

Mr. President, Fellow-teachers, Ladies and Gentlemen:

As I realize the importance of the teacher in the advancement of our State socially and industrially, as well as mentally and morally, I would not be true to the finer feelings of my nature were I to speak to you to-night without first thanking you for the very great honor you have conferred upon me by selecting me as your president. I do esteem it a great honor to be so favorably thought of by the teachers of North Carolina, than which there is not a nobler band of workers in our State.

The true reward that comes to one for having wrought well is another opportunity for service. At present in our State this reward is constantly ours; for I am persuaded that there is not in our Union a State offering greater opportunities for constructive educational effort. Our people are bound by no traditions in education, they are open minded to any real constructive effort. They say to us continually, "If the thing is good we want it." But we must show them the worth of any new plan. Our people want the best and they deserve the best there is. This is the time of all times in the development of public education in North Carolina for the teachers of our State to establish educational standards. The field is "white, already to harvest." The teachers are ready and willing to do the work, but it can not be done with any degree of uniformity nor with true efficiency until our General Assembly sees fit to pass an enabling act. Public education to be truly public must be provided for by public law. There is no public school system for the children of North Carolina. There are one hundred and eight public school systems in our State. There can be no standard set for 108 systems. Each system, to be a system, must have its own standard. One of the themes of this Assembly this year is Standardization, but there can be no standardication until we consolidate. *Use Systems*

Look at the facts. It never hurts to turn on the light. The State Department of Education is supposed to be the head of the public

schools of North Carolina, and it is in so far as they have a head. The General Assembly of our State has fixed the status of public education in its public and private laws, and here is what we have. As of June 30, 1915, 100 county superintendents working under and with the State Department; 107 graded school superintendents working independently-- not under and with the State Department. Of the 10477 teachers paid by public taxation, 1762 are independent of the public school law. If a teacher wishes to teach in any school under a county superintendent she must stand an examination and prove good moral character. She must show herself fit to teach. If she wishes to teach in a graded school she must get a majority vote of the graded school board of trustees. She may be ignorant and immoral, but if she gets a majority vote she is a teacher. Of the 540410 children attending the schools maintained at public expenses, 100,135 do not come under the State Department. Of the \$4,132,213.76 spent in 1914-1915, \$2,229,021.76 was not under the State Department, and the \$1,452,070.77 raised in 1915-1916 by the 1844 special tax districts does not come under the State Department. This means that almost half of the money spent for public education is without the jurisdiction of the State Department.

The legislative enactments that discriminate against the so called country schools is responsible more than any other one thing, for poor country schools. A normal school or a college graduate has to stand an examination to teach ^{in a} county school, but does not have to stand an examination to teach ^{in a} graded school. As a result all graded school teachers but 523 have had normal training while 4694 county teachers are without normal training. Yet, we say we want to help the county schools. Let the legislators prove their words by their works. We must have for our State a law that gives us uniform gradation and certification of teachers. The present discrimination against the child born and reared on the farm must

be done away with. In my judgment this should not mean more examinations, but fewer examinations for teachers. Those persons without normal training or successful teaching experience, should stand examinations, and those with sufficient normal training or successful experience as teachers should not be required to stand an examination. There must be a law for uniform gradation and certification of teachers in North Carolina, and the next General Assembly will not do its duty by the children of our State if it fails to put such a law on our statute books, for anything short of this will fail to give us a system of public education for the children of our State.

Our State has clearly demonstrated that examinations do not of necessity give us the best teachers. In fact, all an examination can do is to keep the inefficient reduced to a minimum. In the county schools where we have the examination system there are nearly 54% of the teachers without normal training and in the graded schools, where there is no examination, - as a rule - there are less than 30% of the teachers without normal training. Put the graded schools and the country schools on the same basis and more of the normally trained teachers will teach in the country schools. Of course the examination is not the only handicap the country school has. Length of term, better salary, better organized work, modern conveniences found in the towns and not found in the country, and more social life in the towns, all work against the country schools. But good roads, cheap and automobiles, improved country conditions are fast removing many of the handicaps that have been felt by country schools. And if our State law would make the professional qualifications uniform I am sure we would soon have a much larger percent of trained teachers in the country schools. The State owes it to the country child to do for him as well as it does for the urban child. A democracy means equal opportunity, not necessarily identical opportunity for all.

I am sure our people want, and that the good of our schools demand, that as far as possible public education be removed from partisan politics. This means that our superintendents should be chosen by non-political boards of education. One of the worst things that could happen for public education in North Carolina would be the election of county superintendents by the people through the political parties, for this would necessitate the selection of politicians as superintendents, when what we need is professionally trained men and women whose politics is "better educational opportunities for the children attending the public schools." Trained superintendents are just as essential for efficient work as trained teachers and I sometimes think more necessary, and you can not get trained superintendents through the school of politics. They develop in a different environment. Do not take what I have said as being "down on" politics. Every man ought to have a political opinion and must have the right to express himself freely on political matters. But the schools are for all, and as superintendent he must be for all, and above all trained ^{Superintendent not trained for his duties as} for his duties as a worker in any political party.

It is perfectly clear to my mind that the people of our State do not know the exact status of public education and that they will not be fully convinced until there is a careful study made by some competent commission. If the next General Assembly were to appropriate a sum of money sufficient to employ a committee of well trained students of public education and give them two years to make a thorough investigation I am sure their report would awake our people to the necessity, not only of putting into law the recommendations of our State Superintendent, but many other things he wishes to have done, but knows it is useless to recommend. To-day our people are already going in advance of our law, and in many respects are held back from doing what they are willing to do by the law. (9)

I want to see such a commission appointed and want it to have power to make

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a thorough study of public education in our State, not only of the ~~so~~
~~called~~ ^{country} public schools, but of graded school and all State supported and
State aided institutions of education. Something of this nature is
necessary for intelligent educational legislation. It is also necessary
to thoroughly acquaint our people with the needs of our State educationally.
I know of nothing that would more materially aid our State Department of
Education in its efforts, ~~and Superintendent Joyner is making heroic efforts~~
~~to better the public schools, than to place the public schools of North~~
Carolina upon a really efficient basis. Our first need is intelligent
educational legislation. When we get this, then, and not until then, can
we get really competent teachers for all the schools of our State. But
this legislation must make teaching a profession. Teaching must become a
profession before it can be standardized. # But may I turn from this to another
side of the question? to an aspect of it that is much more pleasant to me,
and I trust it will be equally profitable for you.

We are spending \$4, 132,213.76 annually and employing 10,500
teachers in round numbers. What is the object of this enormous outlay, and
what is the purpose of this army of workers? Is there any goal toward which
we are all working? What is the real aim of public education in North Caro-
lina? There must be a declaration of principles that will set forth the
things we, the teachers, are going to strive to accomplish. In this decla-
ration of principles will be found many things that a generation ago were not
thought of as being a part of the duties of the teacher. ¶ We must recognize
that public education is for all the children of all the people, and not for
for the favored few nor for the favored race alone. Ignorance and superstition
are even to-day causing more suffering, more crime, more immorality and more
waste than any other forces for evil in our civilization. Eliminate ignorance
and superstition will vanish. The illiterate must of necessity be ignorant,

but the lettered are not always enlightened. It should be the function of the public schools to eradicate the handicap of illiteracy. Illiteracy must be abolished from the citizenship of North Carolina. The stability of our government depends upon an intelligent citizenship. If illiteracy is not blotted out of our civilization, Nation wide, our government will become the world's greatest governmental experiment. If blotted out our government becomes the world's greatest model in State organization.

Next, the public school must help to build character. A learned man without character is more dangerous than the immoral illiterate. The youth must be trained in morality, must be taught that a clean personal life and a pure public life is essential to good citizenship, and absolutely necessary for successful living. He must be taught the necessity of honesty in his every act. For example, he must see the sin in putting three layers of nice apples or potatoes at each end of the barrel and inferior ones in the middle. He must be made to know the low grade of berries in the bottom of the quart determine the price of the good berries on top. He must be made to see that honesty pays.

Again the schools must teach health, not only individual health, but community health. There are certain well known laws of health, certain known facts about contagious or infectious diseases that every teacher should make known to every child attending his school. I can remember when in our ignorance letters from a yellow fever infected city were punctured and fumigated. To-day we all know that screens to keep out mosquitoes is the best way to stop the spread of this dread disease. The schools must instill the laws of health into the minds of the children, and each must be made to realize that it is wrong for him to spread his communicable disease to his neighbor. Our people must be taught that it is really not necessary for every person, sooner or later, to have measles and whooping-cough. The time is soon coming when ^{we} will realize that a county hospital maintained at

and a wholetime health officer maintained at public expense are good investments for each county to make. A healthy body is absolutely essential for a serviceable citizen. Give us the right ideals and standards of health and the criminal classes and the feeble-minded will cease to multiply in our land. This institution at Kinston for the care of the feeble-minded- very necessary now under existing conditions in our State- is a monument to our ignorance and inefficiency. About 20% of the blind in our State school for the Blind and the Deaf in this city are needlessly blind. Ignorance — no, inefficiency has made them so. All those children in the Stonewall Jackson Training School are there because, we back home, have failed to do our duty by them. Instead of helping all who are born to become the best possible of his type we have a great vortex of physical and mental ruin into which we have been pushing helpless babes and unfortunate youths, and then we spend much of our time and money trying to pull them out. Some we get out, others never come back, but all carry through life the marks of our failures.

Public health must be taught in the public schools.† One bright September day, at their mountain home, a father and son were talking about the boy's education. On to-morrow the boy was to start for the University. He was a bright youth. The father had struggled hard to save the necessary funds to educate his son. Finally in the conversation the father summed it up in these words, "Son, I want you to get an education so you can make a living without work." The son graduated and gets along in life without much work, but he does not amount to very much. That is one of the false ideas in our State that the schools must eradicate; for that education that does not make ^{it} of the one receiving more industrious is a failure. The best educated man in North Carolina should be the most industrious man in North Carolina. All labor is honorable. It is one of the functions of the school to help each individual to find the thing in life he is best fitted to become and then to give him that training that will enable him to do the most possible

in his chosen field of activity. It is not the work that is lacking in honor, but the worker.

Education should make each one active not only in his chosen field of labor, but active in the affairs of his church, his community, his State and his Nation. The welfare of the individual is dependent upon the good of the community. No man can live the fullest life save as he assists in the development of the lives of those around him. True living is bound to be in co-operation with one's neighbors. Every school house, every church, is the direct result of co-operative effort. The welfare of each citizen is interdependent upon the welfare of every other citizen. Co-operative endeavor is just in its infancy in our State. Some day we are coming to co-operative selling and co-operative buying, and co-operative manufacturing. Many a dollar's worth of farm produce goes to waste annually in our State for lack of these. The schools must teach this to the next generation. It is too late for this generation, but the next should be saved. It is the task of the schools to see that they are saved. Community co-operation is of more value, cultural as well as monetary, than a study of the humanities.

I might name others, but I do not wish to tire you, (story of John and Mary- said too much already.)

These things can not come to pass unless we have a band of well trained and efficient teachers and supervisors. The great need in our State to-day is more teachers with a vision. Men and women who see constantly the 540,000 children standing in their ignorance with outstretched hands begging us to lead them from darkness into light. Men and women who love children, who know there are no mean children, who realize that each child needs help and who are willing to spend and to be spent for the sake of others. Men and women with a purpose and with character realizing that the spirit of the teacher counts for more in the lives of those taught than the subjects they are attempting to impart. Men and women who see the limitless possibilities

in the life of each child, men and women who are not willing that any one shall be lost to civilization. Big hearted, broad minded men and women with a love for mankind that knows no bounds. Painsstaking and patient men and women who are willing to "labor and to wait." Men and women with faith in mankind, yes, men and women who know there is good in every child, and that by search and endeavor it may be discovered and developed.

Only educational experts should be superintendents; for unless the supervisor knows better than the teacher the manifold duties of the teacher he can not be of the service he should be. It goes without saying that inefficient organization and supervision greatly handicaps the efficiency of any system of schools. Our law should be so stringent that only those who are best fitted could become superintendents. I am sure the superintendents of our State realize the truth of this more vividly than any other group of teachers in our State. Their task is to stimulate each to his best effort and to co-ordinate the work of all. They of all men must have the vision. They must dream dreams and then help to bring their dreams to pass.

The strides of civilization have been so rapid for the past century that each rising generation finds it more and more difficult to keep apace with the times. The teachers of our children are the connecting links between generation and generation, and they hold the destiny of our State in their hands. They are the guardians of our liberty, the protectors of our Nation and the promoters of our civilization.

"8 There is a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen.' Whoever looks into interstellar abysses knows that there is a highway which even the spirit of man in its most daring dreams has not trod. Forever nature moves under the compulsion of power which man does not appraise. The wind bloweth where it listeth, beyond human law, and the light that flashes through the universe is not kindled at man's forge.

"And yet we are beginning to understand our kinship with the life that seems alien — to understand that God and man are not divided by visible or invisible substance. The upward impulses of the race, finding expression in the beauty of art, the glory of ideals, and the triumphs of the spirit, attest that man is the moving instrument through which the divine becomes articulate.

"There is something superior to the tenure of individual life. The music of Poe is greater than the frail tenement in which it sang. The thrush of to-day is dust to-morrow, but the choral song of birds is eternal. The statues of Praxiteles have perished, but the genius of the sculptor of Greece has animated all succeeding centuries. What we see of the man passes, as all things visible pass, but thought does not die. The temple of Solomon has vanished, but the wisdom of its builder is a part of the word that excites the worship of the world. This is the real temple of the Great King of Israel.

"Civilization is greater than its cathedrals or its cities. Shakespeare lived but a fitful day, and Aesop we never knew, but what they wrote is a part of the literature that lives on. Similarly, human love, is tragic in its incompleteness, but the love that animates mankind is infinite.

"We are all a mystical and elemental part of the power that gives luster to a star, perfume to a flower, and melody to all life, but in reality we know little, if anything, of the cosmic secret of the soul. We are mendicants in the Kingdom where we should be Kings. In inattention to our inheritance, we are confronted by the sublime fact that life is greater than the living, for it outlives it.

"There is indeed an infinite highway toward which the race forever moves, but whose supernal vistas it has not yet discerned. For that path — the path of which Job in his vision dreamed — leads through the Kingdom of Heaven. And eye hath not seen nor ear heard the wonder of that invisible

world that perpetually surrounds our faltering race."

"The works of God are all for naught
Unless our eyes in seeing,
See underneath the thing, the thought
That animates the being."

The responsibilities of life that rest upon this generation are greater than the responsibilities that have ever rested upon a previous generation. To meet these responsibilities demands better preparation than has ever been made before. "As good as I got" is not as good for my boy as what I got. We owe it to our children and to succeeding generations to give to the children of to-day the best possible preparation for the responsibilities of life. The future safety and prosperity of civilization rests more heavily and is more dependent to-day upon America than upon the rest of the world. It does seem to me that God has intrusted to our keeping His great plans for the human family. Shall we meet the demands of the day as true men and women or shall we become "mendicants in the Kingdom where we should be Kings?" Let us so stir old North Carolina from mountain to sea that every child in her borders shall have an opportunity to develop into the best citizen that it is possible for him to become. That each child may be so developed that he can live the fullest and the richest life possible for him to attain. Let us give each child a fair start in the race of life, then we will have accomplished our task, anything short of this is less than should ~~have been~~ accomplished.