

Nov. 23, 1923.

The American Legion proposed to the National Education Association a few years ago that we join with them and other bodies of public spirited people in this country in asking the President of the United States to set aside one week each year as American Education Week. I happened to be one of the people who was named on the committee for the National Education Association to work out this with the American Legion, and we worked it out making a favorable report to both bodies, and the body adopted the report, and so we have one week each year set aside as American Education Week when the people of the United States Study the question of the education of the boys and girls of this great republic.

I have been wanting to talk to you every day this week, because this week is American Education week. Now you can see why we feel very kindly and the Pitt County Post of the American Legion feel very kindly toward the college. We are working together for the education of the boys and girls of our country. The American Legion realizes, and so does the American National Education Association, that the safety of a republic, a government like ours, is dependent on the intelligence of the citizenship of this republic. A government where the people elect their officers, the judges, the executive officers, a government where the people elect their law makers is a government whose safety depends upon the intelligence of those people, and their intelligence depends upon the kind of school the people of America have. The very foundation of this ~~re~~ republic is to be found in the home, the school and the church. Every boy and every girl in this great republic of ours must be given the very best educational opportunities possible. It is folly to say that we can run this government as it should be run with half of us ignorant or 10% of us ignorant. It is folly to say that this republic can meet the mission that God has for it unless you and I do our part by the education of all the people regardless of color and nationality, regardless of religious affiliation, regardless of any kind of handicap that may be. We build in America a school good enough for the best of us, and that is none too good for the worst of us, within reach of the home of all of us. It is absolutely necessary if this republic lives and goes forward in the right way.

I have selected some figures out of a recent publication of the National Education Association that are as near accurate as was possible to get them, and I want to give you those figures this morning. You might be interested in knowing that in the United States there are millions (in 1920 because that is the last authentic statistics we have) in 1920 there were in this country 1,488,948 foreign born citizens who could not speak the English language. A little over 1% a little bit more than that out of every ten of the people in this country do not know the language of this country. There are all told in America 13,497,886 foreign people, but there

is practically a million and a half of those people who do not know our language, who cannot read our laws- I mean foreign born- there are more people than that in the country who are not able to read, but foreign born people, people with ideals adverse to the ideals of the great republic they are living in, but people to whom the door of information is absolutely closed, so one of the slogans of the National Education Association is that every person who resides in this republic of ours should be able to read the English language by 1927. It means the total population of illiteracy and the bringing in to the language of our nation of those who are foreign born, who do not know the English language. You will be interested to know that in North Carolina there is 11% of all the people in the U. S. foreign born, and it is because of ~~u~~ that large per cent of non-Americans living in the U. S. that people are favoring shutting our doors against any kind of immigration for at least five years. I don't know whether that is a good thing or not, but that's the position of a number of people in this country, and it is the position of the American Legion. You will be interested to know that North Carolina has the smallest per cent of foreign born people of any state in the union. The pure American stock of people is the nearest to 100% in North Carolina, nearer 100% with us than with any other state in the union. That means that we do not realize how very vital the question of immigration is to the people, for instance, who live in the state of New Jersey or in New York or in Connecticut or Rhode Island or Massachusetts or California. We have in this southland of ours a dual system of education, schools for the white and schools for the black, and we speak of that as being a terrific problem for us to solve, but we know the negro when we see him in New York, ~~y~~ they do not know the foreigner when they see him, they must talk to him, they must get acquainted with him. There are schools in America run for American citizens and in a foreign language, because there are sections of this country of ours with American citizens who do not speak the English language. They are not foreign born, they are not in the list I was talking about. So our educational problem is not any more difficult than the education problem of the city of New York, for instance, or the city of Boston. Boston is the Athens of America, as only a small section, comparatively speaking have full blooded American citizens. The foreign population is a great problem with those people.

Now to-morrow morning I want to give you some more along this same line with reference to the training of teachers, and where we stand as a nation with reference to those who are really qualified to teach the children of this republic.