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SATURDAY MORNING, JULY 24, 1920.

A contemporary remarked a few days ago that getting news is not always easy.—Especially so when there is no news to get.

Well, at any rate, the third party is not going to cut as spectacular a figure as did the bull moose in 1912, for its leaders are not built that way.

Secretary Daniels broke the time record in negotiating the trip to Katchikan, Alaska.—We take it that the boys aboard the fast ship will be singing it hereafter, "Cat h us if you can."

The Federal Department of Agriculture says that crop values decreased about 17 per cent. during June, but so far, the decrease does not seem to have been handed down to the consumer.

Each day is "at home day" with Governor Cox now and he has to listen to numerous and various degrees, some sound and reasonable and others not coming within that scope.

And it would be bad for old man von Hindenburg to die by the assassin's bullet after having so successfully kept out of the way of the enemy's shots all through his long military career.

The new prison at Statesville, Illinois, is said to be provided with individual wash bowls, hot and cold water and 90 minutes of sunshine daily in each cell.—Sounds more like the description of "the most modern hotel" than of a bastille.

UTILIZING MODERN CONVENIENCES.

The University News Letter in its series on country home conveniences, has an interesting and informative article in reference to the use of home electric plants.

Just how many people in the country are falling to take advantage of modern conveniences, the benefits of which would many, many times offset the cost of installation, because of superstition or misinformation, would perhaps be difficult to estimate. At least, a correct answer would be interesting.

In the University News Letter's article, which we reproduce the information is given that lightning has no more fascination for houses which are electrically lighted than those which burn the kerosene lamp or the tallow dip.

The article is as follows:

"We have been told that many farmers hesitate to put in electric plants because of a fear that they will attract lightning. Groundless as this fear may be, nevertheless it sometimes constitutes the deciding point that causes the farmer to give up the durable satisfactions that go with homes equipped with all the comforts and conveniences that modern electrical science affords.

"Instead of buying a farm lighting plant he puts the same amount of money, and then some, into a Cantaford automobile, and proceeds to burn up in a week enough gasoline to light his home for a month to say nothing of doing all the washing, ironing, churning, and sweeping for his wife during that time.

"Perhaps some fine summer day he may start out in the car only to be overtaken by a thunder shower. Perhaps he may take refuge under a nice tall tree, as foolish people usually do on such occasions. Perhaps the tree may be struck by lightning. Perhaps he may live to tell the tale. Perhaps he may not. The chances are very much in favor of the latter. And that being the case there might be a moral to the tale, but let's get back to the point.

"Ever since the days of Benjamin Franklin and the kite that made Philadelphia famous it has been known that lightning and electricity are one and the same thing. Franklin positively identified the untamed thunderbolt as the laboratory curiosity—electricity. Since that time this laboratory curiosity has become the master servant of mankind, thoroughly subdued and harnessed, while the thunderbolt still remains unharnessed and untamed.

"For all that, however, we know enough about the behavior of lightning to say positively that a farm lighting plant in itself does not attract lightning any more than any other object in the house does. If a house is going to be struck by lightning it is going to be struck, but it will not be because the electric lighting plant, or the kitchen stove or the feather bed or grandma's knitting needles attract the lightning to the house.

"If you already have a farm lighting plant don't turn out and look for a thunder storm thinking you will be struck. You are absolutely no difference. If you don't have a farm lighting plant, you can get one by means of a central station by means of a line of wires. The line is equipped with lightning arrears. The first strike discharges caused by lightning strikes in the vicinity and up to these lamps. But remember that your electric lighting plant does not add one iota to the chances that your house will be struck by lightning.—P. H. D."

RURAL SCHOOL PROBLEMS—No. 2.

In his very interesting article, advocating the larger type of rural schools, L. C. Brogden of the State Department of Education, declares that the intelligent farmers of the State are asking what their respective communities can do to make their schools better. They want to know, Mr. Brogden states, how their schools can be made to afford their children the education that they need for better citizenship, and for handling the practical affairs in the home and upon the farm. As Mr. Brogden well says, the question depends upon two vital factors: first, the amount of the community's taxable wealth and second, the size of the community's population, its intelligence, progressiveness and stability.

Mr. Brogden points out that there is a growing relation between the amount of the community's taxable wealth and the size of the school district and he argues that an increased school district means corresponding increase in the amount of the community's wealth, as well as an increase of the size and stability of the community's population.

The one-teacher school is supported, according to Mr. Brogden, by an average size community of approximately 9 square miles. This is not a large area and at best, only furnishes a meagre school fund. Some of the disadvantages of such a small unit of taxation are set forth by Mr. Brogden as follows: Insufficient school funds to finance the schools; an unattractive and inadequate school building; a comparatively short school term; a poorly paid teacher, who usually is inexperienced and a beginner who has to look after the teaching of from five to seven grades with as many as thirty-five classes daily. Any intelligent person who gives the matter thought can realize, as Mr. Brogden points out, that such teaching is of meagre benefit to the pupil, who must spend the larger part of the school day without the supervision of a teacher, because she is busy with some of the other numerous classes. Not only that, but the need in the rural school particularly is for practical training in those affairs of every day life with which the pupil must come in contact on the farm. There is no possible opportunity afforded in the one-teacher school for the teaching of domestic science in any branch, or of instruction in the rudiments of agriculture and the "three R's" must of necessity get only a "lick and a promise."

Statistics in possession of the Department of Education, gathered from representative counties of the State, show that the per capita cost of instruction in the one-teacher school is about 50 per cent. greater than in a representative city school.

The solution of the problem lies in the consolidated school, which must come through the enlargement of the school district. (The consolidated school will be discussed in a subsequent issue.)

RURAL SCHOOL PROBLEMS—No. 3.

In concluding the series of articles on the rural school problems, based on a discussion of the subject by L. C. Brogden of the State Department of Public Instruction, we take up where we left off; the question of consolidation is to be considered.

Already many of the one-teacher schools referred to in previous articles, have made way for two-teacher and even three-teacher schools, but these are not from the viewpoint of educational authorities, satisfactory nor do they come within the meaning of the ideal consolidated school. There must be such an enlargement of the school district as to afford six or seven grades with that many teachers, in order that a well rounded and comprehensive program of education and instruction may be carried out.

According to Mr. Brogden, the school district which will support a six teacher-school should comprise from 30 to 50 square miles, which in most cases, will include enough taxable property to produce at a reasonable rate sustenance to maintain a fairly efficient school. Not only by the consolidation will it be possible to have capable teachers, but a school building which is attractive and comfortable and which affords necessary equipment in keeping with modern thought and needs, situated on a site that is suitable, and a school term more nearly equaling that afforded in the city schools will be possible. Then many of the inconveniences and disabilities of the smaller schools naturally, are done away with. There is more incentive to the pupil and more benefit accruing to those who avail themselves of the opportunity and there is a lowering of the per capita cost.

The County Board of Education has the legal authority to consolidate schools, and Mr. Brogden wisely, The Free Press believes, advocates a countywide plan in the consolidation of schools. This unquestionably makes for a better and more intelligent division and insures a more equitable distribution of the taxable areas of the county.

The transportation problem, is one of vital concern in connection with the consolidated school, but with the building of good roads this question can be more easily answered. School authorities have found that public transportation of pupils is a most efficient method. Some of the progressive counties of North Carolina have already put into service public auto trucks to transport children to and from school. This plan has been carried out in many other progressive states. Vermont, Indiana, Massachusetts, Virginia, California, Louisiana, Idaho, North Dakota and a number of other states are transporting their children at the expense of the tax-payers in order that they may have the advantages to which they are entitled in the larger and better equipped consolidated schools, and they are finding it a profitable investment.

The day of the one teacher "district school" is past and its usefulness, if ever, is no longer apparent.

Senator Overman's play of hands-off in the suffrage fight, as indicated by his recent reply to President Wilson's request that the join him in putting North Carolina in the ratification column, is in keeping with the sentiment of a lot of other political leaders, who realize that they are "in the middle of a bad fix and hardly know which way to jump." But the junior Senator has probably been encouraged in his anti-stand by the overwhelming vote accorded him in the recent primary.

If those Atlantic City cafe managers get what seems to be in store for them, they will be apt to realize that the prohibition law means "stop selling booze."

BROAD, AGGRESSIVE PROGRAM IS NEEDED FOR STATE ROADS

President McGirt of North Carolina Association Tells of Progress in Highway Construction and Prospects

Following is the annual report of W. A. McGirt, the president, made recently to the State Good Roads Association:

"Since my last annual report your association has increased its membership and its budget to the point where it may be made a militant force and an important factor in the movement for a state system of hard-surfaced highways and local county roads.

"Acting upon the recommendation contained in my last annual report a new office of field secretary was created, and definite plans were outlined for an aggressive membership campaign which has already netted wonderful results.

"The association now has sufficient man-power and funds to insure carrying the good road's program to a successful conclusion. During the past year your president has held meetings and discussed the subject of state highways at the following places: Goldsboro, Fayetteville, New Bern, Washington, Mt. Olive, Warsaw, Wallace, Bolivia, Town Creek, Rose Hill, Burgaw, Rocky Point, Jacksonville, Hertford, Williamston, Mt. Tabor, Whiteville, Clarkton, Elizabethtown, Councils, Abbottsburg, Clinton, and has held conferences at many other points in the state.

"Supplementing these meetings and conferences, several thousand letters have been mailed from my office to farmers, merchants, bankers, manufacturers, traveling men, and state and county officials, calling attention to the urgent need of, and suggesting methods for obtaining an adequate system of highways for the state.

"Farmers' organizations, boards of trade, chambers of commerce, traveling men, professional men and various other organizations have passed strong resolutions calling on the state to provide adequate legislation for the construction of a system of state highways. The hearty co-operation of the state press has been obtained in publishing scores of news stories and editorials dealing with this important subject.

"On behalf of the association, I take pleasure in expressing our appreciation of the many courtesies received at the hands of our state periodicals. "Other organizations working for the same ends have given hearty support to our efforts and it has been a pleasure to have the assistance of the other constructive agencies.

"The need of proper transportation facilities was never more acute than now. Relative, if not absolute famine confronts the world today and production must be stimulated.

"I would respectfully recommend that this association again pass suitable resolutions endorsing a system of National Highways connecting states, same to be financed, constructed and maintained by the Federal government without regard to state lines, and that copy of said resolutions be forwarded to Senators Overman and Simmons, and to our congressmen, urging their support of such a measure.

"Good roads are a necessary factor in stimulating production and crop movements. The balance between food supply and demand cannot be regulated nor can food supplies be properly conserved until every facility is given the farmer for moving his product.

"I am reliably informed that last year's crop of sweet potatoes in this state was valued at \$13,000,000 of which \$6,000,000 was lost to both producer and consumer through lack of transportation and organization.

"If this astounding loss took place in only one commodity what must have been the total loss to this state when all crop wastage is considered? It is imperative that farms be kept under cultivation, and to do this we must hold and increase our rural population. This cannot be done until rural conditions are improved, and rural conditions will not improve until we build good roads in all sections.

"When farmers of North Carolina are placed in touch with competitive markets, business in the centers of trade will be greatly stimulated, the problem of marketing will be simplified and the balance between supply and demand will be more nearly established.

"Almost without exception, new homes, farms, churches, public schools and consolidated schools, and other public buildings follow a good road, to say nothing of increased taxable values, better crops and increased crop production and the elimination of crop waste.

"My friends, those of us who have been in close touch with the sentiment of the people in regard to extensive expansion of road construction are

convinced that the vast majority of the tax payers of this state are not only willing, but anxious to support and pay for a system of highways adequate to the present and rapidly increasing need for better transportation.

"If we are right in assuming that there is need and demand for legislation which will meet the situation, then the time has arrived when this association should take the necessary steps to bring the matter to an early and successful conclusion. The people are demanding relief, an aggressive policy on the part of this association at this time would be a powerful factor in giving it to them.

"The present state road law is wholly inadequate to provide for the road needs of the state. You are urged to investigate that law and satisfy yourself as to how long it will take, operating under its provisions, to build a complete system of state and county highways.

"Under the present law, county commissioners must, in order to secure a share of state and federal aid, build the state highways. Therefore, under this system, your commissioners must neglect the remote sections of your county and concentrate on the main highways. Counties are now so involved that the building of a local system of county roads is almost out of the question, because the county which votes bonds to build the county's share of the state highway will have so far exhausted her revenue resources available for road purposes that she will have nothing left with which to build, in a proper manner, the network of county highways leading to the main or trunk line state highway.

"To be of greatest service to the farmer, and through him to the state the state highways must be made available by a system of high class county roads.

"The counties are not able to build both systems.

"In the matter of road building, counties of the state are functioning in a splendid manner and the aggregate voted and appropriated the past year or two approximates \$25,000,000.

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