

EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE APRIL 13, 1934

Evening meeting - President Wright

"I consider a teachers college an integral part of the state's public school system. It is by cooperation that we go forward," President Wright said. "It has been said that education is from five to ten years behind the march of human events. I think that is an error. As a matter of fact, public schools should be from twenty to twenty-five years in advance of their day and the teachers college from twenty-five to thirty years in advance. If we are to train boys and girls of today to meet the responsibilities of life tomorrow when they are mature men and women we must forecast what that life is going to be. If we are going to do our full task and full duty by the children of today we must know what we are training them for. Human events during the past four or five years have moved forward so rapidly that one is somewhat at a loss to forecast what tomorrow may bring forth. Unquestionably, we are headed toward some form of collectivism. I do not think for one moment that we are headed toward a period when the chief ruler of our nation is going to be an absolute monarch, is going to be a tyrant; I do not think for one moment that we are headed toward absolutism.

It has been said we are, but I am quite sure it is not that kind of centralization we are headed for in government. If one takes note of current events and then lets his mind run backward over the pages of history he will realize that every nation that has ever prospered and has ever lived and left its imprint upon human civilization stood for some central idea. The Jews gave us the religion of Jehovah. The teachings of that religion have lived until this day and are spreading throughout the world. The Greeks gave to us the concept of the beautiful, also a pretty clear concept of philosophy. The Greek ideal of the beautiful is still found all over the world. Roman government gave us a clear concept of government, probably the most distinct concept of law any nation has ever given the world. The English government



gave us a concept of individual freedom. The Jews were a homogeneous people, the Greeks homogeneous, the English Angles and Saxons. A band of people, from all these nations, came across the ocean and settled on the American shores, and builded a government, and they contributed to the world a concept of political freedom. That ideal must have been pretty general because it was made up from the ideals of various and sundry people and seems to be a universal ideal--not that all people will establish the kind of government we have, a republic or democracy, a government created by the people, for the people, and, let us hope, operated from the beginning until this day by the people. That ideal has been the dominant ideal in this country. Under this type of government it is found that an intelligent citizenry is necessary for the stability of the government, the safety of our homes, property and institutions. We are free people, but not free in the sense of having license to do as we please. Freedom comes to us under law. To get the greatest amount of individual freedom we have found it necessary to conform to the laws of the land. We had in this country probably the most rugged individualism the world has known in the past two or three centuries. But we soon found that man can't go forward alone, but must have co-workers. Even Edison, the greatest inventor of his day and probably the greatest the world has ever known, found it necessary to build laboratories and call in a multitude of workers. In cooperation with others he gave to the world great discoveries and inventions. The Mayo brothers became famous, but found it necessary to build a clinic and call in others to work with them. Large manufacturers found it necessary to build laboratories and bring in workers to carry on inventions and improve their industries. So we might go on, through all human activities. It becomes more and more evident that it is in working together that we must go forward. It looked as if agriculture would never go forward, but various and sundry organizations have been attempted, and experiment stations have been put up in order to improve agriculture. Even agricultural interests are realizing that it is only by cooperation that they can go forward. Our nation has reached the conclusion that we must work together as a unit if we want to get the greatest



amount of individual freedom, and be of the greatest amount of service to one another. Big business has realized that if it is to prosper the most menial worker must be paid more than a mere living wage; the most menial worker must be paid enough to enable him to buy the products of the factory, if the business is to prosper.

I sometimes think back to the day when Cain and Abel had their difference and the Lord spoke to Cain and said, "Where is Abel, thy brother?" And the answer "Am I my brother's keeper?". "Your brother's blood cries to high Heaven from the ground". The cry of Cain, Am I my brother's keeper? seemed to be the dominant cry for centuries. Then we come to the story, in the New Testament, of the son of a rich man, who took his inheritance and spent it in riotous living, and one day came to himself, and returned to his father and asked him to make him as one of his hired hands. The rich man's son realized that his father had an obligation to his servants, and they were better off than he. I look back at this country of ours a little more than a year ago and wonder if the things that took place at the beginning of last March do not repeat the story of the rich man's son coming to himself. I am not at all sure that this isn't just what has taken place in this nation of ours.

We have organized ourselves as a people on what might be called the laboratory or scientific basis. We have gone forward very rapidly but we have been asking, Am I my brother's keeper? And the cry of the unemployed in America has gone up to high Heaven, until we have realized that we are all kin and that this whole country was built not for the few but that it might be of the greatest service to all people. We are putting into effect for the first time, so far as I know, in the history of the world the laboratory method in government. The President has said the hungry must be fed, those without employment must be given a chance to work, to earn a living, and if they cannot, somebody, if it has to be the government, must feed them; we have put in a program that calls for planned organization and regulates all kinds of human activities--- codes, if you wish to call it that. The President has said frankly, as I imagine Edison said to his workers in his laboratory, Try this, and if it doesn't work we will try some-



thing else until we find a solution. He has said, Here's what we have worked out; I don't know whether right or wrong, but <sup>if</sup> it doesn't work we will change it. He is trying to find the best people for the operation of businesses, and to so organize each business that those who operate it will be guaranteed a reasonable profit, and those who are employed will be guaranteed a living wage. A scheme for the operation of practically everything in America has been worked out, and in each case those who are working on the scheme have said, If this doesn't prove the best plan we will modify it until we find the best.

The fact that we are living in a machine age when there are so many machines to take the place of human activity calls for a shorter work period, a shorter work day. If the time is cut down to forty or to thirty hours a week for most occupations, at least eight hours a day, on the average, will be left the individual as free time. That, as I see it, is going to be the civilization of tomorrow. It does not mean that we will have an absolute ruler; we are a democracy moving forward, coming into its full growth. Agriculture will be so organized as to give more freedom to the men, women and children who live on the farm, more time to live in. It means that we are going to be slaves to a machine for perhaps forty hours a week, while we are making a living, and are going to have forty hours a week when we are absolutely free to live. The slave time, when we are working, we owe an obligation to our fellow-workers. The thing I have in mind is best illustrated by this example (although this is perhaps an exaggeration): Take an assembly plant for automobiles; say there are fifty men working beside a moving track that carries the machines; one man's job is to drop a bolt in place as the machines pass him for five hours a day. There is no chance for mental growth as long as he is a slave to a machine; he owes it to the other men working beside the track to be in his place on time, and to work as long as he is supposed to; he has an obligation to the man who employs him, also. Then he is free until time to go back to the factory; if he is of an artistic temperament, he can work along that line, if he loves good literature he can read and study; he is a free man with time for recreation, growth and study. This is



going to give the human being the maximum of freedom. It is an organized government for the common good; it is a realization of human relationships; it is a realization that man cannot live alone, but that he lives in cooperation with his fellowman, and as I see it, it is the dawn of the brightest day human civilization has ever seen. If it is to carry on, if we are to have planned human activity and cooperation of all the people, then, of necessity, we must have an enlightened citizenry. We must have an educated citizenry. Not school teachers, lawyers, or ministers alone, but cold-blooded business men are realizing this. They are realizing this, and are saying so in every periodical issued. If we are to go forward we must have an educated citizenry, we must have the highest character it is humanly possible to build. Education of tomorrow must carry character education, must carry the three R's, plus. It must carry with it character, intelligence, and a realization of our human obligations one to another. This means that we people who are intensely interested in the education of our boys and girls must adopt the same method that has been adopted in every other kind of human activity, must adopt the laboratory method, and that is what we are trying to do in this conference. We hold these conferences because we are working together, trying to find what is best, trying to see what step to take next, and because you are interested in this, along with the rest of us, I want to say to you that you are more than welcome; we are glad to have you here. We hope and trust that you will enter into the spirit of this meeting and help us who are training teachers to go back to your school for our children, to so train them that they can render the maximum service to the boys and girls who are coming into this new civilization, which is going to be the most glorious the world has ever known.