gainful occupations, and more than half of these live under rural conditions in little trade centers and mill villages of fewer than 2,500 inhabitants. Our welfare problems are therefore mainly rural. Which means that for two and a half centuries we have been unaware of any social ills and unconcerned about them; or so until our present governor Thomas W. Bickett, in epoch making fashion, focused public thought upon their superlative importance.

Nearly exactly four of every five people in North Carolina are dwellers in the open country, outside towns and villages of any sort or size whatsoever, only eight families to the square mile the state over, both races counted. And they dwell not in farm groups or communities as in the old world countries but in solitary, wide-

ly scattered farm homes, fewer than four families per square mile in ten counties, and fewer than seventeen per square mile in our most populous country county. Our country civilization is analyzable in terms of individual farmsteads, settlements, and neighborhoods. Compactly settled country communities conscious of common necessities and definitely organized to secure common advantages are few and rare. Country community is a term that means something in the Middle West, the North and East; it means little as yet anywhere in the South. We have such communities here and there, but they are infrequent, sad to say.

Our ills are not mainly those of congested population centers where, in Rousseau's phrase, the breath of man is fatal to his fellows. We know little of the bewildering, baffling city problems of progress and poverty, magnificence and misery side by side. Our ills are mainly the social consequences of (1) farming as an occupation (2) in sparsely settled areas. Our social ills are the ills of solitariness, remoteness, and aloofness. We are far removed from socialism in any sense good or bad. On the other hand, we have always been but a hair's-breadth away from individualism, raw, raucous, and unorganizable. Both the best and the worst of my home state lies in the fact that too long it has been excessively rural and intensely individualistic—in business enterprise, in legislation and civic rule, and worst of all in religious consciousness. Our fundamental ill is social insulation and our fundamental task is local organization for economic and social advantage, for local self-expression and self-regulation in community affairs, and for generous, active civic interest in commonwealth concerns.

Such in brief are our problems, and they are the problems of some 40 odd millions of people in countryside America.

A Common Social Menace

In passing, let me call your attention to a social ill of fundamental sort that increasingly menaces our cities and country areas alike—namely, the steady decrease in the number of people who live in their own homes and till their own farms, the steady increase of landless, homeless multitudes in both our towns and country regions. These homeless people shift from pillar to post under the pressure of necessity or the lure of opportunity. They abide in no place long enough to become identified with community life, to acquire a proprietary interest in schools and churches, and to develop a robust sense of civic and social responsibility. Instable, irresponsible citizenship is a seed bed—a hot bed, if you please—for every sort of irrational social impulse.

Already three-fifths of all dwellings in the United States are occupied by tenants and renters: in Boston the ratio rises to 80 percent and in Greater New York to 89 percent. (See the University News Letter Vol. III, Nos. 36 and 39). Fifty-five million people in the United States spend their days and nights, like poor Dante, going up and down somebody else's stairs. In general the fatal law of our civilization seems to be that the more populous and prosperous an area becomes, the fewer are the people who live in their own homes and dwell unmolested and unafraid under their own vines and fig trees. I have yet to hear in this conference the discussion of any social ill that is not sequentially related directly or indirectly to home ownership by the few and land orphanage for the many. I shall hope to hear this foundational problem threshed out at length at some early day in the National Social Work Conference. It concerns both our city and country civilizations in fundamental sort.

In the Old North State

I was drafted into service, I presume, to give you a modest account—if such a thing is possible—of North Carolina's brave attack upon the social problems of a rural people during the last four years.

The story is full of detail, but briefly it covers a common-school fund nearly doubled during the war, and a fifty percent salary increase for public school teachers as a legal requirement; an il-

PEACE PATRIOTISM

Civic responsibility and civic pride are hard things to instill into the minds of those who have grown old without them. The time to develop a desire for a clean, beautiful, and wholesome community is in childhood. Developed then, it will never disappear.

Concrete activities are the best method of developing things of this sort. An example is the children's crusade for a town free from filth.

Discussing the subject in a recent bulletin of the Kansas board of health, Walter Burr shows concretely how much boys and girls have done toward removing germ-breeding conditions in Kansas towns.

This is the practical, present day side of peace patriotism. The other side—the instilling of right community principles into the minds of the young people—is of equal importance. The two go hand in hand.—Kansas Industrialist.

literacy commission with a support fund of \$25,000 a year; a compulsory school attendance law together with a standard child labor law; three and a half millions of bond money for enlarging and equipping our public institutions of learning and benevolence; nearly \$250,000 a year for public health work, for the medical and dental inspection of schools and the free treatment of indigent school children, and for the defense of our homes against the ravages of social disease; around a million two hundred thousand dollars a year of local, state, and federal funds for agricultural education and promotion; a law sanctioning cooperative enterprise in general and in particular the best cooperative credit-union law in the United States, as a result of which we have more farm credit-unions than all the rest of the states combined; a state-wide cotton warehouse system based on the best law in the South; a public welfare law establishing a state welfare board with ample authority and support, and calling now for county welfare boards and superintendents, not optionally as in Indiana, Kansas, Minnesota, and other states, but mandatorily; a juvenile court and probation officer in every county, and in every city with 10,000 inhabitants or more; a rural township incorporation law and a state commission charged with rural organization and recreation; a state-wide social-work conference; rural social science studies and public welfare courses at the state university.

And so on and on. Thirty-five laws of economic and social import have gone on our statute books in four years, all of them directly or indirectly related to rural social welfare. It is a new kind of legislative activity in North Carolina and we have had more of such legislation during Governor Bickett's administration than can be found in any hundred years of our history heretofore. It has been epoch making legislation and it ushers in a great new era in North Carolina. The Valley of Humiliation located between two mountains of conceit, as a Tarheel is accustomed to describe his state to Virginians and South Carolinians, has suddenly become the Valley of Decision that the prophet Joel saw in his dreams.

Rural Township Law

So many experiments are recently under way in North Carolina, that I have been at a loss to guess just which one of them the chairman of this section had in mind when phrasing my theme for me.

I have, however, a vague suspicion that she meant for me to discuss in particular our Rural Township Incorporation law—a law that makes it possible for the people of our country neighborhoods to create by popular vote the civic machinery necessary to self-expression and self-rule. It is the familiar town meeting of New England. It was indigenous to the democracy of a people compactly settled in communities in limited areas.

The idea has been slow to develop in the South because of our vast open spaces, and the settlement of our people in early times and at the present day in individual farmsteads. Our counties are large as a rule, many of them larger than the state of Rhode Island. Our townships are large. They are geographical divisions and administrative units in the political scheme of things. They are nowhere economic or social groups. The net result has been a feeble sense

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FLAG ETIQUETTE

It is an American and especially a Southern habit to be courteous, respectful, reverential in the presence of age and honorable service. Our flag is as old as our nation, as honorable as the sons who have fought and died in defense of American principles, yet we fail wofully to pay that respectful, reverential courtesy to our flag which is her due. That we may all know to the end that we may practice flag-etiquette the following official rulings are presented.

The Code

The flag should never be placed below a person sitting.

The field of the flag is the stripes; the union is the blue and the stars.

When the flag becomes old or soiled from use it should be decently burned.

When two American flags are crossed the blue fields should face each other.

In decorating, the flag should never be festooned or draped; always hung flat.

The statutes of the United States forbid the use of the flag in registered trademarks.

As an altar covering, the field should be at the right as you face the altar, and nothing be placed upon the flag except the Bible.

The American flag, the emblem of our Country, is the third oldest national flag in the world. It represents liberty, and liberty means obedience to law.

When the flag is displayed from a staff the blue field should be in the upper corner next to the staff.

From private poles the flag may fly at all hours, day and night, with due respect to the colors.

In crossing the American flag with that of another nation the American colors should be at the right.

When the flag is passing in parade, in review, or is being raised or lowered, the spectators should—if walking, halt; if sitting, arise, uncover, and stand at attention.

When carried in parade or when crossed with other flags the Stars and Stripes should always be at the right.

The flag should never be worn as the whole or part of a costume. As a badge

it should be worn over the left breast.

There are three standard sizes for the flag provided by the War Department regulations: Garrison flag 20x38 feet; Post flag 10x19 feet; Storm flag 5x9 1/2 feet.

In handling the flag it should not be allowed to touch the ground, and never allowed to lie upon the ground as a means of decoration—nor should it be laid flat with anything upon it.

If you hang the flag from a window it should be suspended by the same edge which is ordinarily attached to the pole, and if two flags are hung together the cantons should be placed together. If the flag is draped across the street the blue canton should be up.

In draping the flag against the side of a room or building the proper position for the blue field is toward the north or the east.

When the flag is used in unveiling a statue or monument it should not be allowed to fall to the ground, but should be carried aloft to wave out, forming a distinctive feature during the remainder of the ceremony.

Always stand when The Star Spangled Banner is being played or sung, and protest when used in a medley.

The flag contains thirteen stripes, alternate red and white, representing the thirteen original states, and a star for each state in the union.

When the flag is shown horizontally the blue field should be at the upper left hand corner to the observer; when vertically the blue should be at the upper right corner; when in either position the flag should be fastened only at the top.

When the flag is flown at half staff as a sign of mourning it should be hoisted to full staff at the conclusion of the funeral; in placing the flag at half staff it should first be hoisted to the top of the staff and then lowered to position.

Whenever our flag and any other are hoisted on the same staff, the Star Spangled Banner must float from the top. In the heart of every American citizen the American flag must have the first and highest place—must be supreme.—I. A. W.

of civic and an almost utter lack of social responsibility in our country counties. A perfectly natural result has been honest but inefficient and wasteful county government in the South, or so as a rule. The remedy for this sad state of affairs, as Thomas Jefferson clearly saw a hundred years ago, lies in organized community life and local discipline in righteous self-rule. It is essential to the perpetuity of American democracy and the lack of it threatens our entire civic structure, said he. Our Rural Township Incorporation law is a tardy recognition of Thomas Jefferson's wisdom.

The law is two years old and, because it rests upon our ancient rights of local option in static farm areas, township organization under this law is slow—so slow that only six communities in North Carolina are so far organized even on paper. It is a hopeful experiment of the right sort, and in time it will head-up into great results.

Social Welfare Laws

Lest you think me a Bourbon and not a democrat in political philosophy, let me hurry to say that I think of legislation as related to social aspiration and effort about as I think of the steel tubing in a Hudson River tunnel.

The tube of steel is indispensable to permanency. So are law and civic machinery necessary to give form and permanency to social activity. Of course I believe that true democracy is the outward evidence of inner grace and worth; that it must be developed from within and cannot be imposed from without. But ours is a represented democracy. Our own representatives make our laws and, if they are unfit, sooner or later we freely elect new representatives and repeal obnoxious laws.

Such reform legislation as I have discussed is not dropped down from above like manna; it is grown out of the social soil under the hand of our chosen civic servants.

This I know—a vast deal of the gospel of cooperation, say, has gone to waste in America, because it has lacked fit legal sanction in state legislation. Cooperative credit unions, for instance, are rapidly developing in North Carolina because we have what other states lack—an effective cooperative enterprise law. Our local welfare problems are being

directly attacked by county juvenile courts, county public welfare boards, county probation, parole, and school attendance officers, and county factory inspectors charged with enforcing our child labor law. There is nothing new to you in these forms of social activity, except perhaps the fact that these county boards and officials have come into existence in North Carolina under state-wide compulsion and not by community choice as in other states.

It is highly significant that a rural, individualistic people has at last been willing to lay aside the sacred rights of local option and to choose instead the sacred rights of childhood as an imperious commonwealth concern. A full four-fifths of our children are country children and they have long suffered from the social inactivity of remote rural counties; not more nor worse in North Carolina than in similar counties in other states—say in Clinton and Franklin counties New York state, or in Fayette county Pennsylvania, or in Windham county Connecticut, or in Aroostook county Maine, or in the delta regions of South Illinois.

But at last the great common heart of North Carolina has heard the cry of her children, and as a state she has sounded a call to the colors for a grand army attack upon the enemies of childhood—upon poor schools in rural areas, upon bad health conditions, upon the benumbing drudgery and unrelieved loneliness of life in solitary farm homes. Nothing less than this will avail to explain the ground swell of legislative reform in North Carolina. When one stops to think it through, it becomes plainer than a pikestaff that our radical legislative reforms are sourced in a newly awakened, immense concern about the children of North Carolina.

The simple fact is that every really worth while economic and social activity is related to the supreme purpose of making 'this dirty little spot in space that men call earth,' a safer and happier place for children to be born into and to grow up in. This is the very essence of the mind and message and meaning of Miss Lathrop to this generation of men and women the world around. May God multiply her kind ten thousand times over in every land and country.—E. C. Branson, National Social-Work Conference, Atlantic City, June 5, 1919.