

East Carolina Teachers College.

October 25th, 1923.

Address by Mr. R. H. Wright, President.

Scripture lesson- Section from the 13th chapter and section
from the 14th chapter of the Book of Numbers.

We people who live in this good country of ours are convinced that when we hear a government report, that government report contains nothing but the truth. As a rule that is correct, or at least it contains only the truth in so far as the Government knows the truth, but it is not always true. One of the means of forming the spirit of the American people is through government reports, and I have taken them out of publicity from the standpoint of the Press because they become only documents, official documents, more or less official.

I have read this story this morning from the Book of Numbers that you might see how a false report becomes a real punishment some times to a great people. Moses sent a delegation, the leading men out of each tribe over into Canaan to look the country over and to come back and report to the children of Israel what they were going into; that land they were going to possess beyond the River Jordan. They came back, two of those men told the truth, the rest of them lost their nerve and couldn't stand up before opposition and tell the people the truth about the land beyond Jordan. When Caleb got up and went to correct the false report, why they got so angry that they went out and manufactured yarns. I can see how they acted, because I see people doing that same kind of thing to-day. Why they got their heads together and said why you know that old fellow Caleb is trying to make us out a bunch of liars.

e

They went out among the children of Israel and told falsehood after falsehood about that country

Old Moses is crazy and Caleb is a fool and Joshua hasn't got much sense and the whole company of the children of Israel spent a miserable night, and the next morning they decided they had rather go back to Egypt and select the leaders. A false report had gone out among the children of Israel, and the children of Israel were headed

in the wrong direction, and Jehovah himself was not safe with the children of Israel until that idea was rooted out, and so after Moses and Jehovah had conferred it was finally decided that the only hope for that generation of the children of Israel was to take them back

It is an exceedingly important thing that the truth go to a free people, and we do not always get the truth not even in the supposed to be official reports. The Governor of Penn. recently had a conference with the coal people to settle this anthracite coal problem and he made those people come to an agreement for which the people of the eastern half of the United States almost unanimously gave him a vote of thanks, even a republican hating man like Josephus Daniels praised in high terms the democratic man the Governor of Penn, and when you get Josephus Daniels and Pinchot together you have done almost a miracle, but they got together in praise and commendation for what had been done, and the people in this country almost unanimously began to talk of the Governor of Pennsylvania as the next President of the United States. We had a false idea from across the River of Jordan so far as this coal situation is concerned. It increased the compensation considerably of those who dig the coal; they were already getting pretty high wages; increased the amount ^{that} of the operators of the coal mine were to receive so that the coal mine owners get a little bit over one million and four hundred thousand dollars a year more than they got before, and they were getting before war prices for coal. The American people are paying something like 2-1/2 million dollars more for hard coal than we ought to have to pay. That is the truth of the situation. I am not going to blame one or the other, but the reports that we got were false. That is the point I want you to see.

Some years ago we got reports- government reports- of the conditions in the near East, and if a christian would read those reports and his blood didn't boil, he didn't have very much red blood in his body. In fact it was so horrible that our government sent some people over there to find out the truth, and when they brought back the truth it was so far from the other government report, they said, we must suppress the report, it won't do to give it to the people, we have lied to them too long, and it has taken five years almost for the truth to trickle

and for the people of America to begin to get at the real truth. The government reports have created a false impression. I had a little experience with that particular instance at the Teachers Assembly in Raleigh one year, and I advised the Teachers Assembly not to go too far in endorsing this Near East campaign for relief because there might be another side to it, and the good brethren all over North Carolina thought that I had been bought out by the devil, and that I had gone over to the unspeakable Turk. I don't love the Turk any more than they do, but the truth has been trickling out from time to time

but it has taken five years to get the truth and we don't believe the truth yet, so in forming your opinion (pardon me for taking just a minute more) with reference to government reports that deal with people a long way from home, remember that the folks in a community know the problems of that community better than any person in America knows it