

The Place for Public Education in Our Civic Life.

It seems to me that we people in North Carolina have not fully realized the place for public education in our civic life. We do not see the state's duty toward education. The state is fast realizing its duty, - there is an awakening along this line not surpassed by any state in our union. But we have not yet fully realized what public education means for us as a people.

I wish to talk to-day for a few minutes upon
The Place for Public Education in Our Civic Life.

To one interested in the growth of our nation its constitutional history and its economic history; to one who is willing to give the time and thought necessary to go to the bottom of things, to one who really reads and interprets the meanings of things there is nothing more significant in our institutional growth than the development of our public school systems. This growth and development is peculiar to our own nation. Many educators would have us believe our system is developed from the European systems. This is not based upon the facts of history, as much as many sections of our country would like to claim priority for the establishment of our free public school systems. The truth is that this system is a slow but steady evolution of the public for the need of universal education as the real foundation for our institutional stability.

Every nation has the form of government best suited to the needs of the people, for the form of government is the out-growth of the consensus of public thought. The voice of the people in every nation is the Government. An absolute monarchy can exist only when the people ruled believe the power of the ruler should be absolute. A limited monarchy can exist for only those who believe in that form of Government. A republican form of government can exist for only those people who believe in a Representative form of Government. The voice of the people is heard in the different forms of government in just the proportion the people want their voice heard. It is a noticeable fact in the history of human civilization that the people have political liberty in proportion to the public intelligence. Educate the masses and you eliminate the classes in government. Governments become more and more democratic as the people become more and more enlightened. Education is the tyrant's greatest enemy and the people's warmest friend. . In a nation like ours where the government rests upon the heads of its intelligent citizenship, in a civilization like the one in which we live, not only the form of government, but the civilization itself depends in no small measure upon public education. The nation, or the state in the nation, or the county in the state, will prosper in the proportion that public education is fostered. We may believe this or not, but it is just as inevitable as fate, and as true as any

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What then is the place for public education
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in our civic life? In what do we find justification for
decay of nations is after all only the birth, establishment
the expenditure of public funds for public education,
and working out of great ideas. A little over a century
either for the maintenance of a system of public schools
ago a new nation sprang up upon the eastern shore of the
or for the support of a state institution? Whatever the
North American Continent. It is to-day perhaps the
nature of the school, so far as the State is concerned,
greatest nation upon the earth. Around what does the
if public funds are appropriated its justification is to
American nation centre? The Greeks were the Beautiful;
be found upon but one basis. This does not mean all
Rome: Law; Jews: Religion; England: Individual Freedom;
state institutions of learning must be of the same type,
and America: Political Freedom. The home of the Roman
or do the same grade of work, but there must run thru
idea was the Forum: of the Jewish idea, the Temple and of
them all one general purpose.

It has been said that "Whatever the state
is a nation of taking hundreds of thousands of teachers
visions as good in its own advance, it rightly expects
annually from practically every other nation on the globe
the schools to impart;" and the public school's "first
and americanizing them is a most stupendous one. It is
concern must be to equip each to co-operate with his
thru the public school system of the individual states
fellows and then, and not until then, shall it turn to
and the larger cities that this is to be accomplished
the more individualistic task of fitting each one for the
highest economic efficiency." In other words, to quote
national idea, and are troubled no little with the same
Dr. M. G. Baumbaugh, the state's justification is to be
eration problem that we have not seen the necessity of public
found not on "the earning power for the individual, but
education, like our less favored sister states, less
the service power for the state." If, however, the in-
favored" with all the emphasis I can. It is a blessing to
dividual's service power for the state is properly de-
veloped when his earning power as an individual adds
any man to have been born and reared in North Carolina. The
spirit of the people of North Carolina is perhaps more truly
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American than the spirit of the people of any other state
his service power will include his economic worth.
in the Union.

As we read the history of civilization we are impressed with the fact that the growth, development and decay of nations is after all only the birth, establishment and working out of great ideas. A little over a century ago a new nation sprang up upon the eastern slope of the North American Continent. It is to-day perhaps the greatest nation upon the earth. Around what norm does the American nation centre? The Greeks gave us the Beautiful; Rome, Law; Jews, Religion; England, Individual Freedom and America, Political Freedom. The home of the Roman idea was the Forum; of the Jewish idea, the Temple and of the American idea, the Public School. The task before us as a nation of taking hundreds of thousands of immigrants annually from practically every other nation upon the globe and americanizing them is a most stupendous one. It is thru the public school systems of the individual states and the larger cities that this is to be accomplished.

We in North Carolina are so well grounded in our national idea, and are troubled so little with the immigration problem that we have not seen the necessity of public education, like our less favored sister states. I say "less favored" with all the emphasis I can. It is a blessing to any man to have been born and reared in North Carolina. The spirit of the people of North Carolina is perhaps more truly American than the spirit of the people of any other state in the Union.

What is the function of our public schools? Are they to be fostered simply to keep alive patriotism and teach Government, or are they to touch the heart and life of our people? Is education with us to be as it has been in the past for leadership alone, or is it to reach itself down to the very foundation of our life, lay hold of the masses of mankind and bring us to a more vivid realization of our obligations and opportunities and thus raise the standard of living and advance our civilization? As I see it, the public schools, and I include all state supported educational institutions in the expression, "the public schools," must not only train for leadership, but they must touch in a vital way the every day affairs of our people. We must have leaders in church and state, but we must have also, an intelligent citizenship, and of the two we most need an intelligent citizenship; for from the rank and file we will develop intelligent leaders, provided that rank and file is intelligent. It is the substantial Yeomanry of England who have preserved that great nation in many a crisis. And, the safety, to say nothing of the prosperity of our state, depends upon the intelligence of its citizens, our Yeomanry.

Our system of public education from the state University down to the Kindergarten, while not perfect, is based upon true principles. We realize that "The difficulties of democracy are the opportunities of education", (N. M. Butler) and that each generation is

not only the inheritor of a glorious past, but also a trustee for posterity. And that "To preserve, protect, and transmit its inheritance unimpaired, is its highest duty. To accomplish this is not the task of the few, but the duty of all." (N. M. Butler). Again we realize that "That democracy alone will be triumphant which has both intelligence and character. To develop them among the whole people is the task of education in democracy." (N. M. Butler). That "There is no smack of charity about the public educational system of America. It is for all. It is the universal and inalienable right of every man and woman, every son and daughter of the realm. It is the corner-stone of our plan, the essential factor of our governmental purpose. The public schools are to train boys and girls,-- not to support the thriftless or the unfortunate," (Draper).

We realize that "Whatever adds to the real enlightenment of the multitude, adds to the happiness, the strength, and the security of a republic which rests upon the common intelligence and equality of rights for all." (Draper). This does not mean socialism if by socialism you mean a kind of paternalism. It does mean equality of rights under the law, but not equality of results in spite or moral and legal rights.

We realize that the educational purpose of our

state would make the work of the schools aid the industries, that it would give as much prominence and as much honor to manual skill as to intellectual occupations, and yet its educational purpose reaches forward to the very mountain tops of human learning.

"It is time for all to realize that that purpose points not only to a free elementary school in reach of every home, but also to a free high school," and a free university, college or training school for every young man or woman who can avail himself of these opportunities.

Realizing these things our state system is divided into two general types of schools:

a- State Schools to train for leadership,

b- Public Schools that will lay for us at least the ground work for an intelligent citizenship.

In the former class are schools to prepare leaders in practically every field open to our people for useful occupation. The state owes it to itself to equip these institutions so they may do in an efficient way the work for which they have been established. And then it owes it to itself to see that these educational plants turn back to the State the type of person for which they have been builded. . I stand here this evening as the head of the youngest of these state schools and I say to you that if we do not give back to the state well trained teachers we have no claim upon North Carolina for State aid. If we do the Old North State can not afford to let the school

at Greenville suffer for a lack of financial aid. The same is true of every other one of our State educational institutions.

Turning now to the other division of our educational system, our public schools, the schools for the great masses of our people, yes the schools for over ninety-five percent of our people. The task that confronts us here almost staggers one. But after all it is the most important side of our system; for it is here that the system reaches itself down to the home of every citizen in our state, here it is that the system comes into vital touch with the people who constitute the Yeomanry of our State. Here it is after all, that the people will get their education. These are the schools that are the real educational expression of our democracy. These state schools that train for leadership are in part the out-growth of European civilization, but the public schools are the pure expression of American democracy. They did not begin until long after our Government had been established. There were a few free schools in a few localities, but they were not the expression of the American idea. It is only quite recent that the real American public school has come forward. It is destined to grow and develop until every child every where in this great land of ours, has the educational opportunity that belongs to him as an inheritance of our

Government.



The public schools in our state are organized along two distinct lines:

a- Chartered schools in towns known as The Graded Schools. These are in a measure independent of our state superintendent and are under purely local government. Since they do not come within your jurisdiction I shall not discuss them.

b- The Public Schools. These come directly under your jurisdiction and thru you under the state superintendent. Of all the schools in our State, these, it seems to me, need relatively speaking, more attention than they are getting, more attention than our form of organization with the poor pay given to the County Superintendent, will allow.

(Roark, in his economy in education says truly: "The County Superintendent is the most important school officer in the whole rural school system. Through his active service the uplift of the schools must come, or through his inefficiency or neglect occurs their degeneration and decay.") There is practically unanimous agreement among students of education to-day, that the rural schools need close, intelligent supervision throughout a county, or some smaller unit of school organization. To give such supervision men and women must be chosen as superintendents who, by scholarship, professional training, and successful experience, are properly qualified

for the work," and I will add the county must pay such men enough to justify them in giving their time and thought to the work. A man who is forced to give some of his time to providing for the necessities of life in some other way than the work of county superintendent, cannot possibly make the best superintendent. And after all the laborer is worthy of his hire, otherwise the thing in which he is engaged is not worthy of the man.

The problem of these schools is your problem,-- it is also our problem; for it is the purpose of our school to turn back to the state more efficient teachers for this grade of school. Let me say to you, however, that with existing laws and conditions the product of the Training School will not go into the country school. What is the condition. The Graded School is located in towns, has longer terms, pays better salaries and does not require examination. The public school is in a sparsely settled community, has a shorter term, pays a poorer salary and requires examination. In the former the work is better organized, is lighter, in a more attractive environment, pays more and does not call for an examination. Would you not seek employment there in preference to a country school? I take up this problem first because you can not improve your schools unless you can draw into them better teachers. What is the remedy? Let the graduates of these schools and colleges

who give training for this work.-- not those who say in their catalogs they are doing it, but those who satisfy the state department of education that they are actually doing that grade of work that does equip teachers for these schools --let such graduates be given a three years' certificate to teach in any of the public schools of our state, subject to the approval of the county superintendent. If this can't be made into a law let this body of county superintendents agree that such graduates may teach in your counties for three years without standing an examination.

But even this will not give you good teachers without longer terms and better pay. But it is thru the good teachers that you will get longer terms and better pay.

Introduce the kinds of instruction the people need. Give more household economy and agriculture so the people will see and know that the school is a blessing to the community.

Establish county high schools that will teach the classics and prepare young men and women for college, and let these schools also teach farming in every phase, so the young men who can not go to college can make more efficient farmers. Let these high schools also teach the domestic science for young women. Let farm life in

these schools be given the training in those schools that we have neglected too long. Let the people see they are getting something in return for their money and schools will prosper as they have never prospered before. Our state will grow in riches and every hillside will blossom as the rose and our people be come richer and happier.