

**THE WEEKLY DIRECTORY.**

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dren of proper age. It is true that in certain northern States compulsory education has proved a success, to a certain degree, but this is due to the fact that these States are more thickly populated and means have been provided by which children can be conveyed to the school-houses. Also, these states have a better financial situation. Not content with our present educational system, not content with present progress, with past accomplishments and with future progress, our opponents would pass a law compelling our State to become tyrannical along educational lines. All that is now possible for North Carolina to accomplish along educational lines is to perfect the State's school system and if allowed to work it out in a natural and practical way, and within a reasonable time, she will offer the best possible educational facilities.

**An argument for the affirmative in which the advantage of knowledge over ignorance is set forth and the decrease in illiteracy under the reign of compulsory education is shown.**

By Mr. G. G. Holland.

Education has been a problem for ages: but compulsory education in the United States is of comparatively recent origin. A great deal of the education, even in States that have no compulsory educational laws, is compulsory, the parents compelling the children to attend school. This, we grant, not to be so satisfactory as education obtained by the free will of every one thus to be educated. But the question before us is this: Is it better to force children to go to school, thereby causing them to learn some things by repetition if not by study, than to allow them to grow up in perfect illiteracy? Our judgments answer the question. Now the question we have is whether North Carolina should adopt, right now, compulsory education laws. Knowledge is power, we claim, and the pen is mightier than the sword. If these things are true, and who will not grant them? then what stands in the way of our State passing laws looking to this end? A man in this age is not judged by what he is, but by what he can do, and before he can do anything he must possess a certain amount of education.

A few statistics will suffice to prove the advantages of compulsory education. In thirteen States not having compulsory education the percentage of illiteracy is 25.5, and the percentage of illiteracy in

thirty-two States having compulsory education is only 6.5. What, then, does this show? We are alarmed to find North Carolina among those States not having compulsory education and still more chagrined to find the percentage of illiteracy in the Old North State, the State near and dear to us, is 29.4. Gentlemen, does this not indicate that a radical change should be made in our educational laws? Germany, the nation of universities and scholars, has very strict compulsory education laws. The percentage of illiteracy in Germany is about one out of every 1,000, and we have just shown that the percentage of illiterates in States not having compulsory education is one out of every four. Sweden has compulsory education. A comparison of her standing army with ours is as follows:—Percentage of illiterates in the army of Sweden is one out of every 1,250, and in the United States one out of every 10.

The negative will argue that compulsory education will snatch bread from the mouths of widows, and rob mothers of their support. We beg of you to remember that the respective child labor laws of the different States prohibit children up to a certain age from working, and if they can't work, then there is absolutely no reason why they shouldn't go to school, and those who will not go of their own accord, should be made to attend school a certain number of months for a certain number of years.

**An argument for the negative based on comparisons of what we are now doing for the schooling of our children with what Massachusetts is doing as to the rate of taxation, and in which statistics as to North Carolina schools are given.**

By Mr. R. H. McCauley.

In this discussion my colleague has shown you that the theory of compulsory education is inconsistent with the spirit of American social and political institutions, that it is a violation of the rights of personal liberty, and that it would tend to turn our American democracy into despotism. My opponents have represented a theory which I believe we have successfully answered. Under any circumstances, however, their theory is of no real value unless it is practicable. So to substantiate our own position, I intend to prove that North Carolina should not enact a compulsory education law, because all that is possible at present is being done to perfect the State's school system, and that if allowed to work out in a natural way and within a reasonable time North Carolina will offer the best possible educational facilities, but the cannot now accommodate her total school population, and if education were made compulsory the effort to accommodate all children of school age, which this act would necessitate, would involve an increase in taxation which the tax-payers of the State could not and would not bear. This would prejudice them against the State's school system and being, consequently, a hindrance rather than a help to the cause of education.

North Carolina has not yet reached a high state of economical development. The rural districts are sparsely settled, the towns are few and far between, the State as a whole is comparatively poverty-stricken because her resources were

swept away by a terrible civil war from which she has never fully recovered. Because of this fact North Carolina was at no distant time in the past ashamed of her educational record. But now that is changed. A movement begun some years ago, has been carried on so vigorously, and especially so in the past eight years, that our educational progress during this time will compare favorably with that of any State or nation. Since 1884 the increase in the average daily attendance of the public schools has been 112,000; the average school term has been increased 55 per cent. and there has been a decrease in the number of illiterates of 20 percent. In 1906-7 375 rural school houses were built, while the increase in the expenditures of that year over the preceding year was \$2,000,000. Here figures are only illustrative of the desire for education, which has taken hold of North Carolina. The people have begun to realize that education is essential to the highest success, to the fullest enjoyment of life. The people of this grand old State are now thoroughly awake to the value of education and are making a record of advancement of which no State would be ashamed. Within a generation they have transformed North Carolina from its state of neglect of education to one of the most progressive states educationally of the Union. Under adverse circumstances North Carolinians have done as much along educational lines as they could have been reasonably expected to do under the most favorable conditions. And yet what they have done is only a beginning of what they expect to do. They must have time, however, in which to complete this work already begun and now being carried on with such earnestness and thoroughness.

If the people of the State are allowed to carry this work on in a natural way, at a reasonable rate and are allowed to finish it in a reasonable time we will be able to look back upon our educational progress with satisfaction and to refer our states to our school system as a model after which they may pattern theirs.

At the present time, however, our school system is far from perfect. While we are justly proud of the progress we have already made we can admit that there is still room for improvement. Thus the last annual report of the State Supt. of Education shows while the total school population of the entire State is 710,000 it has been possible so far to provide only ten thousand teachers, and 7,500 school houses, 410 districts having only log houses, while 419 have none at all.

With present attendance houses and teachers are taxed to their utmost. And yet it is proposed that the State enact a law compelling every child of school age in North Carolina to attend school. Not content, as my colleague has said, with the present rate of development of our school system, not content with the record of the past, the progress of the present, or the prospect of the future, our opponents wish to pass a law compelling the people to do that which that they have been eager to do, and will do as soon as the necessary provisions are made.

But suppose education is made compulsory before the State is able to accommodate those whom such a law would affect. Every teacher in the State would be obliged to instruct an average of 71 pupils and every school house would have

to accommodate 94 pupils. To you who are not so intimately acquainted with school life, it is necessary to say that it is impracticable for every teacher to give adequate instruction to 71 pupils, if they are all in the same grade. When, however, this number includes all grades from first to tenth with from 25 to 30 different classes, the task is so enormously increased as to make its accomplishment impossible. Equally impossible, too, is the accommodation of an average of 94 pupils in each school house. Many of the school houses in our towns can accommodate only 100 pupils while the rural schools can seldom accommodate 50.

The fact, then, that there has been no provisions made for the one third of our school population accounts for its absence from school. The people of North Carolina want their children to go to school, but they are not so neglectful of their children's health as to make them walk from 3 to 5 miles to school, sit in a poorly heated and poorly ventilated house all day and then walk another 3 or 5 miles back home. Nor when the school houses are comfortable and well furnished are the children themselves willing to stay in school all day merely for the privilege of having there a form of recitations of 10 to 15 minutes each. And not only do we contend that under present conditions, the State is unable to accommodate all her children of school age, but we contend, too, that if a compulsory education law were passed and effort made to bring our school system up to the state of efficiency which the law would require, this effort would involve an increase in taxes which the State is not able to bear. Already it is deeply in debt because of the expenditures made for education in the past. Cities, towns and rural districts have, in many cases issued bonds and borrowed money in order to build and equip their buildings; the special taxes often being insufficient to pay interest on those debts and the current expenses of the schools. The people are, however, determined against retrogression and are struggling along under these burdens with no thought except of ultimate success. True the total amount raised in

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