

GEORGIA'S SCHOOL NEEDS

Superintendent Brittain Emphasizes Advantages of Transporting Pupils, Especially Girls, and Urges Agricultural and Domestic Science Instruction

IN ANSWER to your request for a message as to "How Georgia Farmers may Improve Their Schools," permit me to answer under three heads as follows:

1.—Consolidation

IF WE are ever to attract and retain the strongest teachers in the work of rural education the unit of organization must be larger in order to pay better salaries. Seeing plainly the frequently farcical work which almost necessarily results from the effort to teach forty classes a day and to give expert instruction in primary grades, as well as in the upper classes, the highest type of teacher is repelled by the almost hopeless task, as well as the small salary. In such teaching or "near"-teaching there can be none of that division of labor so necessary for expert efficiency.

2.—Transportation

CONSOLIDATION will require transportation of some of the pupils. School wagons should be used and without burdensome expense we may have the happy, living freight, warm and dry, delivered each morning at the school door. In the South in particular, with the ever-present dread of the Negro vagrant, is this of value, for it would remove the pallor from many a mother's cheek, now never relaxed from the strain until she hears the welcome sound of her daughter's step returning unharmed to the parental hearth-stone. These two considerations of health and safety ought to be sufficient to win the support of every father on the farm to substitute the consolidated school with its natural accompaniment of transportation in place of the small district unit with its disagreeable and oftentimes dangerous walk.

3.—Practical Instruction

OUR schools, and in particular, our rural schools, need to be more closely in contact with the life for which they prepare. In most cases they represent but pale and feeble imitations of city education, itself too often worshipping forms and words instead of the real things of life. The teacher and the county farm agent should work together, both in theory and practice, to give the farmer's child this training in agriculture. Let the emphasis be placed upon biology instead of algebra or Latin.

A similar practical tinge should be given to the training of the farmer's daughter. Sewing, cooking, the artistic and sensible care and decoration of a room, canning—all the arts which go with home making, are needed to match the new work of the boys. The girls should learn the meaning of a well-balanced food ration and add to the mother's training a practical knowledge of the chemistry of foods. I have seen one little girl prepare corn in its various forms in sixty different ways for the family table.

It is not contended or expected that these things can be put into our rural schools without perhaps additional expense. But we have already seen that the farmer's child now has less spent upon him than any other in the land. Give him the same chance and history shows that he will go further and do better upon an average than the city-reared boy. It is too much to expect, however, that he will be as well prepared for life upon a per capita of \$3 or \$4 each year as the urban child with an expenditure of \$12 to \$20 annually. His father must see that proper education of this type costs money and he must be as willing to spend it for this purpose as his city brother. — M. L. BRITTAIN, State Superintendent of Schools, Atlanta, Ga.

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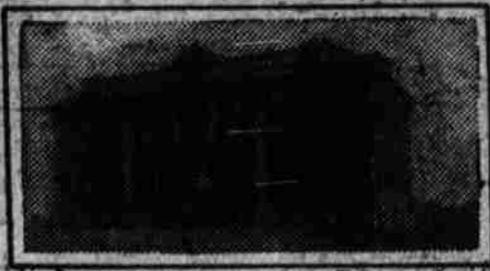
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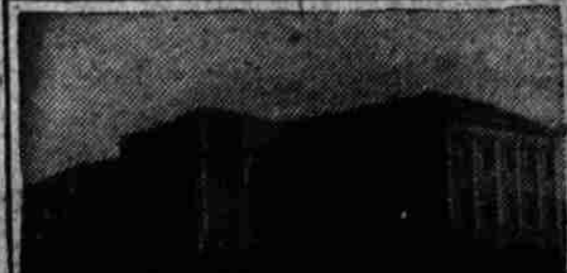
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