

EDUCATION, COÖPERATION, LEGISLATION

(1) Education to Develop Power, (2) Coöperation 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

Clippings, Conversation and Comment

IT'S a pity more of our farmers and teachers did not attend the meeting of the Southern Conference for Education and Industry in New Orleans last week. Here are some of the reports of progress in various sections that we think worth passing on to our readers.

The first item concerns the progress Florida is making. "There has been 300,000 increase in population since the last census," Prof. H. H. Hume said, "and 80 per cent of the increase has gone to the rural sections. The increased interest in livestock is especially marked. And everywhere the counties are improving their roads, \$4,000,000 being spent this year for this purpose." What Professor Hume says is borne out by reports we get from Progressive Farmer subscribers in Florida. It is a coming state.

The Mississippi delegates showed great pride in their system of county agricultural schools. Fifty of the eighty counties now have such schools. The state appropriates \$1,500 to \$2,500 to each of them, the county, of course, being required to provide adequate support. Or two counties may join together in establishing a school. "I believe it is better to have an agricultural high school in each county rather than in each Congressional district, as some states have," said Dr. H. L. Whitfield. "The people of the county have a feeling of proprietorship, a feeling of nearness for their own county school, that they do not have for a district school. Then the county demonstration agent and county school superintendent and county health officer utilize the school and the school utilizes them, and it becomes a place of developing leadership for waking up the county along all lines." The boys in these Mississippi schools are required to do ten hours farm work a week as a part of their agricultural course. Then many of them do extra work for which they receive extra pay, reducing their expenses to almost nothing.

Dr. Whitfield believes, however, that many schools have spent relatively too much for buildings at the beginning—a weakness which Owen Wister recently said is characteristic of American colleges and universities, too. "Too much for brick and too little for brains," is the way he puts it, pointing out that many a college spends lavishly for buildings and then pays such meager salaries to teachers that men of real ability cannot be had. Which reminds us to say that the cost of living has increased so much in the last few years that despite some increase in salaries, probably no state is paying its teachers more adequately than a decade ago.

How to organize the rural communities was one of the big questions discussed at the Conference. There was much interest in Superintendent Joyner's explanation of the North Carolina plan for "Community Leagues", as heretofore described in The Progressive Farmer. In Alabama Mr. J. Sterling Moran has organized fifty "Community Clubs", these being scattered over a dozen counties and confining themselves largely to social and play features, whereas the North Carolina Leagues have committees to deal with local agricultural progress, marketing and rural credits, as well as health, education and social life.

The Texas plan as described by Prof. A. Caswell Ellis has never been put before our Progressive Farmer readers, we believe. Professor Ellis discovered from experience that except in very progressive neighborhoods community clubs are not likely to live without a good deal of aid and supervision from some central source; and he was interested in reaching not only the communities wide enough awake to organize and maintain clubs of their own volition, but also the communities where such leadership was lacking. Consequently he took advantage of the cotton crisis in 1914 to get "schoolhouse meetings" called all over Texas to discuss the cotton situation, programs being furnished. The people responded, the idea developed, and now over 4,000 teachers have interested themselves in this plan for fortnightly meetings at the schoolhouse. The University sends out pamphlets and literature in advance. Here are some of the recent subjects: "Cover Crops," "The Farm Garden," "Farm Poultry," "Household Conveniences and Labor-saving Devices," "A Balanced Ration for the Farm Family," etc. These are subjects about which everybody knows something, and about which everybody wishes to know something more. Consequently it is easy to arouse discussion; and there is nearly always either a local specialist or a farm demonstration agent ready to

lead. Debates are also encouraged, a pamphlet suggesting suitable subjects having been issued, with four selected topics exhaustively treated.

The recreation element has not been forgotten in this Texas plan. Plans for celebrating Christmas, Washington's birthday, and "May Day" have been included. Programs for two musical evenings have been sent out, one embracing familiar folk songs and the other patriotic airs. These musical numbers may be provided either by local talent or by the Victrola. Furthermore, the suggestion of Mrs. V. P. Clayton on this page last week has been anticipated, in that actual farm sports have been suggested in place of citified athletic contests. There are contests in riding, plowing, hitching and unhitching, roping and tying steers, chopping wood, cornshucking, biscuit making, table-setting, etc.

Prof. Harry Clark brought word of the gratifying growth of farmers' mutual fire insurance in Tennessee. Three years ago there were nineteen county organizations. Today there are twenty-four, and they are able to take care of all losses satisfactorily on a 30-cent rate.

The Progress of Arkansas in crop diversification was emphasized by President Mobley of the Arkansas Farmers' Union. "Not only are the farmers beginning to raise more food and feed crops, but we have better gardens," he said, "having discovered that a garden ought to be something more than a place with a high fence around to keep the women folks in and the men folks out. The farmers are taking their horses inside and helping out their wives. We are also beginning to raise more poultry. A man had rather pick up an egg than hoe a row of cotton. And while the boll weevil scared us, we have learned that a weevil never milked a cow or sucked an egg."

Not only has Mississippi taken advanced ground in the matter of tick eradication, but Louisiana has done an unheard-of thing by proclaiming and observing "Tick Eradication Day" in all the public schools of the state. Thursday, April 20, was the day named by Governor Hall. The State Sanitary Livestock Board issued 120,000 circulars giving twelve reasons why the ticks must go, and the State Superintendent of Education directed that in all schools an hour be set apart for instructing pupils in this matter of such vital importance to the state's progress.

"We must keep on learning till we die," is the common cry now heard in all educational gatherings. The wonderful record of Kentucky's "moonlight schools" waked up the whole South to the possibilities of educating grown-ups. At the A. & M. District School in Clarksville, Ga., last year Principal Gay inaugurated a special course for teaching grown men and women. Thirty-one of them came, most of them fathers and mothers, and the progress they made in six days' time was almost amazing. Lectures on agriculture and health were given; Banker J. A. Erwin gave instructions in writing checks and keeping simple accounts; while some of the previously illiterate men and women mastered 60 pages of Mrs. Cora Wilson Stewart's first "Country Life Reader." Here is a letter written August 30th by a man who on August 23 couldn't write his name:

Mountain City, Ga.
 Aug. 30, 1914
 Mr. M. C. Gay—
 I got home all right and found all well. Are you all well. I was sorry that the school closed from your friend.

In 1906 Georgia established one of these A. and M. District Schools in each of her eleven Congressional Districts, and if all are like the one at Clarksville, the state is receiving untold benefit from them. They are supported by the fertilizer tonnage tax, and tuition is free to boys and girls. The only difficulty is in getting enough dormitory room. All boys study agriculture, all girls domestic science; and all boys are required to take turns doing farm work by groups, just as all the girls are required to take turns in dining-room and kitchen. In this way leaders are being trained who will make this part of Georgia one of the finest sections of the South.

Glimpses of Northeast Georgia

SEE that beautiful apple orchard there? Well, there are ten acres of it, and the owner refused \$10,000 for it last year."

That is what they told us the other day as we went through the country from Cornelia, Ga., to the Ninth District A. & M. School at Clarksville. And we soon found that Habersham County has plenty of other things to boast of besides its magnificent apple orchards. The banquet speaker who proclaimed, "Here in Habersham we can grow anything that grows in the Temperate zone," may have been putting it a little strong, but you can easily understand his enthusiasm. It is good land for apples, peaches, corn, wheat, truck crops, alfalfa, clover, and is far enough north for bluegrass and far enough south for Bermuda.

"We have made more improvement in growing corn these last ten years than in 300 years preceding," Mr. J. W. Peyton declared; and hardly less progress has been made in other lines. We rode through the Yonah Orchard with its 27,000 apple trees; and a little to the north of us was the Appalachian Orchard with 42,000. "I picked 105 bushels from three trees," said Mr. H. P. Staight. In peaches Col. I. C. Wade and his son Phil have scored a notable success. Market gardening is also on the increase. "Three years ago we shipped less than 500 hampers of beans," said Mr. Phil Ogletree, "but last year 17,500." Interest in purebred livestock is increasing; the broad bed or Mangum terrace is taking the place of the old method; farmers are beginning to coöperate in buying improved machinery; and longer leases are being given to satisfactory tenants. "I have had a three-year lease with the white farmer on my place," Professor Gay told us, "and I am ready to give him a ten-year lease if he wants it."

Perhaps diversification in population is responsible somewhat for the diversification in production. At the banquet of the Habersham Chamber of Commerce (held at the school) we heard speakers who had come to Habersham from North Dakota, Ohio, Illinois, and other sections, and all are working mightily for development. This part of Georgia is almost wholly white in population, and all over the South it is noticeable that it is easier to get good settlers from the West to come to white sections than it is to attract them to mixed communities. This is partly due to physical fear of and aversion to the Negro and partly to the knowledge that in wholly white communities it is easier to develop strong schools, churches, social life, etc. Moreover, in such communities there is likely to be a wholesomer attitude toward manual labor. There is less of the "boss" habit. A man won't spend an hour hunting a Negro to do a half hour's labor, which is one failing some sections of the South have yet to get over.

These people have a pretty country; and it is gratifying to find that they have an eye for beauty and a heart for sentiment. Nearly everybody seems to know Lanier's "Song of the Chattahoochee." When Mr. Staight got up to speak on "Apple Culture" he couldn't help saying something about the wealth of beauty in the spring blossoms as well as the material wealth in the autumn fruit. The people are painting their houses and planting flowers about almost every home. The smallest villages are setting aside public parks as soon as they are incorporated. With the coming of longer leases instead of the old one-year system, even the tenants are beginning to beautify their places. And whether or not her fight was wise you can't help applauding Mrs. Helen D. Longstreet, widow of General Longstreet, for sacrificing her home and even her wedding ring to save Tallulah Falls from being ruined by a hydro-electric power plant. Perhaps the power plant is worth more to Georgia than was the majesty of the thundering cataracts; but at any rate we rejoice that one woman in the South cared enough for the beautiful to make the fight she made to save one of God's wonders from the Midas-touch of modern commercialism.