

EDUCATION, COÖPERATION, LEGISLATION

(1) Education to Develop Power, (2) Cooperation to Multiply It, and (3) Legislation and Good Government to Promote Equal Rights and Human Progress—Plain Talk About Men, Measures and Movements Involved

By CLARENCE POE

Reviewing the Work of the Legislatures

THE Virginia Legislature we shall have to wait to review till next week, but the records of the North Carolina and South Carolina law-making bodies may now be briefly examined.

The South Carolina Legislature did not measure up to the high standards set for it in the inaugural address of Governor Manning, but it did pass a number of notable laws. In adjourning the House of Representatives, Speaker James A. Hoyt summarized the achievements of the Legislature as follows:

1. A primary election law that is adequate and fair.
2. A compulsory education law that, while not all some of us had hoped for, is progressive and will lead our people out of the blight of illiteracy.
3. A reformation of the tax system which has been advocated and promised for a generation. But the attempt to put it into effect has never been seriously made until now.
4. The State's great charitable institution, the State Hospital for the Insane, is to be put upon a proper basis, and the state has committed itself to the policy of giving decent treatment to the most unfortunate and pitiable of our people.
5. The liquor question, which has been for a generation the disturbing question in our politics, after a generation is for the second time to be submitted to the people, and submitted in such a way that the decision of the people will be final; not subject to any subsequent legislative change. Let us hope that it will be settled, so far as South Carolina is concerned, once and for all, and settled right.
6. The House has also passed, the other body has not considered, a bill providing for medical inspection of school children. Also a bill providing for the Torrens System."

The new compulsory education law provides that upon petition of a majority of the registered voters in any school district, attendance shall be required of all children between the ages of eight and fourteen for four months in the year. This is certainly a mild measure, and now that North Carolina has just tried State-wide compulsory attendance and likes it, we hope to see thousands of districts in our sister state avail themselves of their new opportunities.

The highly important tax commission bill, we are told, "is intended to bring about equality of taxation, make those who are not bearing their just share of the burden, do so; and relieve those who are bearing too much. There will be a tax commission, headed by a chairman at \$2,500 a year and two other members at a per diem. There will also be a board of review consisting of one member for each congressional district."

The liquor question is to be decided by a vote on the question of state-wide prohibition next September. Here again if South Carolina wishes to consult the experience of North Carolina, she will find that prohibition works well—so well that we believe a majority of those who voted against state prohibition in 1908 would vote just as emphatically for it if the issue were submitted today.

The General Assembly of North Carolina

THE Legislature of North Carolina wound up by making a better record than it at one time promised to do. The Senate was more progressive than usual; the House less so.

The most important legislation adopted was the following:

1. A state-wide primary bill for all state offices and for all parties the same day. In a large part of the counties, too, the people are given the right to choose their county officers and representatives, but the reader may find that his county was forbidden this privilege. The primary bill is not so good as it should be, but it is a long step in the right direction. Next time the bill should be so amended as to provide for the compulsory secret ballot and for nomination by petition. In nearly every county, for example, there is some strong and worthy man who would never take the initiative and offer himself for office but would run if requested by petition of 10 per cent of the voters.
2. The state prohibition law was so amended as to prohibit any person from receiving more than one quart of whiskey in any fifteen-day period.
3. The inheritance tax law was so amended as to incorporate the graduated feature. We are glad of this new recognition of the justice of the inheritance tax.

4. A State Highway Commission was established which should furnish expert help in road building and save much money now wasted.

5. In quite a large number of counties—how many we do not yet know—the useless office of county treasurer was abolished. Other counties also arranged for saving money to the tax payers by putting officers on a salary basis.

6. Four constitutional amendments which narrowly escaped success last year are to be voted on again at the next election. Three of these look to increasing local self-government by providing for settling local legislation at home instead of leaving it to the Legislature, and the fourth proposed amendment is for providing emergency judges. The people ought to approve these amendments and would probably have done so last year but for the unpopularity of the tax amendment due to a misunderstanding of its provisions. Certainly the people ought to have authority to settle local questions at home instead of having to wait two years for a Legislature to meet. Furthermore, when local questions are left to the Legislature it means that people of wealth are more largely heard, while the plain people who could appear before their county officers and commissioners, cannot afford long and expensive trips to Raleigh.

Senator Currin's bill for the repeal of the croplien—amended by Senator Stedman—so as to allow liens up to \$250 per work horse in 1916, \$200 in 1917, \$150 in 1918, and \$100 in 1919—passed the Senate but was killed in the House—largely because the great mass of local legislation prevented it from getting attention in the closing hours. In the matter of child labor legislation the General Assembly also made a shameful record. Only nine senators stood for human rights as against property rights in this matter.

The Vote on Land Segregation Between the Races

THE idea of Land Segregation Between the Races made rapid progress—so rapid as to make it sure that the state Farmers' Union and other advocates have only to keep up the fight another two years in order to have the amendment submitted.

It is generally believed that the measure would have had a majority in the House, supported as it was by such actively interested men as Dr. R. L. Carr, Capt. T. W. Mason, Judge Jacob Battle, F. R. Mintz, Col. Benehan Cameron, F. E. Thomas, J. B. Clark, Thomas McBryde, G. R. King, J. M. Clayton, J. T. Wall, M. A. Bennett, J. B. Scott, C. H. B. Leonard, etc.; but having been first introduced in the Senate it was first voted on there.

The ballot there as we reported in last week's Progressive Farmer, was 15 to 17 against granting this demand of the organized white farmers of North Carolina, the ballot being as follows:

For giving the people a right to vote on Land Segregation Between the Races—Senators Cahoon of Pasquotank, Cooper of New Hanover, Currin of Granville, Giles of McDowell, Harding of Pitt, Majette of Tyrrell, McNeely of Union, McNider of Perquimans, McRackant of Columbus, Morris of Cabarrus, Parker of Johnston, Snow of Wake, Stedman of Halifax, Stevens of Wayne, Upchurch of Caswell.

Against giving the people a right to vote on Land Segregation Between the Races—Bumgarner of Wilkes, Dixon of Gaston, Efrid of Stanly, Haymore of Surry, Herbert of Clay, McAulay of Montgomery, Jonas of Lincoln, Lineback of Mitchell, McRae of Mecklenburg, Miller of Rowan, Nash of Orange, Paxton of Transylvania, Polk of Warren, Speight of Bertie, Thompson of Iredell, Ward of Craven, Weaver of Buncombe.

It is easy to see from an examination of this ballot that a majority of the Democratic votes were for the bill, and we believe a majority of the Republicans would also have been for it if they had appreciated conditions under which our white farmers, their wives and families are laboring. In fact, the only Republican vote from east of Greensboro was for the bill, and from all eastern North Carolina—that is from the more than half of North Carolina east of Greensboro and Hamlet where the people really know conditions and know they must have a remedy—only four votes were cast against the bill.

The Plea of Chivalry

THIS fine record on the very first test of the Land Segregation idea shows that the plan is coming and coming fast, and we have only to gird ourselves and keep fighting till 1917. For

the gentlemen who voted in opposition this time we have no harsh criticism, but they should study conditions before another session and resolve to give the people a chance to right them. Many of them simply did not think public sentiment strong enough to justify an amendment now; others were simply not informed. As for the question of constitutionality the able arguments of Judge Manning and Senator Majette almost silenced the opposition on this point.

Senator Jonas and Senator Nash both raised the cry that the plan would be unjust to the Negro, but we don't believe Senator Jonas realized this fact—that while it is true that the Negroes would be able to segregate but few districts to themselves, most of the land in the state would not be segregated at all, but left as it is now. Certainly there would be plenty of territory left in which Negroes could buy land.

Senator Nash, on the other hand, noble character that he is, throbbled with a chivalrous regard for a weaker race, and for this we honor him. We should be ashamed of ourselves if we were inspired in this matter by any bitterness toward the Negro. We are not. But here is what Senator Nash hasn't seen and what he must be made to see: He hasn't seen the great burning issue—to which alas! our comfortable city dwellers are yet largely blind—namely, that the disadvantaged man, the handicapped man, in the rural South today is not the Negro who is fast becoming heir to the most advanced civilization in the most favored portion of the whole earth, but the really disadvantaged man is the small white farmer who must compete industrially with a race with lower living standards and who finds his white social life impoverished if not imperiled by the universal sandwiching of white and Negro homes. These are the people who, fighting the hard battles of our race and of a sorely pressed civilization are ignored while benevolent people overflow with sympathy for the supposedly down-trodden Negro.

Let Senator Nash and his colleagues persist in their chivalrous attitude toward the Negro—we honor them for it; let them safeguard the Negro's rights as they may—but let them also consider if their chivalrous spirit should not also go out to the white men and women, women of our own race and blood, on all Southern farms.

Let them consider the case of a sixteen-year-old schoolgirl who writes in a letter now before me that she cannot go to school a mile and a half away because of the Negroes.

Let them consider the case of a dear old white-haired widow lady who will die far from home and kinsfolk and who writes me:

"Many a man has died and left his wife and children in very good circumstances with a little farm and stock where she and her children could have stayed and worked and been happy. But for fear of the Negro she would have to pull up and leave it all and go to the factory with a sad heart and put her darling children to work from daybreak till dark. The Negro is free and the white child has often become the slave through fear of the Negro. I myself would never have left my home but for this fear."

Or let them consider this further letter:

"This is just to thank you, Mr. Poe, for your work on segregation, through The Progressive Farmer, and to beg you not to be weary in well-doing until something is accomplished. I am a widow with a family of little girls. I had to leave my home when my husband died because it is not safe to live in the country with no man in the house, and it is not safe in most places for little girls to walk alone to school. I am now forced to live in a small rented house instead of in my own comfortable home. A Negro lives in my house. I cannot hold out to work so hard long; then what will become of my girls? They can only be clerks, stenographers, or mill girls, and they have to work so hard and get so little respect. Why won't good men do something so that it will be possible for women such as I to live on their farms, before their farms are washed to gullies and their houses torn to pieces?"

Is not this, Senator Nash and gentlemen, where some chivalry is also needed? For our part, we believe it is, and we believe that the remedy can be applied to the help of white communities that wish to stay white and yet so safeguarded as not to work substantial injustice to the Negro—certainly not more injustice than present conditions wreak upon worthy men and women of our own race.

BROTHERHOOD

THE quest and crowning of all good,
Life's final star, is Brotherhood;
For it will bring again to Earth,
Her long-lost Poesy and Mirth,
Will send new light on every face,
A Kingly power upon the race,
And till it comes we men are slaves,
And travel downward to the dust of graves.
—Edwin Markham.