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THE COLLEGES OF CAROLINA

A HUMILIATING RECORD

North Carolina after two and a half centuries of history has college plants and equipments valued at \$14,008,771. This is the total of the figures turned in to the department of Rural Social Science at the State University by the authorities of 31 white colleges, junior colleges, technical training schools, and the University.

It is almost exactly the wealth we produce by our sweet potato crop alone in a single year.

The plant and equipments of the University of California are valued at two and a half million dollars more than the thirty-one college properties of North Carolina all put together.

The total annual working income of our thirty-one colleges is \$2,434,646. We spend 20 millions a year to keep our motor cars going and less than two and a half million a year to keep our colleges going. The working income of the University of Michigan alone is a half million dollars more than the combined income of all the colleges of North Carolina.

The students enrolled in our thirty-one colleges this fall number 10,586, and the applicants turned away for lack of room were 2,308. These are the exact figures reported by responsible college officials.

Which is to say, nearly one of every five students who sought to enter failed to get into the colleges they fondly chose.

At present our four-year high schools are graduating students at the rate of 8,000 a year, and the colleges of their choice have this fall closed their doors against 2,308 of them.

It is a college situation that is well nigh unbelievable. It is wholly unendurable. And if it cannot instantly be cured, we ought never again to prate about our amazing agricultural wealth and rank, or our industrial development and leadership in the South, or our pre-eminence in Dixie in the payment of federal taxes on incomes and excess profits.

We talk about the highway policies of North Carolina in terms of millions and hundreds of millions of dollars.

And the time has come when the college policies of North Carolina must be discussed and decided in terms of millions and hundreds of millions of dollars.

In a righteous cause of this sort, the State has a right to expect her college authorities, church and state, to be bold as a lion.

The Current Topics Club

What these college figures mean was the burden of Dr. L. R. Wilson's address to the Current Topics Club at Rocky Mount the other night.

This club is a unique open forum, and its like ought to be in a hundred counties of the state.

And Dr. Wilson's address is so graphic and stirring that we are passing it on in full to our readers.

OUR CRIPPLED COLLEGES

The outcome of three matters of tremendous importance engages your thought tonight. Almost in spite of yourselves at this dinner hour your minds are constantly turning back to them and weighing them. They are (1) the holding and underwriting of the tobacco and cotton crops of North Carolina in such a way as to increase the prosperity of the men and women who toiled in their production; (2) the decision by ballot tomorrow of the tax program of the State; and (3) the verdict of the nation upon the League of Nations, which, whether with reservations or modifications, I trust will yet become the great new document of world peace and human liberty.

Tonight I wish to divert your thought from these matters to one of like import, namely, the critical situation, the rightful congestion, the woful lack of plants and funds in the thirty-odd colleges and junior colleges of North Carolina dedicated to the higher education of your sons and daughters. I want you to consider with me our bumper crop of high school graduates which, for lack of educational warehouses, laboratories, libraries, and underwriting organizations, is not being properly moved into the ultimate channels of material and

spiritual prosperity for North Carolina—a matter, if I mistake not, as fundamental as taxation, and the proper solution of which will result in the further liberation of North Carolina's League of Youth for high service to the state.

As business and professional men you may not have realized that your college authorities are facing an educational problem in North Carolina as grave as your financial-crop situation here in Rocky Mount. They, too, are sitting up at night struggling, with such grave facts as these: (1) The total amount invested in the thirty-odd college plants of the state is the ridiculously small sum of \$14,000,000. (2) Their annual working income is less than \$2,500,000 all told. (3) Their dormitories, with four students to the room in many instances, are packed and jammed with a total of 10,586 students. While (4) the records of their registrars and secretaries show that for lack of room they have turned away 2,308 applicants for admission this fall.

They understand too that the high schools of the State are just now beginning to function at high speed. Five years ago only 800 students were graduated from four-year high schools. Over three thousand were graduated last June. Within the next five years the number will be doubled or trebled. They see a crop whose acreage cannot be cut, and which will further overwhelm them unless succor comes instantly and in full measure.

Adequate Salaries

In undertaking to meet this situation our colleges find themselves confronted with another equally distressing set of facts. They discover that in their attempts to secure instructors they are in keen competition with institutions in other sections of the country whose problems, though acute twelve months ago, have already been happily solved or rendered far simpler through instant action by their supporters and state legislatures. They find that Harvard has had but one cause of worry. All it has had to do was to raise enough endowment to increase its salary scale fifty per cent, thereby raising its maximum rewards for skilled teachers from less than \$6000 to \$8000. This it accomplished by putting on a drive last October for \$15,000,000, \$13,000,000 of which has already been paid in or subscribed. At the same time Princeton put on a campaign for \$14,000,000, while Yale began to assimilate the \$18,000,000 bequest from the Sterling estate in 1918 and a special gift of more than \$600,000 from her alumni for immediate running expenses.

They find again that they have to underwrite building programs as well, from which Harvard and Yale and Princeton have escaped because the public schools in the states in which they are located have been functioning successfully for decades.

Furthermore they discover that states like Michigan, which have witnessed in the last two years an unprecedented rush of high school graduates to college, have largely anticipated their building programs, or, like Minnesota, have money already appropriated to take care of them.

Carolina, The Unready

There is another thing they find which isn't an easy or pleasant thing to say. They find when they put on campaigns for maintenance funds and buildings, that the State has not yet fully awakened to the meaning of a thorough-going, adequate educational program. We have not backed our professions of belief in higher education with our dollars. The meager \$14,000,000 invested in college buildings and laboratories and libraries and equipment tells the story. And further testimony is added by the fact that the University of Michigan has a working income of over \$3,000,000 representing an investment of \$60,000,000 at 5 per cent and that a college like Dartmouth could announce in June gifts and legacies amounting to more than \$1,500,000, while all of the thirty-odd colleges of North Carolina have a total working income of less than \$2,500,000.

Again, our colleges find that their alumni were not organized to leap instantly into the breach when the evil hour was first upon them. While Har-

IT IS IMPERATIVE

For the interests of our people it is imperative that we bring our State University to the full equal of Harvard, Yale, the University of Michigan or the University of Wisconsin, and our State Agricultural and Mechanical College to be the equal of the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, the Columbia School of Mines, or the Massachusetts School of Technology.—D. A. Tompkins.

The supreme problem in North Carolina today is to reconcile two mutually contradictory facts: the splendid circumstance that North Carolina in agricultural resources is fourth from the top in the United States and the humiliating circumstance that North Carolina in illiteracy is fourth from the bottom in the United States. Our problem is to bridge over this hideous gap, this yawning crevasse, between progress and reaction, between our financial wealth and educational poverty, between our agricultural glory and our cultural shame.—Archibald Henderson.

vard and Princeton and Cornell and Smith and Bryn Mawr and more than a hundred other Northern and Western institutions and state legislatures were putting on drives for increased endowment or appropriations from public funds, Trinity and Wake Forest, and the A. and E. were just announcing the appointment of full-time alumni secretaries, officers which numbers of other colleges of the State still do not have, because they haven't the money!

And intimately connected with these facts they discover that when Mr. Rockefeller turned over to the General Education Board \$50,000,000 as a 1919 Christmas gift to be applied to the relief of this critical situation in the colleges of the nation, our local institutions were not ready, except in a few instances, to take advantage of this source of assistance on a fifty-fifty basis.

How to hold their college faculties together, how to raise salaries, how to recruit their teaching staffs with proper new material, how to secure funds to build dormitories, and laboratories, and dining halls, and libraries and classrooms to take care of your sons and daughters and brothers and sisters—these are the problems with which college presidents and boards of trustees have been confronted and for which they must find the proper solution.

A Personal Problem

But has it occurred to you that there are questions involved in this situation which concern you more than they do the colleges?

This is not a case in which you can say "we should worry." These high school boys and girls, these ninety seniors enrolled in your own city high school, have sprung up around your own hearth stones. They are yours, and your responsibility does not end when you bid them goodbye, hand them a check, and turn them over to a college faculty.

If you will permit me, I shall ask you some of the questions you should be asking yourselves. First, what do our colleges mean when they say that they turned away 2,308 applicants in September? What does Meredith mean when it says it turned away 100, or Trinity 75, or Davidson 175, or the North Carolina College for Women 250, or Flora McDonald 205, or Wake Forest 40, or Queen's 144, or Davenport 71? Certainly it does not mean that 2,308 boys and girls were unable to enter some college, because, in many instances, when entrance could not be obtained in one institution it was sought in another and another until an opening finally was found. But it does mean that in hundreds of cases students who had planned their courses in high schools to enter specific colleges found it impossible to carry out their cherished plans.

Again, some had to go to other states and so may be lost in later years to North Carolina, a loss which the State can no more afford to sustain than losses through freight rate discriminations which tend to enrich other commonwealths and impoverish our own.

The picture I want you to get is this. On Commencement day in June President Chase of the University announced that every room on the campus was already taken by upper-classmen before applications from the incoming freshman were placed in the mails. Davidson in mid-summer had to say that its rooms were running over, and parents took the trains to go in person to this and that and the other institution to hunt down a room "for just one more student." One boy in Monroe wrote 26 letters before he found a room, and a girl in an eastern county found only four out of 28 southern colleges written to that could take her in.

It means that some students whom the State had inspired to equip themselves fully, grew tired of this desperate hunt and gave up this greatest of all the quests of youth. This happened right

here in North Carolina, which, with all of its vaunted agricultural wealth, stands fourth from the bottom in the scale of public school accomplishment.

Impossible Conditions

But the matter does not end here. What about the health of these boys and girls in overcrowded conditions? I know a girl accustomed, for precautionary reasons, to a sleeping porch. After ten days of crowding with three other girls in one room, she went home. The situation was impossible for her from the viewpoint of health. Every day as I pass rooms on the campus I see double-deck beds, two to the room, which four boys occupy in rooms intended for two.

What about the standards of living gained by our young people under these conditions? Is it right to force a boy who has had proper standards of sanitation and hygiene and methods of living at home to lower them at college while rooming as some men I know in quarters over grocery stores and garages? On the other hand shouldn't the boy whose standards of living at home have been low, have better ones set him while at college, particularly, if he is to become the teacher or officer or leader to whom some North Carolina school, or community, or special interest is to commit its program of sanitation and beautification of grounds? Shouldn't he be so sensitized in college to things sanitary, and hygienic, and beautiful as to demand similar standards in a work-a-day world?

Can our thirty-one colleges with only \$14,000,000 invested in plants and a total working income of only \$2,435,000 a year provide the best type of instruction? Can they stack up in this all important particular with Williams and Haverford and Wesleyan and Wellesley and hundreds of other institutions?

I shall not attempt to size up the situation in other North Carolina institutions, but will confine myself to my own. I was particularly interested in one freshman in the University last year. After he had been in college three weeks I asked him one day who his instructors were. He named four. Two of them had been graduated the preceding June. The third came from another institution and was teaching at the University for the first time. The fourth was a professor who had completed his work for the doctorate and had had a long and rich experience as a teacher. Three-fourths of his instructors in his freshman year when he was most in need of skilled guidance were inexperienced men. The point I am making is that too many North Carolina students receive instruction from callow instructors. I also know a Carolina freshman who entered a small Pennsylvania college twenty-five years ago who, at the very beginning of his college career, received instruction from one of America's greatest professors of English, and whose other instructors with only one exception held the rank of professor and had long records of preparation and successful teaching behind them. He sat at the feet of Gamaliels, not of raw recruits whose diplomas bore the date of the preceding spring.

Meagre Equipments

Laboratories and libraries play a large part in instruction. A study of our college catalogues will show that fewer than a dozen institutions in North Carolina have more than one entire building devoted to laboratory uses. This means that for the acquirement of skill in detailed experimentation essential to the proper development of our industries, such as your cotton seed oil industry here, North Carolina has not given her students the necessary buildings and apparatus.

The same is true of library resources. Only three of our college libraries added more than 1000 volumes to their collections during 1918-19. In eight of our colleges, junior colleges and technical training schools the new library volumes added during the year range from 10 to 781. Contrast these figures with those of Dartmouth, and Williams, and Smith, and Bryn Mawr, and Harvard, and the University of Michigan which add from 3,000 to 40,000 volumes a year!

Working Incomes too Small

Another question follows hard after these. It involves the working incomes of our colleges which can be put back into the instruction and cultural enrichment of students. You understand that colleges do not declare money dividends. On the contrary, they put every cent they can, through scholarships, and fellowships, and lectureship, and equipment, back into your boys and girls. Think of colleges with working incomes that range from \$130 to \$271 per student; can our colleges with these amounts to spend upon their students, give back to them as much cultural enrichment as your sons and daughters ought to receive? Can they carry out programs through which the youth of North Carolina can be brought in touch with the thinkers and leaders in the various fields of technical or scholarly or artistic attainment? Do they compare favorably in these respects with Will-

iams which has a working income that enables it to spend \$495 annually on each student who enters its doors? Or with Haverford which has \$750 or with more than a hundred other institutions throughout the North and West that have working incomes per student that average from 50 to 200 per cent more than those of the colleges in North Carolina?

The Penalties We Pay

The two weightiest questions still remain unasked. (1) Are we giving the boys and girls in our colleges as good a chance as parents in Michigan or Massachusetts or California are giving theirs? (2) Are we equipping them to do the big jobs awaiting them here in North Carolina?

The answer to the first can be found in the figures already submitted. It is an emphatic no. I shall answer the second with two observations.

A very thoughtful gentleman said to me a few days ago that cotton had enriched every man that touched it except the men who produced it. What he had in mind was that England and New England, through technical knowledge, have reaped the reward of our cotton planting. The Worcester Polytechnic Institute of Massachusetts and the financial concerns of New York have until recent years turned the dividends which should go to Southern farmers into Northern pocket books. Imagine what it would mean today to North Carolina and the South if trained men were immediately to emerge who, without futile recourse to the Federal Reserve Board, could conserve, through organization, through manufacture, through export, through financial stabilization, our two record crops of cotton and tobacco to the financial enrichment of the men who produced them.

The second observation is this. Today North Carolina is at the beginning of what should be a tremendous road-building program, one that calls for the expenditure of millions and millions of dollars. Opinions vary as to the amount required. It has been placed at \$50,000,000, at \$100,000,000, at \$150,000,000. The significant fact is that no one seems really to know what the figure should be or what sort of roads we should build. And in the face of this stupendous undertaking and this woful lack of clear understanding, only two institutions in the State announce in their catalogues departments of highway engineering for the training of town and country and state road engineers. And the headship of one of these has been vacant for 18 months because a man who knows asphalt and concrete and cement and sand and clay and culverts and bridges and costs and sinking funds and road taxes,—who knows them from A to Z, and can teach them—cannot be secured to fill the vacant position at the salary of \$3600 which represents the maximum of the regular salary scale of the institution concerned.

The Call is for Millions

I understand, gentlemen, that as members of the Current Topics Club, you meet here to discuss matters and not to promote particular causes. Consequently, I am not going to ask you what you are going to do to improve this situation. But I am going to say that if you have a son or daughter or a brother or sister who will be seeking admission in the colleges of North Carolina next fall or the next, you, or someone, must do something about it. I grant you that only last year the Moravians, the Presbyterians, the Friends, the Baptists, and other denominations put on endowment campaigns for the benefit of their educational institutions. I know that the Methodists propose a similar campaign in the coming spring. But if this matter is handled adequately, if our boys and girls who are knocking at the doors of our colleges are to be given an equal chance with those in other states to the North and West, if they are to be properly housed, if they are to sit at the feet of the best instructors, if their instruction is to be supplemented by laboratories and libraries, if their lives are to be given depth and breadth and completeness through contact with the master minds in the fields of scholarship, the arts, the industries, the world of affairs, somebody must make it possible. If these things are to be done not only must the churches and the alumni concerned put on campaigns for their particular institutions, but dividends, and stocks, and bonds, and estates, and public revenues, running into the millions, must be devoted to this cause.

The old adage runs that you cannot make brick without straw. Your experience as business men is that you cannot move tobacco and cotton successfully without money. And I am sure that your logical minds have already reached the conclusion with me that this crop that is capable of being turned into the finest of all finished products—these boys and girls of yours who are knocking at the doors of North Carolina's technical schools and colleges—cannot be moved into the fields of usefulness and service which they should occupy, unless the fathers and mothers and public spirited citizens and the General Assembly of the State come to their instant aid.