

TARHEEL TOPICS

Items from all Over the State.

FOUR MONTHS SCHOOLS.

Counties Must Levy Taxes for Four Months Schools.

A Raleigh dispatch of the 10th says the Supreme Court has rendered a decision in a very important case. The State constitution requires that all public schools must be kept open at least four months in each year. The State has for several years made an annual appropriation to aid in this, but has contended that it was really the duties of the counties to levy a special tax for this purpose. Franklin county commissioners levied the tax and the taxpayers enjoined its collection. The lower court decided the tax to be proper and constitutional. The Supreme Court affirms this and thus reverses a decision made by it twenty years ago, which all these years had hampered the rural public schools.

This decision is a very important one, for it establishes the principle that the section of the constitution making a four months' school mandatory is not negative by the subsequent section limiting the ratio of taxation to 7 1/2 cents on the \$100 valuation. This means that although the ratio of taxation, exclusive of special taxes, may be 6 1/2 cents in any county, that the commissioners must, in addition, levy a sufficient amount to provide four months of public school. The Supreme Court many years ago decided that this could not be done, and to remedy the matter as near as possible the State in recent years has made appropriations direct to the school fund. State Superintendent Joyner has steadfastly maintained that the counties should levy this tax and that the Supreme Court in a test case, would reverse the former decision, which it has done. The test case was brought in Franklin county, and Judge Cooke held the tax constitutional. The opinion was written by Judge Brown and appears to be unanimous.

Unlimited Fertilizer from the Air. Charlotte Observer.

When in 1898 Sir William Crookes as many people will doubtless recall, attracted wide attention by declaring in an address before the British Association that unless some means were found of replacing the nitrogen taken up from the soil by cereals the world must soon face a grave situation, he could hardly have anticipated that the thing would be done within a few years. Sir William showed plainly enough that the nitrates now mined in Chile and elsewhere could not be depended upon very much longer and that fixation of atmospheric nitrogen consequently presented the only visible hope. This process was already a demonstrated fact, but its excessive cost made it commercially impracticable. To Norway has been reserved the honor and the earliest profits of really solving the problem. Ministerial and consular reports just received at Washington give an interesting story of plants new to the world of manufacturers. At Nottoden, Norway, several years ago, a development of 2,000 electrical horse power was used for producing nitrate of lime and nitrate of soda. By methods much more efficient than any employed in such work when Sir William delivered his address, the plant has turned out 1,000 tons of these nitrates a year at a good profit. Only last month a much larger plant, supplied with 40,000 horse power from the noted Tinfos water fall, was put in operation. Before long a monster plant of 250,000 horse power from the Rjukan fall will be begun, the capital having been readily subscribed in France.

It is not easy to exaggerate the prospective importance of the discovery of processes whereby nitrates can be profitably produced in unlimited quantities through atmospheric combustion. Manifestly the earth's productivity cannot only be maintained but enormously increased

Manifestly, also, the industry of nitrogen fixation will become a great one. Here would seem to be new possibilities for Southern development. In the Piedmont region water-powers are now being developed on a great scale, and this country and continent grow grain for the world. To talk of extracting from the atmosphere an immensely valuable product by the ton seems wilder than any promotion scheme of which Col. Mulberry Sellers ever dreamed, yet the facts speak for themselves. Such are the wonders which science continues to work for mankind. There may be a nitrogen fixation plant right here in Charlotte before many years. Who knows?

President Jordan's Address in Raleigh

President Jordan discussed the various forms of the better methods of gathering, baling, ginning, marketing and financing the cotton crop. He stressed the importance of local gin compression instead of shipping the cotton off for this operation. This system, he declared, would greatly reduce the fixed charges of low and better freight, and will break up the congestion of freight cars in moving the crop and would reduce to a minimum the heavy rates of water and land freight on cotton, and economize the storage and insurance charges on cotton.

He also advocated the use of cotton bagging in place of jute and the sale of cotton based on its net weight, instead of deducting six per cent for tear. He advocated the bringing about of a better understanding and a closer trade between the growers and spinners of American cotton, and a permanent organization of an international growers' and spinners' organization to discuss all matters of mutual interest to both industries. He favored the abolition of speculation when the delivery of spot cotton is not contemplated in the contract. Mr. Jordan heartily favored the building of adequate warehouse facilities throughout the cotton belt for the purpose of storing and financing the crop in the hands of the farmers. He advocated a slow movement of the crop each month so as to regulate the supply of raw cotton to meet the legitimate demands of consumption and the maintenance of the price of cotton on a stable basis and at profitable figures for the growers. The necessity for compact organization, President Jordan declared, is necessary among the farming and business interests of the South for the proper protection of the staple, as embraced in the objects and purposes of the Southern Cotton Association.

President Jordan expressed his gratification at the splendid international cotton conference recently held in Atlanta, and believes that great good will grow out of the reforms advocated in that convention.

"I am confident," declared Mr. Jordan, "that the present cotton crop will be much shorter than the yield of 1906, and that if the farmers of the South will hold back their cotton and refuse to sacrifice it at present artificially depressed prices, caused by speculative manipulation, that prices will in the near future seek much higher levels. I am thoroughly satisfied that spot cotton, basis middling, is intrinsically worth fifteen cents per pound, based on the present price of manufactured goods, and that the farmers should have that price for the balance of the unsold portion of this crop."

It is always a pleasure to enlighten subscribers when we are able to do so, and the Henstead reader who wants to know if Nicholas Longworth is a professional man is respectfully informed that he is a son-in-law. —Houston Post.

"But you mustn't blame me for my ancestors, you know," "I don't, I blame them for you."

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Corn

Charlotte Chronicle

Bartlett, Frazier & Carrington, a New York brokerage concern, has issued a pamphlet on wheat, corn and cotton, and aside from its market features, it contains a little historical sketch which we think of public interest. It is a review of the corn crops from 1808 to the present time, and it gives some information not contained in the school books. It says that within a few days, the farmers of the United States will be engaged in harvesting their three hundredth crop of Indian corn. We mention this fact to recall the most memorable agricultural event in the history of this country—namely, the planting of the first colonial corn-field, by the members of the London Company, on the banks of the James river, Virginia, in the spring of 1608. We have no record of the crop conditions of that year, but we are justified in assuming that the news was very bearish, since the historians tell us that the yield ranged from 200 to 1,000 fold—that is to say as high as 135 bushels to the acre. No year since 1908 has failed to show the immeasurable importance of this cereal to the country; and the uncertainties which have involved the crop of 1907 gives striking emphasis to the assertion that corn is the main source of our national wealth.

It will be interesting in passing to recall that maize early took its place in the export totals of the nation. In 1748 South Carolina sent abroad nearly 40,000 bushels, and during the period preceding the Revolutionary war Virginia sold abroad annually about 900,000 bushels. Two years after the Treaty of Yorktown we exported 2,064,000 bushels and in 1850-51 our exports of the cereal approached 4,000,000 bushels. In the same year, we shipped about 11,000,000 bushels for the production of malt and spirituous liquors. Moreover, the cultivation of corn between the Jamestown settlement and the year 1850 closely relates to the accumulation of about \$500,000,000 of live stock wealth—probably nearly \$1,000,000,000 according to the purchasing power of our money to-day. So much for the early history of corn in America.

Frequent references have been made recently to the fact that the record breaking yield of 1906 hardly any corn seems to be left for the central markets. Certain it is that the ruling high prices have failed to bring out enough to meet the consumptive demand. Whatever the amount held back may be, it is safe to say that it is no more than a safe reserve pending the harvesting of the new crop. To all intents and purposes the three billion bushel yield of last year has been disposed of and cleaned up, going out at the best prices of the year. The question arises what was done with all the corn. If nearly three billion bushels were required in 1906-7, how are we to worry along during 1907-8 with a crop which can hardly exceed five sixths of the record production?

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Heretofore people who underwent an operation possibly did so upon advice of friends and physicians. But here was a man who "took" the operation and recovered. Whether he took anything else was not stated—but a man who would take an operation for appendicitis at a hospital will bear watching.

John Charles McNeill, Charlotte Observer.

Has embarked upon that unknown sea that rolls round all the world. We pretend to no shock of surprise. For long the mark of death has been written in his face and those who loved him must have not mis-read it. But reflect as we may upon the fact, seek as we may to accustom ourselves to the thought of his absence, it is new and cruel and the philosophy of life is invoked in vain for alleviation of the pain of it all. The public knew him through the exquisite verse he gave it and through which ran his soul, and admitted him; but to those who were in intimate personal contact with him he attached himself with the tenderest ties of affection, suggested by something else than his mere intellectual qualities. There was never a sweeter spirit. His presence meant sunshine. He was uniform of mood, the mood ever delightful, and one who knew him to-day knew him yesterday, to-morrow, always. This was the man in person. Plain, simple, natural. He could not have pretended if he had wanted to: the beauty of his character was its perfect naturalness. He was amiable almost to a fault, and under this root, where men are judged by each other, where friendships are cemented and characteristics discerned, no harsh words of his, no unkindly criticism by him of any human being can be recalled. It was a golden heart. He compelled affection; without trying to find his way into the hearts of people, he won irresistibly whoever came within the circle of his acquaintance. He was so near the heart of the writer that it is difficult at this moment to write of him conservatively, and it is not singular that the proper words do not come when one stands in the presence of a great grief. It is the opprobrium of life that now as ever, while friends fall around us, the inexorable demand of duty compels us and we must go our usual ways, employ our common words and meet the great world with smiling faces, though our hearts be as heavy as lead.

North Carolina was good to this young man; it weighed him at his worth; he was conscious of this and was grateful for it—saying always that he was over estimated and appraised for more than he was. Such was his modesty. The intelligent, discriminating public knew him self. We think it is not an exaggeration to say that he was the greatest genius our State has yet produced, that no one of our people has written such poetry as he. He would have combatted quickly the expression of this judgment, yet it is submitted in confidence to the deliberate consideration of those who have followed him, and there is the added test that he had ready access to the columns of the first magazines of the country.

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