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MARCH 14, 1928

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Entered as second-class matter November 14, 1914, at the Postoffice at Chapel Hill, N. C., under the act of August 24, 1912.

# THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA NEWS LETTER

Published Weekly by the  
University of North Carolina  
for the University Extension Division.

CHAPEL HILL, N. C.  
THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA PRESS

VOL. XIV, No. 18

## SCHOOLS AND LIBRARIES

### SCHOOL SUPPORT

The speaker at the last meeting of the North Carolina Club of the University was Leroy Martin, secretary of the State Equalization Board. A few extracts from his talk follow.

The school cost in North Carolina has mounted during the last several years with a rapidity that is alarming to many of our people. In 1920-1921 the total school cost for the state was 17 million dollars. The expenditure per child per year, 1920-21, was \$24.70. Five years later, 1925-26, total expenditures amounted to 32 millions, or \$39.62 per child—the figures having nearly doubled in both instances. The last two years have seen an increase almost as rapid.

### Equalize the Burden

After all, we find that it is not so much the total amount of the taxes that one pays that constitutes a burden of taxation as the belief by the taxpayer that he is paying more for that which he receives than his neighbor is paying. In all the weaker financial counties of the state the people are not complaining so much about the total sum of their taxes as they complain of the fact that they are paying so much more than certain other counties.

North Carolina is today doing much to equalize the burden of school support. This is being accomplished through the equalizing fund. The sum of \$3,250,000 per year was appropriated out of the general state revenue for this purpose by the last General Assembly. Since all state revenue is derived from indirect taxation, the larger portion of it coming through the medium of the income tax, this is in effect the strong financial sections of the state aiding the weaker in the support of their schools. The idea is good and with a sufficient fund distributed in similar manner to that now prescribed will result in equality of school support.

### The Distribution

The plan for distribution in force in this state at present appears to be the best that has yet been worked out. Any plan that equalizes the burden of school support must take into consideration (1) the school cost, (2) the ability to meet the cost. In dealing with the first—school cost—teachers' salaries represent 70 percent of the total. The state through its system of control and supervision deals largely with the teaching item of the cost and it will readily be granted, I believe, that the quality of educational opportunity offered the child is best indicated by the number and quality of teachers employed.

The second factor—ability to meet the school cost—is dependent upon taxable property. Forsyth county with \$11,104 of taxable wealth behind each child in school is certainly more able to meet the school cost than is Wilkes with only \$2,548 per child in school. Should Forsyth county spend thirty dollars each year per child in average daily attendance it would require a tax rate of twenty-seven cents on the one hundred dollars' equalized valuation. For Wilkes county to furnish the same amount per child in average daily attendance the county would be forced to levy a rate of \$1.18 on the one hundred dollars' valuation—nearly five times as much as that of Forsyth. Consequently the distribution of the equalizing fund at present is based upon two essential facts: (1) number of teachers legally employed and their quality as evidenced by the type of certificate held; (2) the difference in ability to provide school revenues as measured by the wealth back of the child in average daily attendance.

The determination of the second essential (ascertaining the difference in ability to provide school revenue) is not so easily done and can perhaps never be satisfactorily accomplished. Practically all of our school revenue being derived from a general property tax, we are confronted with the problem of ascertaining the true value of all taxable property contained within the county. With a state geographically situated as is ours and with interests so varied, the task is indeed an immense one.

### Determine True Values

The law creating the Board of Equalization says it shall investigate, study, compare and determine the true value of all property, subject to taxation for each and every county of the state, which value shall be the basis upon which the equalizing fund shall be apportioned. That is the primary duty of the Board.

Upon the fulfillment of that duty hinges the equality of the distribution of the \$3,250,000 fund and consequently the equalizing of the burden of school support, for the difference in the cost, and the yield of a 40c levy on the determined valuation represents the amount a county will receive from the state fund.

We have come a long way in the field of education—certainly educational finance—in North Carolina, but we still have a long way to go. We must fix for our ideal an equal educational opportunity freely offered to every child in the state. The day must come when it will no longer be a misfortune and an injustice from which they will never recover for children to be born in certain counties of the state. Those children when plunged into, adult life in competition with children of the more fortunate counties will look back with bitterness upon the county of their nativity. Every child everywhere must have an equal opportunity for an education.

### PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Ninety-four percent of the people who live in the cities and towns of the United States have access to public libraries, but only seventeen percent of the rural population are served by public libraries. Of the 3,065 counties in the United States, 1,135 have no public libraries within their boundaries. In other words, there are fifty million people in this country who are without library facilities, and forty-six millions of these people live on farms and in small villages. These facts are reported by the American Library Association and it suggests that "the problem of public library service for fifty million people now without it is large enough to challenge the best thought and effort of the citizenry. It is nation-wide, though it presents different aspects in different parts of the country. The use made by rural folk of the library facilities they have, the growing interest in books and library service on the part of rural leaders and organizations, the rising standard of rural living, the advance in rural education, show that the time is ripe for rural library extension."

### Rural Service Weak

The table which appears elsewhere in this issue shows to what extent each state is served by public libraries, and the discrepancy which exists between urban and rural facilities.

In only two states—Massachusetts and Rhode Island—is library service universal. In twelve other states the entire urban population is cared for, and in none of the states is the percentage of urban population without library facilities large.

It is the people living in rural territory that have been neglected. In nineteen states less than ten percent of the rural people are provided with public libraries and most of the southern states are in this class. North Carolina ranks thirty-third among the states, with 17.3 percent of its rural population, 89.4 percent of its urban population, and 32 percent of its total population supplied with library facilities.

### County Libraries

Twelve North Carolina counties are listed among those in which public funds are appropriated for county public library service. These counties are Burke, Chowan, Durham, Forsyth, Guilford, Mecklenburg, New Hanover, Rowan, Stanly, Vance, Wake, and Warren. In each of these counties contract is made with a city or town library. The annual appropriations vary from \$110 in Chowan to \$5,000 in Mecklenburg. This is an excellent beginning, but the state ought not to be satisfied until every county is included in the list.

### THE PUBLIC LIBRARY

I am the storehouse of knowledge in this city.

I am opportunity.

I am the continuation school for all.

I hold within myself the desires, hopes, theories, philosophies, impressions, doctrines, culture, attainments, experience, and science of all ages.

I am a house of wisdom and an institution of happiness.

I am supported by the people for the people.

I offer the opportunity to know all there is to know about your work.

I am for those who would enjoy fiction, poetry, philosophy, biography, or learn more about business, trade and science.

I have books for all tastes and needs and creeds.

I am free to the public to profit from and enjoy.

I am in the care of courteous attendants, whose duty it is to help you to profit from me.

I open my doors as a great public mental recreation ground for your leisure hours.—Davenport Public Library.

The American Library Association says of the county library: "The county unit makes for economy and effectiveness without loss of the personal touch. The good county library has a large book stock and has worked out flexible methods of distribution to overcome obstacles of distance and isolation through a system of branches, stations, school deposits, mail service and possibly a truck. It puts any book anywhere in the system at the disposal of a serious reader wherever he may live. Best of all, it commands the services of a capable librarian who visits each community and knows its needs, works with and through other county leaders and organizations, as the county agent, superintendent of schools, county nurse, the Farm Bureau or Grange, the Parent-Teacher Association. Schools are given adequate book service, small village libraries have larger resources as county branches, or through other arrangement, and can still use local interest and initiative. Thus the scattered rural folk receive a high grade of library service, comparable to that of the large city library."

### FIVE CENTS A DAY

Expenditures for public schools, as reported by the Department of Commerce, seem large in the aggregate, but when they are reduced to the daily amount for each individual, even in the cities where the cost is relatively higher, the general average is less than five cents a day. At a price of a street-car fare these cities provide the instruction without which a republic can hardly hope to endure or a democracy to function. It might be reckoned as a form of insurance which a civilized nation maintains for its own collective protection. And it is of interest to note that what is spent yearly for this purpose is approximately what is paid yearly by individuals in life insurance premiums; for the total expenditure in 1924 for public elementary and secondary schools was \$7.32 percent of the amount paid for insurance in that same year, though in the state of New York it was only 64.23 percent.

If five cents per capita per diem seems a small outlay even for so essential a purpose as paying what Mr. H. A. L. Fisher, President of the English Board of Education, called "the eternal debt of maturity to childhood," it seems even smaller when the total is shown to be only a little more than one-half of 1 percent of the economic resources or tangible wealth of the states—or three-quarters of 1 percent, if all schools, public and private, are included—less than 4 percent of the total yearly income and only 11.19 percent of the accumulated savings deposits for all the states. Another comparison, based upon estimates made by

the National Education Association (in 1924), shows that the total expenditure for public elementary and secondary schools is but 32.94 percent of the amount spent in the same year for "certain luxuries"—these luxuries being "soft drinks and ice cream, theatres, candy, chewing gum, tobacco, jewelry, perfumes and cosmetics."

The statistics permit the broad generalization that the material resources of the nation as a whole—whatever may be true of certain areas—can easily provide for the present outlay, or even a larger one if efficiency requires. Moreover, it is demonstrable that school expenditure increases the economic power of the country quite out of proportion to the contribution made by many other public expenditures, which the very lack of sound education makes necessary.—N. Y. Times, as quoted in Commerce and Finance, February 22, 1923.

### GOT RESULTS

Sherwood Anderson, the famous novelist, has bought a country weekly in Marion, Va., and has settled down to a life of quiet. It is exactly what he has been looking for, he declares, for many years.

In a small town like Marion, where he knows everybody and everybody knows him, he finds life to his liking. At noon time, for instance, everybody goes home to dinner—they still call it dinner there—and in the afternoons as he goes home, people greet him with a friendly nod and salutation.

He recently made an appeal for the town band, and as the Baltimore Sun records, got results:

"What is a town without a good band?" he inquires in a front-page editorial entitled "Join the Glory List."

"This campaign," Anderson writes, "is not undertaken for any altruistic purpose. It's just because we like to hear the band play; we like to see them parade. When a big day comes we like to see them put on their uniforms and come blowing their heads off up Main street."

"Flags flying, everyone feeling fine. Life is drab enough on ordinary days. We have never found any way to be a canary bird ourselves. What we want is to see the band boys have a little money in their treasury. We want band concerts on summer nights."

"Oh, hearts of gold, who will put up \$5 a year over a period of five years to get and keep our band in bang-up financial condition?"

Otto H. Kahn, the New York financier and patron of the arts, who subscribes to Anderson's weekly, was moved by the appeal and sent a check for \$100.—Gastonia Daily Gazette.

### PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE IN UNITED STATES

#### Percent of Rural, Urban, and Total Population Served

The following table, based on a recent study of the American Library Association, ranks the states according to the percent of total population served by public libraries in 1926. The first and second columns, give the percent of rural and urban populations, respectively, which enjoy public library service. The rural-urban distribution of population is presumed to be the same as in 1920.

Forty-four percent of the total population of the United States are without access to local public libraries. Six percent of the entire urban population are without public library service, and 83 percent of the entire rural population are without such service.

Massachusetts and Rhode Island are the only states in which all the people, urban and rural, have access to public libraries. In twelve other states all the urban people are served. In only nine states do even half of the rural people have library service.

In North Carolina 17.3 percent of the rural population, and 89.4 percent of the urban population are within reach of libraries. This is approximately 32 percent of the total population. Thirty-two states make a better showing.

Department of Rural Social-Economics, University of North Carolina

Rank	State	Percent of rural population with library service	Percent of urban population with library service	Percent of total population with library service
1	Massachusetts	100.0	100.0	100
2	Rhode Island	100.0	100.0	100
3	New Hampshire	97.1	100.0	99
4	Connecticut	92.8	100.0	98
5	California	89.3	100.0	97
6	Vermont	91.9	100.0	95
7	Wyoming	89.9	100.0	93
8	New Jersey	59.2	98.1	90
9	New York	34.5	99.1	89
10	Maine	71.2	100.0	83
11	Michigan	23.8	99.6	71
12	Indiana	39.1	99.0	70
13	Ohio	18.2	97.4	69
13	Illinois	4.0	99.3	69
15	Wisconsin	38.4	100.0	68
15	Utah	36.7	100.0	68
17	Oregon	33.8	100.0	67
18	Maryland	10.8	99.3	64
19	Delaware	13.0	97.8	59
19	Pennsylvania	25.5	97.0	59
21	Washington	6.4	98.7	58
22	Minnesota	20.4	98.3	55
23	Colorado	9.2	99.0	53
24	Montana	29.8	91.3	49
25	Nebraska	20.8	100.0	46
26	Missouri	1.0	94.3	45
27	Florida	14.4	93.4	44
28	Kansas	8.2	99.7	41
29	Idaho	5.6	95.0	39
30	Iowa	2.4	99.3	38
31	Nevada	25.0	78.8	36
32	Kentucky	14.4	86.4	34
33	North Carolina	17.3	89.4	32
33	Louisiana	3.1	83.8	32
35	Georgia	8.4	93.4	30
35	Texas	9.0	70.0	30
37	Arizona	3.0	76.6	29
38	Virginia	2.8	88.2	28
38	South Dakota	13.8	100.0	28
38	Tennessee	6.6	87.0	28
38	Alabama	10.6	87.4	28
42	New Mexico	13.8	85.8	27
43	Oklahoma	4.0	96.8	25
44	South Carolina	5.8	93.1	22
45	West Virginia	1.8	71.0	20
45	North Dakota	6.6	100.0	20
47	Mississippi	8.8	71.7	17
48	Arkansas	2.3	77.0	15