

## BETTER COUNTRY SCHOOLS

### \$24,000,000 MORE

Some families of 2,784 North Carolina farmers, sailors, and marines, killed or disabled in the Great War, are now being insured for \$24,322,160 in war risk insurance policies by Uncle Sam, according to advices from Washington. This, by the way, is a larger total than the value of all the real property of every sort whatsoever in North Carolina. The average policy insured by these 2,784 men was \$8,740. Disabled soldiers, as well as the widows and children and dependent parents of those who have died, are being made comfortable by the government. The compensation claims to residents of North Carolina number 1,157. In addition to the insurance and compensation claims now paid in North Carolina, 14 claims of these two classes are under investigation.

### BILLION DOLLAR STATE

In the current issue of the News Letter published by the Extension Bureau of the University, there appears, under the heading of A Billion Dollar State, some very encouraging figures relating to the value of North Carolina products. The total value of the crops, farm animals and products of 1919 and the manufactured products of 1914 (statistics as to 1919 years not being available) was \$1,000,000. The figures of the 1919 census of manufactures, which have not yet been made public, will probably bring the total up to considerably nearer two billion dollars, as our manufacturing products have enormously increased in the five years. And we are even richer than we seem, because the \$1,072,000,000 mentioned above does not include the value of lumber, fisheries, cottonseed, or the output of our mines and quarries. Such a record means that North Carolina is at present in the greatest period of prosperity which the State has ever experienced, and that our wealth is increasing yearly, for the years from 1914 have been marked by very rapid gains. The News Letter says:

"We are now producing greater wealth in one year than we have been willing to invest on our tax books in two hundred and seventy years—more by a hundred million dollars. This rapidly increasing wealth should give us the possibility of larger expenditures for such public improvements as roads, education, and health. We are unquestionably prosperous; whether or not we are progressive as well depends on the use we make of our money."—News and Observer.

### VANN A GREAT CITIZEN

The best piece of news that has come to this community in a long time was announced to the teachers and pupils of the graded school yesterday morning by Mr. H. Vann, the chairman of the board of trustees. He simply stated that his father, Mr. S. C. Vann, had offered to give to the town the sum of \$100,000 for the purpose of erecting a modern school building for the town. The only condition to the gift is that the Brewer property, just in front of the Baptist Church, and the lot on which stands the Masonic temple and a strip off of the back of Mr. W. Henderson's lot be secured at a reasonable price for school grounds, and that the school be made up-to-date in every respect.

Mr. Vann is a wealthy cotton mill owner and Franklinton's foremost citizen. He came to this place a little more than twenty years ago a young man just entering life with no money of consequence and worked as a merchant as a clerk for about two years. By hard work and frugality he soon was able to enter business for himself. This grew under his leadership and soon became one of the largest mercantile establishments in this section of the State. Later on he, with a few associates, established the Sterling Cotton Mills, which was a success from the beginning. He is now sole owner of the establishment, and it is one of the most prosperous of the cotton mills in the State.

A few years ago Mr. Vann established the Bettie Henly Vann educational loan fund for the purpose of educating the children that finish at the Methodist orphanage. Up to the present two or

three scores of these young people have been the beneficiary of Mr. Vann's benevolence.

It is not expected to be able to get the new school building erected in time for occupancy this fall, but it will be ready a year from now. Mr. Vann's instructions are to make it all that a schoolhouse ought to be and prepared for every department of work.

The gift of Mr. Vann will enable the trustees to erect what will possibly be the most complete school building in the State for a town of this size and furthermore it will be free of all debt. —Raleigh News and Observer.

### THE COTTON FARMER

For the last sixty years the price of cotton has been based on slave labor. Once it was negro slave labor. Now it is white slave labor. The price has always been below the cost of production. Is that fair?

The Southern cotton farmer has lived on wages lower than those of the laborer. He has received nothing by way of profit. He got nothing for his ability as a farm manager. And yet he supplied essential raw material to the rest of the world.

Low-priced cotton has kept farmers and their families in slavery. Children have been kept out of school to work in the cotton fields. It has meant bad roads and undeveloped natural resources.

The only way the farmer could meet his problem was to make more cotton, even though at a low price. Volume helped him at times to barely live, but he was always in debt. You know that's true.

Today the debtor farmer is still in the majority. His children, from six to sixteen years old, are usually out of school, barefooted, and at work chopping and picking cotton.

The injustice, the unfairness, and the misery of it cry aloud for remedy.

The American Cotton Association is the remedy.

With Southern cotton growers, Southern business and professional men, Southern merchants, and Southern bankers—all the Southern South—dovetailed and interlocked in this organization and working for Southern interests, it will be easy to apply the remedy.

Will you help us fight your fight? Sure, you will. Why wouldn't you?—S. G. Rubinow, Raleigh Times.

### CHURCH STATESMANSHIP

Officials of the Christian Church from Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Florida met at Tuscaloosa, Alabama, the other day to perfect plans for the education of ministers at the State University.

The church proposes to erect a \$300,000 building for the use of theological students. Professors will be added to the faculty of the university for the church courses and the whole educational plan involves the expenditure of one million dollars.

### BETTER RURAL SCHOOLS

It seems commonplace and trite to remark again that the rural schools do not compare favorably with the urban schools. But the differences between the educational advantages offered the country child and those offered the city child have not made a deep impression on the public mind. And until the real picture is seen and the public's imagination is fired by it, the inequality of educational advantages will continue to hinder the wholesome development of the people at large. For the city child is now a favorite, and we have somehow come to think of him as deserving a larger and better educational opportunity than is afforded the country child. This condition remains even in the face of increased talk about the right of all children to an equal chance in life. The plain truth is that such a right is not now guaranteed in North Carolina or any other state.

It is generally recognized that throughout the country at large the city school is superior to the rural school, in available school funds, in buildings and equipment, in length of term, in organization and direction, in supervision, in teaching effectiveness, in salaries paid teachers, in the courses of study, and in almost every

### UNSUNG HEROISM

For more than twenty-five years, says Elizabeth D. Abernathy of Pulaski, Tennessee, I taught a country school because I wanted to teach a country school. I had made a reputation as art teacher before the call came to me from the rural district. Other positions opened to me year after year. Once I refused \$100 a month in order to stay in my district school for \$40. All these years I have been studying the rural school problem from the country teacher's standpoint. I have read and thought—and worked.

In my rural district, in my county institutes, in the state school journal in which I conducted a department called Our Rural Schools, I fought for the country child, often feeling that I fought a losing fight single-handed.

When I appealed to my patrons for help they would say: We know you are doing the best you can for the children. We leave it all to you.

And they did. They let me pick up underbrush from the hillside for the winter fires, scour the school house, replace broken window lights, and so on. With the help of the children I did what I could for my country school and community.

When I went to teachers' meetings the town teachers talked and the country teachers listened. During intermissions the town teachers always asked us why we stayed in the country. During the sessions they taught us all about rural problems.

After thirty-five years of heart-breaking work I find that we have no country schools, nor money for them, no children of school age, no leaders, no communities,—and nothing but derelict and stranded churches.

Our landholders have gone to town. They had to. Every fall the man with children to educate realizes that he has no other recourse.

other respect. So long as this condition is permitted, it seems both idle and bad faith to talk and write of the charms of rural life and the glories of the countryside,—a subject that has been done to death by cant and twaddle.

### Disgraceful Contrasts

Differences in the educational opportunities offered in North Carolina are very pronounced. According to the latest published report of the state superintendent of public instruction, for the school year 1917-1918, approximately eighty percent of the state's entire school population of 846,000 is rural. Approximately twenty percent live in towns and cities.

For the school year in question the total available school fund for each of the rural children was \$7.71, as against \$16.23 for each of the town or city children.

The value of the school property provided for the education of the eighty percent was \$7,800,000, or about \$11.50 for each rural child. But the value of the school property of the twenty percent was \$6,500,000, or about \$38.00 for each city child.

The annual salary of the teachers of the eighty percent was about \$244, as against \$486 for the teachers of the twenty percent.

The rural child was provided with 113 days of schooling. The city child was provided with 165 days.

More than twice as much was expended for the supervision of the twenty percent in the city as was expended for the supervision of the eighty percent in the country.

Nearly three times as much was expended for the operation and maintenance of the schools of the twenty percent as was expended for the operation and maintenance of the schools of the eighty percent.

These figures were not unlikely somewhat changed for the school year 1918-19

## COUNTRY HOME CONVENIENCES

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**FARM HOMES—OLD AND NEW**

It is very interesting to compare the way household tasks were performed in the farm home a few years ago and today.

Farm help was easily and cheaply gotten a few years ago, but even with this help everyone was kept busy from morning until night trying to finish the daily household tasks. At the end of the busiest day, however, a great deal of the work was still unfinished. There was the endless sweeping with a heavy broom and the pumping and carrying of endless pails of water. The milk had to be skimmed and the butter churned by hand. Then there were the dirty and dangerous lamps to fill and their chimneys to clean. Long hours were spent at the wash tub and the ironing board, beside the hot stove, and finally after supper the darning and mending was done by a dim, flickering lamp.

Today it is almost impossible to get

hired help, but with electricity in the home the farmer's wife does not need so much help in her work. By simply turning a button the room is flooded with bright light. The cleaning can be done with a vacuum cleaner, the clothes washed in an electric washing machine and ironed with an electric iron, while many other tasks such as churning, dish washing, cooking, and sewing can be done with simple and reliable appliances. The same electric plant will pump water under pressure to any room in the house and all that is needed is obtained by simply turning on a faucet.

With the aid of these electrical servants the work can be done much more thoroughly, easily, and quickly, but best of all, at the end of the day the farmer's wife is not all tired out. The work has become a pleasure instead of a drudgery.

Which is better, the old way or the new?—A. N.

and they will of course show some change for the present year, 1919-20. But the big difference between expenditures for rural and for urban education for both these years will probably show little change from that of 1917-18.

The rural school in North Carolina, therefore, presents itself as a difficulty that challenges the best of the state's attention and effort, for it can never be overcome until it is faced seriously and solved properly. And it will not be properly solved until the rural school is made to approach and attain in effectiveness the best standards of public education now furnished the children of urban communities. The schools of towns and cities are not perfect, of course, but they are in many respects two and often three times as good as those provided for the country children. The question is clear-cut: Should eighty percent of the state's children be longer denied educational advantages approximately equal to those now furnished twenty percent of her children?

While these contrasts are disgraceful, it is well to remember that the fault lies mainly with our country people themselves. Good schools depend primarily on the willingness of communities and counties to tax themselves locally. The 750 thousand dollars contributed out of the state treasury in 1917-18 to the counties for school support will not solve the problem. It could not be solved indeed with a state appropriation ten times that amount. Our country counties and rural districts must invest more liberally in their own children. There is no other way out in this or any other state.

### Consolidating Schools

Consolidation of schools and the transportation of pupils offer the chief and only practical means by which the school advantages now enjoyed by the twenty percent can be brought to the eighty percent of our children. And the opportunity for this rural educational improvement in North Carolina is now at hand, because coincident with the policy of building good roads, to which the state has recently committed itself with increased vigor, and with the expansion of modern agricultural practices, there appears a most promising and wide-spread interest in the betterment of school facilities for the masses of our children.

The advantages of town or city school can in the main be put within reach of most of the rural communities of the state. The poor type of building; poor equipment; ineffective teaching; the tendency towards idleness and other evils which appear when children are not properly supervised and directed but forced to spend a large part of their time aimlessly at their desks; the lack of professional contacts for the teacher; the lack of intellectual stimulus in the one-teacher schools; and the lifeless existence so often observed of the children in such schools,—these and other harmful features can be eliminated by the union of the small schools and the maintenance of good consolidated schools. The purpose of rural school consolidation is to furnish the country boy and girl a larger opportunity for effective education and training for happier and more useful lives, but this opportunity can never be afforded the majority of our children until consolidation has become accepted practically instead of merely in theory.

### The Advantages

By means of consolidation and transportation the advantages of the urban school can be placed within reach of most of North Carolina's rural children. Among the advantages that can thus be brought to the rural children are:

1. More comfortable, convenient, attractive, and better equipped school buildings can be had. Experience shows that such buildings can be erected at no greater cost, sometimes at less cost, than that of the several small buildings of the communities which are consolidated. In such modern buildings the health and morals of the children are safeguarded to a greater degree than is possible in the smaller one-room schools. Are not the country children entitled to better buildings and equipment than are now provided for them?

2. Because of the more nearly adequate salaries and the opportunity afforded for more systematized work, the consolidated school insures better trained teachers who are willing to remain for long terms in the same communities. Are not the country children worthy of the best trained teachers?

3. The consolidated school makes possible a more complete course of study, including the high school subjects, agriculture, domestic science, industrial arts, drawing, music, etc., which are always found in the best type of urban schools. Are not the country children entitled to as good a course of study as that now provided for the city children?

4. The consolidated school shows a larger enrollment and better attendance, because of the social stimulation afforded by larger numbers.

5. Better grading and classification of pupils and a general standardization of the work are found in the consolidated school. More time can be given to each recitation, thus increasing the opportunity of the individual pupil for thoroughness of work. Better organized class instruction such as that found in the consolidated school becomes a source of inspiration and assists in the development of leadership.

6. Opportunity is afforded for a closer and more helpful form of supervision. This improves the effectiveness of the teachers and furnishes the professional contacts now denied the teacher of the small school.

7. The consolidated school affords the country child the chance to secure a high school education near his own home, an opportunity that is not now within easy reach of most country boys and girls. Larger numbers of such boys and girls would then enter the high school for the simple reason that the consolidated school would prepare them for it.

8. By means of the adequately equipped consolidated school a great saving is possible in the expense of sending children away from home for high school training or preparation for college.

9. The consolidated school stimulates and develops a more wholesome and attractive community spirit and interest, which are reflected by church, social, and other community organizations and activities.

10. The consolidated school enriches and strengthens the lives of boys and girls and the men and women of the community which it serves.—E. W. K.