

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 FOE

Seven Plans for Better Schools

WE THOUGHT at one time that we would not issue an "Educational Special" of The Progressive Farmer this year. It was not announced along with other specials in January. But the experiences of another half-year have only emphasized afresh one inescapable fact. That fact is, that no matter in what line of progress we are interested here in the South, the foundation for it must be better schools.

We can't have the right sort of farming until all the people can read intelligently about soil fertility and legumes and crop rotations and fertilizing ingredients and plant growth and animal feeding and all other scientific facts which must be applied in progressive farming. We can't have business methods on the farm, modern methods of marketing and business cooperation, until the masses of farmers are fully informed as to what farmers in other states and countries are doing and making by these methods. And certainly we cannot have the needed enrichment of country life until a wide diffusion of knowledge develops among all classes an inspiring and satisfying rural pride and culture.

For all these reasons therefore The Progressive Farmer again turns aside from its regular features in order to implore its readers to redouble their efforts in behalf of better schools for the farm boys and girls of the South. And in order to be specific, we wish to call attention now to seven things needed in the program of better rural education.

First: Larger Investments for School Purposes

THE first point—namely, the need for larger investments in public schools—is emphasized on page 1. We in the South have to support two school systems and yet we are not spending as much for two as the North spends for one—not spending as much either per capita or in proportion to wealth. We are giving on page 1 some of the figures in proof of this statement, but it may be well to give in full the figures showing what every state in the Union spends per child of school age. Here are the latest official figures from the United States Bureau of Education:

State	Amount Spent	State	Amount Spent
Maine	\$34.27	West Virginia	\$25.96
New Hampshire	37.06	North Carolina	12.39
Vermont	33.23	South Carolina	11.85
Massachusetts	53.39	Georgia	13.70
Rhode Island	42.03	Florida	21.88
Connecticut	45.24	Kentucky	22.90
New York	53.47	Tennessee	13.61
New Jersey	60.92	Alabama	15.32
Pennsylvania	46.71	Mississippi	9.30
Ohio	45.82	Louisiana	24.88
Indiana	45.21	Texas	25.88
Illinois	42.93	Arkansas	14.60
Michigan	42.63	Oklahoma	24.40
Wisconsin	42.75	Montana	64.54
Minnesota	53.03	Wyoming	49.03
Iowa	42.82	Colorado	55.49
Missouri	33.97	New Mexico	26.83
North Dakota	64.45	Arizona	71.39
South Dakota	45.80	Utah	52.73
Nebraska	47.14	Nevada	77.14
Kansas	39.29	Idaho	65.06
Delaware	27.94	Washington	69.44
Maryland	34.46	Oregon	43.46
Virginia	19.78	California	70.98

See what your state here in the South spends. Then note that except for little Delaware and desert New Mexico there is not another state outside the South but that spends all the way from \$33 to \$77 per child.

We ought to be willing anyhow to spend more for education, and this necessity is made doubly imperative right now by the increased cost of living. It is folly to expect to get competent teachers at the same salaries as three or four years ago. If we could pay 30 to 50 cents on the \$100 for local tax when cotton was ten cents a pound, we ought to pay 60 cents to \$1 now when cotton is 20 to 25 cents.

Second: "A Three-teacher School for Every Child"

IN THE second place, we wish to say again that the slogan and battle cry of every patriot in the South should be, "A Three-teacher School Within Reach of Every Child." The district should run out two to two and a half miles in each direction from the school; it will not hurt ordinary children to walk so far. Or if transportation is provided, the district may be larger.

As one of our correspondents puts it this week, "Teachers should not be overcropped." Recitation should not be a time when the overworked teacher must get the briefest possible answer from a pupil in order to hurry on to hear other classes. On the contrary, it should be a time when the teacher, able to specialize in a smaller number of sub-

jects, considers the text-book lesson with the pupils; adds further knowledge of her own; answers new questions as well as propounds the printed ones; brings out the local and practical applications of the lesson, if possible; not only notes that Johnny is lagging behind but finds out why and tries to remove the cause; helps the pupils in self-expression and corrects bad grammar; and inspires one and all with a desire to go on and learn more about the subjects studied. That's the sort of teaching all boys and girls need, but it is just the sort it is impossible to get in a one-teacher school.

Furthermore, boys in their teens should have a man teacher part of the time; and with the three-teacher school the aim should be to have a man principal who will live in the teacher's home and serve as a community leader the whole year round, interesting himself in everything that will make the neighborhood better and more progressive. If you get the right kind of principal, almost any three-teacher school can do as much for the community as the Lowes Grove School has done. Read its story on page 5 and see if it would not be worth doubling your school taxes to get such a vitalizing agency at work in your neighborhood.

Third: Better Attendance Laws

WE NOT only need longer terms but better attendance. If we say to the tax-payer, "We are going to compel you to pay taxes to provide schools," he has a right to say, "You compel the children to take advantage of the schools my money provides."

In matters of school attendance we are as yet making a rather shameful record in the South. In Oregon, according to the latest figures, 91 per cent of the children enrolled are on hand every day and in most Northern states, 80 per cent, while in no Southern state except Florida and Tennessee is the average attendance over 60 odd per cent of the enrollment. Consequently, we make an even poorer showing on average attendance than in length of term. Following are the figures showing the number of days each child of school age was actually in school in 1910 and how each state ranked in this respect:

Rank	State	Days per Child	Rank	State	Days per Child
1.	Massachusetts	131	25.	Missouri	83
2.	Connecticut	128	26.	Wyoming	81
3.	New York	117	27.	North Dakota	80
4.	Rhode Island	116	28.	South Dakota	79
5.	Vermont	115	29.	Maryland	79
6.	Ohio	113	30.	Delaware	78
7.	Michigan	108	31.	Idaho	78
8.	Illinois	103	32.	West Virginia	73
9.	Maine	102	33.	Tennessee	72
10.	Washington	102	34.	Arizona	70
11.	New Jersey	102	35.	Florida	66
12.	Iowa	100	36.	Oklahoma	65
13.	New Hampshire	104	37.	Nevada	63
14.	California	109	38.	Georgia	62
15.	Montana	98	39.	Mississippi	58
16.	Pennsylvania	98	40.	Virginia	58
17.	Utah	98	41.	Kentucky	57
18.	Kansas	91	42.	Texas	56
19.	Nebraska	98	43.	Arkansas	52
20.	Indiana	98	44.	North Carolina	51
21.	Wisconsin	91	45.	South Carolina	50
22.	Colorado	89	46.	Louisiana	49
23.	Oregon	88	47.	Alabama	45
24.	Minnesota	88	48.	New Mexico	46

How can we expect our children in the South with 50 to 60 days schooling per year to earn as much, grow as big in mind or spirit, or get as much out of life, as children in other states whose parents sacrifice enough to give them 100 to 130 days?

Fourth: Local and County Commencements

IT IS well for every country school to celebrate its "closing day" with appropriate exercises. It may take a little time from the formal studies, but in developing the social spirit among pupils and people it will be worth more than it costs. Preparing for commencement lends variety to school life; boys and girls learn to cooperate in getting up things for the neighborhood; it also trains farm boys and girls in public speaking so that they can hold their own when they later meet city boys and girls on public occasions. And in various other ways the local commencement is worth all it costs.

Likewise, in every county there should be a county commencement or "field day." In some large counties it has been thought best to divide the county into districts so as to have more intensive study of exhibits, reach a greater number of people, etc. Certainly the spirit of generous rivalry engendered among the schools by the county or district commencement makes all of them do better work—just as horses racing against one another run better and more joyously than they would ever run alone.

Prizes or certificates should be awarded to the

children who make the best exhibits of various sorts, or who have distinguished themselves by high marks in this or that study or by perfect attendance, or by having read a certain number of library books, etc.

Fifth: Agriculture, Domestic Science and Nature Study

IT GOES without saying, of course, that in every country school the boys should study the text book on agriculture. Even if you have only a one-teacher school, insist on this even if agriculture must be substituted for geography or history half the time. The proper plan, of course, is to have a three-teacher school with a male principal who will be the teacher of agriculture and use the school farm for demonstration purposes. But anyhow have the text book on agriculture used.

Much more can also be done in the matter of teaching domestic science than we are now doing. Read the story next week of what one country school did, and ask yourself if your school couldn't do as much.

Every country school should also aim to interest the boys and girls in nature study. Through books, charts, pictures and nature-study collections, the boys and girls should be taught the names and characteristics of all the common birds, insects, wild flowers, trees, weeds, and the principal star groups or constellations as well.

Sixth: A Good Library for Every School

AMONG the letters we have received both from educational leaders and from farmers and farm women for this issue, we have been struck with the emphasis laid on the school library. This is certainly a good sign.

In the past we have thought relatively too much about teaching people how to read, and not enough about getting them to read after they learn how. To develop "the reading habit" in each pupil should be one of the chief aims of every teacher. Train any child so he likes to read, so he is a real book-lover, and he will educate himself even if he never goes to school another day. Moreover, if a school has a good library, it should aid greatly in educating the older people whose school days are over but whose learning days should never be over. The saying of old Thomas Carlyle, "The True University of these days is a Collection of Books," cannot be too often repeated.

In practically every state now the state offers to pay part of the cost of a library if the patrons of the school will raise the other part, and it is a discredit to the people of any district if the school is without a library. The money can be raised by private subscriptions, by entertainments, and gifts by business men and former residents of the community, etc. In every Southern state, too, which gives its people the benefit of a traveling library service—Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, Alabama, and Texas—the teacher and school committeemen should see to it that the people get its benefits.

Seventh: Recreation, Music and Art

EVERY school should be a place not only for promoting book knowledge but for developing all the finer things of the spirit. Adequate and well-equipped playgrounds such as are described on page 19 should be a feature of every school. Except during the most strenuous periods of cultivation or harvesting, Saturday afternoons should be a time set apart for recreation for the young—for baseball, basketball, tennis, and other games—just as older people should set this time apart for meetings of farmers' clubs, farm women's clubs, community leagues, etc.

Every day, too, the children should join in singing inspiring songs; and there should be frequent musical evenings for the older people as well—the singing of familiar songs varied by instrumental pieces, band numbers, and Victrola records.

Every school should also endeavor to cultivate an appreciation of the beautiful. In the first place the grounds should be made glorious with vine and shrub and flower (after leaving enough space for playgrounds), and then even the humblest one-teacher school should somehow raise a few dollars for purchasing copies of the great pictures of the world. Copies of the most famous masterpieces may now be had for a few nickels each, and there is no longer any reason for sighing with the poet of another generation:

"Alas, for the poor! that they have no part
In yon sweet living lands of Art!"

ON FINISHING A WONDERFUL BOOK

How I shall miss you, friend of the Autumn rains!
Friend of most quiet nights and candle gleams,
Yet why should I say good-bye, when your joy remains,
And into my heart you have poured the sun of your
dreams?
—Charles Hanson Towne, In The Bookman.