

SYSTEM IS INADEQUATE

STATE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MAKES REPORT

Committee Appointed By Legislature to Examine School System Finds State Facilities Are Not Sufficient.

Raleigh—The report of the State Educational Commission on the condition of public education in North Carolina is made public today. The commission was appointed by an act of the legislature, and an appropriation of \$1,000 was made towards its expense. The commission invited the General Education Board, which has long cooperated with educational institutions in North Carolina, to make a survey. The board accepted the invitation, giving to the work the services of its staff, particularly those of Dr. Frank P. Bachman, and making appropriations besides, which in the aggregate, amount to \$18,000.

The report issued today gives the state credit for the educational progress which has been made in the face of adverse circumstances during the last forty years. It points out that during this time the number of schools—high and elementary—has increased, the number of pupils enrolled has grown rapidly, and the amount of money appropriated has risen from the sum of \$396,000 in 1880 to a total of \$8,105,000 in 1919.

Notwithstanding these favorable and encouraging facts, the report deals squarely and candidly with the defects of the existing situation, defects which will have to be removed if North Carolina is to develop a homogeneous and substantial public school system.

School Buildings and Equipment
At the end of the school year 1917-18 there were in the state 7,738 rural school houses, of which 5,422 were for white children and 2,316 for colored children. Most of these school houses have been constructed since 1900. The funds available for their construction were very limited, and, in consequence, the buildings are for the most part poorly built and in poor condition. Nevertheless, school houses which have been built in the last few years are distinctly superior and more substantial. The older school houses are badly lighted, badly ventilated, and wretchedly equipped. Rarely do they contain decent provisions for sanitation. The report prints pictures of these school houses, which can be found in almost every section of the state. It is, of course, impossible to hold a good teacher in an unsightly, uncomfortable and unequipped school building, for which, in too many cases, the teacher herself is expected to do the janitor work.

The best rural school houses for colored children are the so-called Rosenwald school buildings, toward which the county, the communities and Mr. Julius Rosenwald, of Chicago, contribute as a rule equal sums, and the best for white children are the consolidated rural elementary and high schools which are becoming more and more common. Some of these consolidated school buildings, as well as some city school buildings, are excellent from every point of view. The report, therefore, points out that while the overwhelming majority of the existing school buildings are in urgent need of being repaired the state has made a good start in this direction. It will be in the long run, highly economical for the state to face the whole problem, providing school buildings that are substantially built and equipped, so that they will last during several generations.

School Term
In 1904 when the present course of study was first issued, city schools had an eight month term, but the 97 had an eight month term, but of the 97 counties then existing 30 had a school term of less than four months, 51 a term between 4 and 5 months and the rest between 5 and 7 months. Not only was the term short but the attendance was poor. In the cities only 71 per cent of the white children and 60 per cent of the colored children enrolled were in average daily attendance; and in the country districts only 59 per cent of the white children and 56 per cent of the colored children. Thus, at that time the average school year for the white children in cities averaged approximately 121 days and

for rural white children approximately 50 days. Good work, under such circumstances, is generally speaking, impossible, since that day the term has been lengthened in the cities and somewhat in the rural districts, but even so in rural districts it is altogether inadequate. The school program has also been improved, though it is still too heavy for the teaching staff. This is especially true in small rural schools where the age of the children in attendance are so diverse that it is impossible to grade them as they ought to be graded. As a result large numbers of children are in their studies far below the point, which, at their respective ages, they should have reached.

The number of high schools has rapidly increased in recent years. In 1908 there were in operation 132 county and 81 city high schools. Now there are over 200 county high schools and about 150 city high schools. Also a great many elementary schools give some high school instruction. These high schools have increased in numbers so rapidly that it has been absolutely impossible to procure for them either a well trained teaching staff or a properly qualified body of students. Nor have they been systematically and closely supervised. The report points out the necessity of getting rid of both small rural elementary schools and of small rural high schools by consolidation.

Teachers

The teachers of North Carolina are for the most part untrained and therefore unskilled. Only 20 per cent of the elementary white teachers of the state hold professional certificates showing that they have received a satisfactory preparation for the work which they are doing and only seven per cent of the colored teachers hold such certificates. Of the high school teachers about one half have had education enough to equip them for their work. Not only do the teachers of North Carolina in large numbers lack training; they also lack experience. About one half of them, have taught for less than five years. The teaching body of this state is accordingly in a constant state of flux, and is made up largely of young untrained teachers, who have too little incentive or interest to remain in the profession.

These conditions are accounted for by the salaries which have been paid for such services. As late as 1917-18 the average annual salary for the rural white teacher was \$276 and for the rural colored teachers \$140. The legislature of 1919 raised these salaries, but despite this increase the average annual salary of the rural white teacher is still only \$430 and the average annual salary of the colored teacher only \$295. It is of course perfectly plain that no stable and well trained teaching staff can be procured on these financial terms. The state has fortunately adopted a new certification scheme which will result in raising the pay of teachers who have received the right kind of training. But the effective work of this new plan will be interfered with by the lack of teachers training facilities. Existing normal schools cannot produce the number of trained teachers now needed and will be woefully inadequate if the salaries paid are sufficient to attract competent men and women to teaching. Not only must salaries be further increased but additional training facilities must also be provided.

Instruction

In order to find out the quality of instruction which is being received by the school children of North Carolina under these conditions written examinations were given in both elementary schools and high schools. In the elementary schools children were examined in reading, spelling, arithmetic and history. In the high schools they were examined in reading, algebra and Latin. The showing made is extremely poor. The result both in the cities and rural districts fall far below the usual standard reached in other sections of the country. On the other hand the results obtained in city schools are better than the result in rural schools and in the rural schools the results in the consolidated schools are distinctly better than the results obtained in the one and two room schools. For example in reading, seventh grade city children read no better than good sixth grade children elsewhere and fall two years below the reading achievements of children who complete an elementary course of eight years. In the rural schools seventh grade children read no better than good fifth grade children and fifth grade children no better than good third grade children. This is not the

"KIDS"



worst of the situation. In one room rural schools seventh grade children are on the average older than the children of the same grade in our city schools, which actually makes them three years instead of one year behind our city children.

When reading is so poor little can be done in informational subjects like history and geography. Think of sixteen year old country boys, says the report, who believe that Thomas Jefferson was the president of the southern Confederacy and that Andrew Jackson invented the telegraph. The poor instruction in reading in the elementary schools is reflected in the high schools. No North Carolina high school tested did as well as the poorest high school tested outside the state, and the reading ability of the children in our small high schools is almost unbelievable. Seniors in these small high schools read no better than Freshmen in good high schools. Obviously the general level of instruction must be greatly raised. This calls for better trained teachers and for doing away with one, two and three teacher elementary schools and small high schools; for the larger the school, even under present conditions, the better the results.

Administration

The administrative machinery of the schools must also be improved. The constitution of the state should be so amended as to permit of a lay state board of education, the members of which are naturally and deeply interested in the subject. This board should select the state superintendent who would be its executive officer and secretary. Proper professional safeguards should be thrown around the office of the state superintendent and his salary should be increased so that a competent man can be properly remunerated. Maryland pays its state superintendent \$8000; New Jersey \$10,000. The salary of the state superintendent of North Carolina should not be less than \$6,000 a year. The great variety of administrative boards now in existence should be abolished and their place taken by divisions in the office of the state department of education, each division provided with a head and adequate assistance, all working as a unit under the state superintendent.

Nominally North Carolina has a county system of education but there has been so much special legislation creating specially chartered districts and special tax districts that the county system exists, for the most part, in name only. This immense complex of exist legislation should be wiped out and replaced by a simple general law, providing for a county system of schools and for city school districts.

Over all the schools of the county outside of the city school districts should be placed a county board of education elected by the people on a non partisan ballot at a general school election. These county boards of education should be authorized and required to employ experienced and well trained county superintendents to provide their superintendents with the necessary supervisors and clerical as-

sistance, thus securing competent and continuous educational leadership and guidance for the schools of the county. While it would probably be impracticable at this time to abolish all special tax districts, certainly the laws should be so modified as to prevent their further development and should at the same time pave the way to a genuine county system avoiding the evils of a district system toward which the counties are now rapidly drifting.

Over each city school district—and there should probably not be more than a score in the entire state—there should likewise be a board of education elected by the people on a non partisan ballot at a general school election. All city boards of education should operate under the same general law and the law should confer on them adequate powers to meet the needs of developing city school systems. The city boards of education should stand in the same relation as county boards of education to the state department of education.

Financial Support

The measures above outlined will call for increased expenditure. As the commission points out the amount of money available for public education in North Carolina has increased greatly in the last forty years. But the public must not be misled as to what the state is now doing in the matter of financial support of public education. Few states now spend less; and in respect to the efficiency of its public schools North Carolina belongs with the states at the bottom of the list. Yet North Carolina stands fourth in agriculture and eleventh in the amount of internal revenue, income and excess profits tax collected. It is perfectly clear that the state can afford to put more money into education, also that unless more money is put into the state department, county administration, city administration, Normal schools and into teachers salaries, the children of North Carolina will continue to receive an inferior education. The report concludes as follows:

"Education is not cheap. It is expensive and it is everyday becoming more expensive, but let it not be forgotten that education is the most profitable investment that a state can make. Wealth flows into the states where the tax rates for education is relatively high, not into the states where it is relatively low. Two poor boys to maintain schools?", one of the greatest of North Carolina's sons cries out. The man who says it, is the perpetuator of poverty. It is the doctrine that keeps us poor. It has driven more men and more wealth from the state and kept more away than any other doctrine ever cost us.

"Our suggestions involve large expenditures, but the state can afford them. As our educational facilities develop our wealth will increase, we shall be able to spend more still in training the children of the state. Breaking the vicious circle of poverty and ignorance and we shall have started a beneficent circle of intelligence and efficiency."

MISS PRICE CHARMINGLY ENTERTAINS

On Thursday night Miss Lulie McCraw Price charmingly entertained in honor of Miss Nan Elizabeth Rodwell, bride-elect. The house was beautifully decorated in yellow chrysanthemums and ferns, and made more effective by the soft glow of yellow candles.

Progressive hearts was an interesting form of merriment at which Miss Rodwell, guest of honor having received the highest score was presented with a box of dainty linen handkerchiefs by Mrs. Mary Eleanor Price Grant.

Then followed the Brides' Book, which was filled by each guest giving a receipt for keeping a husband well fed.

Miss Byrd Jones rendered several piano selections, and at the strains of Mendelssohn's Wedding March, the doors were thrown open and little Miss Leah Fleming Terrell and Master Edward Price Grant dressed as bride and groom slowly entered carrying a big basket of gifts for the bride-elect. The numerous and beautiful gifts bore the love and best wishes of each guest and attested the popularity of Miss Rodwell.

The bride's cake, decorated in yellow chrysanthemums and a miniature bride and groom was presented by Mrs. Edward Price and was cut by the bride-elect and each guest. The fate of those cutting was determined by the cake favors, and amid great laughter it was found that Miss Mary Harris had cut the thimble and Miss Lulie Price the ring.

Miss Rodwell then placed a piece of cake in little white hand-painted boxes bearing the names—Johns-Rodwell gave to each guest.

Delicious salad, sandwiches and hot chocolate were served.

A BODY BROUGHT FROM FRANCE

Robert Thomas Adams, a soldier of the late war, died in France of Bronchial pneumonia, following influenza, October 15th, 1918. He was buried in the National Cemetery in France; but, in compliance with the request of his mother, his body was recently exhumed, and brought to this country. On last Saturday night, escorted by a soldier, it arrived at Norfolk. On Sunday afternoon the body was carried to Macon, ex-soldiers acting as pall bearers.

The funeral services were conducted in the Baptist church by the writer. A large concourse of sympathizing friends were present. The burial was in Macon cemetery.

The subject of this sketch was a native of Warren county and was a worthy young man. He was a member of Macon Baptist church, and was devoted to his mother. He was a good soldier, and laid down his life for his country.

His mother, Mrs. Susan E. Adams, and his brothers George and Clarence and his sister, Mrs. E. L. Keeter, of Littleton, desire to thank their many friends for the kindness and sympathy manifested to them and the respect shown to the heroic young soldier.

T. J. TAYLOR.

MICKIE SAYS:



GIVES ANNUAL BANQUET

MASONS HOLD THEIR THANKSGIVING FEAST

Members of Johnston-Caswell Lodge, A. F. & A. M., and Their friends enjoy Pleasant Evening.

Johnston-Caswell Lodge of Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons has been an institution for good in this community since the days preceding the American Revolution. It was first located on "Buffalo," that is to say, out near or at old Bute Court House at "Buffalo Race" as it is spoken of in the old Colonial records. From that good day to this the membership has held itself ready to minister unto the widow and orphan and to help those in distress.

In commemoration of this spirit the Orphan Asylum Committee, in preparation for the annual banquet, sent to each member the following letter of invitation:

"Dear Brother:

"As November passes, you are doubtless waiting for just the thing that is now reaching you—the notice of Johnston-Caswell's annual dinner. Of course you know exactly how good a thing this dinner has been in the past, if you have been long a member of old Johnston-Caswell; and this letter is written to tell you that the 1920 dinner is going to be the best of all.

The date is Friday, November 19, and the time is eight o'clock p. m. Each member is invited to bring along one of his lady friends, or his wife or—you know how that is.

And say, brother—our hall is just about the right size to seat the entire lodge and their ladies comfortably. We don't want to provide a place for you and find you absent when the big occasion comes around. You're expected and wanted. If through any sad misfortune you cannot be there, will you not please let us know on the enclosed card, without fail? Please tell us also whether you will bring a lady. On the enclosed card, therefore, please answer these questions; May we expect you to be present? Will you bring a lady? Return the card as soon as you can, please.

Good speeches, a good dinner, good cheer, and best of all, a Thanksgiving blessing for our orphan children—these are all in store for you. We expect you.

"Very sincerely and fraternally,"
"The Orphan Asylum Committee."

They came and brought their wives, sisters and sweethearts.

Fortunately for Johnston-Caswell we have associated with this Lodge the Order of the Eastern Star. These ladies were good enough to prepare the banquet, and an elegant repast it was. Sliced turkey, oysters fried in cracker crumbs, cranberry sauce, celery, creamed potatoes, English peas, beaten biscuit, coffee, a salad course of sliced pineapple and pears with Mynona dressing, etc., etc. This banquet with covers laid for one hundred and fifteen was indeed a feast for the inner man. The Hall was tastefully decorated in festoons of cedar and holly, commemorative of the season of Thanksgiving.

Past Master J. Edward Allen was Toastmaster and performed that difficult role with ease and grace.

The Speaker of the occasion was Dr. Williams, of the University of North Carolina, whose theme was the demand for better facilities in the Colleges and University of North Carolina. His address was informative and well delivered. He showed conclusively that the crying need of this State was more room for the thousands who desired to attend our Institutions of Higher Learning, and who were turned away because of lack of room. Take the University; rooms there intended for two or four boys were housing six and eight boys by the expedient of placing one bedstead over another and lashing the two together, and instead of a boy "getting up in the morning," he "got down."

Another interesting speech was that of Mr. Ivey Allen, brother of our townsman Mr. Eugene Allen, who represented the Oxford Asylum. Mr. Allen is Treasurer of the Asylum. He told of the over-crowded conditions there and of the work being done in the preparation of the orphaned boys

(Continued on Fourth Page)