The Rural Life Conference

The Rural Life Conference, under the direction of Miss Annie Webb Blanton, State Superintendent of Education, and Miss Lathrop and Mrs. Cook, and Dr. McBrien, of the National Bureau of Education, held a two-day session here Tuesday and Wednesday. Owing to unfavorable weather conditions, the out-of-town attendance was not what might have been expected, but the student body and faculty gave appreciative thrills through the program.

These conferences at being held by all state schools offering courses for teachers, as a means of carrying national and state messages direct to the people.

Basic of the rural school ran thru the entire program as the silk cord through the fabric of the Federal bank note. Miss Lathrop referred to her work as preaching the gospel of the rural school.

The fact that more than half of the children of the Nation are in these schools, many with wildings and equipment typical of a long past, provided, perged, by year, in-experience, and untrained girls who will be drawn into the city schools if they make good, caused her to declare as the climax of her major speech that the rural school is a national opportunity.

With men being forced out of the profession from sheer necessity, and younger men refusing to take the census, the answer was to send out into the rural grade schools ranking only six dollars per pupil for public education while others are spending forty dollars, with some states upping only forty dollars; the salaries just double what a neighbor state is paying; with city schools increasing five times what the rural schools were.

In bettering conditions for the rural schools the speaker thought that the main condition was that the teachers should be better trained in their equipment; longer tenure; those of course, mean higher salaries and more pay for the schools, a great deal of which will have to be raised by local taxation. Hence, the need of raising or looking off altogether the constitutional tax limit of fifty cents on the hundred for school purposes.

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The speaker thought, could best be accomplished most profitably by voting for a new State constitutional convention, which will be submitted to the voters of the State this fall. Lessening the number of recitations per day was suggested as one of the ways of helping the conditions of the grade teacher.

Miss Blanton concluded her address by urging larger appropriations for rural roads and by speaking favorably of the teachers' union idea, not only as a local organization but as a State organization as well, since it upheld the principles of democracy. She emsified the fact that the teachers' union must make just demands on the department of education, that schools cannot be taken out of politics, and that the only way unions can obtain just rewards will be in a political manner, thru the legislature and the voters as a whole.

Round Table Discussion

The gist of the Round Table Discussion conducted by Miss Blanton was as follows: problems of administration of our free textbook law; prompt payment of teachers' salaries; the teachers' contract, course of study; the teachers' organization, etc. The solution lies in getting these conditions and preparing oneself definitely to meet them.

Educational Conditions in Texas

Miss Blanton devoted the first part of her address to summarizing what might be the educational-political conditions in the State preceding her election to the office of State Superintendent of Schools. That is, the same in the history of the political struggle within the ranks of the State Teachers' Association which resulted in her being elected president of that body on the platform of equal pay for equal services regardless of sex of the person rendering them. The rest of her address was devoted to a consideration of the details of the three things she is seeking to do for the schools of Texas: (1) doing something more for rural schools that has not been done; (2) bettering the conditions of the grade teacher; (3) advancing the cause of the teacher.

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The prompt payment of teachers' salaries was barely mentioned. The teachers as to the salaries of the contract should be binding on both parties, unless good unforeseen reasons arise. In case the teacher or trustees, should be unreasonable appeal may be had to higher authorities.

In discussing the course of study, the most that could be said of a course that has been appointed to work out a course of study suitable for rural and urban school is that attention should not be overlooked, and much should be followed slavishly but modified, must suit the conditions and circumstances of the community's life.

An Hour With Great Men

In this address Dr. McBrien spoke mainly of the influence of good literature—that is, the thoughts of great men—on the teacher, and of certain obvious necessities that a successful teacher should have.

The successful teacher, he thought, should be a good story-teller, able to appreciate humor and understand the value of a good laugh. He should also be able to write a good reader. There should be a greater demand for good reading, not mere writing. A teacher should be placed on the difference between the two, since nine-tenths of the subjects taught depend upon the ability of the student to get the meaning of the word from the printed page himself or from hearing it given him orally in reading. The child should be encouraged to read at home and thus spend a part of his time at least in the company of great men, getting acquainted with them thru the printed page or the spoken voice. Finally, there should be an effort to limit the work imposed on the teacher, either in the matter of examinations or in other routine work, so that the teacher may have more time in which to cultivate his leisure and get further acquainted with the thoughts of great men.
The Normal Star

Entertained as second-class matter, March 14, 1911, at the post-office at San Mar- ces, Texas, under the act of March 3, 1879.

EXECUTIVE STAFF, English 301 Class


The Star solicits communications of different kinds from all students or faculty members who feel that they have something worth sharing with us. To insure prompt publication, all communications should be in by the Saturday afternoon of the week previous to date of publication. They should be typewrit- ten, double spaced, where this is possible; and may be added to the Editorial P. O. Box No. 1, in either of the Star boxes—(1) in the west hall, Matric Building, ground floor, near entrance (2) in the east hall, Education Build- ing, ground floor, near entrance.

The Simplified Spelling Formu- la is used as far as possible in articles acceptable to these recommended by the Sim- plified Spelling Board in its "Report, circular, April, 1919.

Conference Afternoon

After all has been said and done we feel forced to agree with Solomon that there is nothing new under the sun, but do not consider this a possibility of endless new ways of arrange- ment that are of ever increasing and inspiration to man. So, in the Normal Education Conference, we found no new message but rather different and in- dividual presentations of most of our well known current problems. We heard from the usual angle but with greater emphasis: the urgency of the mother knew would please you at noon; back at the dictates of fashion, these lectures from the United States. Tho somewhat inarticulate in the details, we were acquainted with the general smile at the sleepy beds of one Mary had a little wink, a parting kiss, and your lunch. At any rate, as you sit in your fifth period class a little later, you are con- scientious, a feeling of thankfulness that you live too far to walk at home during the night; and with a light heart you join the general smile at the sleepy heads of one or two classmates who are not succeeding in their attempts to digest at the same time the subject under discussion and a heavy dinner under their belts. And as Jones or Smith falls gently asleep, you are glad that you bring your lunch.

MARY'S WINK

Mary had a little wink.

A visual reflection; When Mary lamp a likely lind, That wink would strip for action.

It went with her to class one day, Which was unpsychologist; It made the young men sing, flirt, And act unpedagogic.

And so the test proved, frown it down It seemed to disappear. But lingered fretfully around Until the coast was clear.

And then it wandered thru the halls, But lingered here and there To wiggle thru with some sporty youths Who sought that wink to snare.

What makes the boss rash Mary say? The gossips ask with unction.

"Oh, Mary has the "Right", you know, The winsome ural that function!"
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SATURDAY, JULY 5th.
OLIVE THOMAS, in "THE FOLLIES GRIL."
Dandy comedy-drama. Also Fatty Arbuckle in a two reel comedy.
MONDAY, JULY 7th.
MARY PICKFORD in "DADDY LONG-LEGS."
MATINEE FROM 4 to 6 P. M.

Majestic Theatre
SATURDAY, JULY 5th.
WALLACE REID in "MAN FROM FUNERAL RANGE."
Western drama. Also a Arbuckle Comedy, "THE SHERIFF."
MATINEE at 1:30.
MONDAY, JULY 7th.
NORMA PALMADGE in "GHOSTS OF YESTERDAY."
MATINEE at 1:30.

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E. C. HORTON, Prop.
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San Marcos, Texas

The NORMAL STAR

Rural Education, a National Emergency

In this Miss Lathrop considered the following problems and their relations to rural education: the work of the rural life conference, recent rural legislation, facts relating to illiteracy, fiscal inefficiency and conditions in areas occupied by foreiners not assimilated, as revealed by the recent war, and problems to be solved before the rural education problem can be solved.

In part, Miss Lathrop said the work of the rural life commission directed the attention of educators to general rural conditions. This was accomplished by health surveys, good roads surveys, economic surveys. All these led to efforts to improve educational conditions, as is evident in the provisions of the Smith-Lever Bill intended to extend the work of the agricultural colleges to rural people; and the Smith-Hughes Bill to aid in training teachers for rural school work.

The fact that rural education is a national emergency was revealed by the events of the recent war. The Draft Act brought out the fact that, of the number of illiterate army men, two-thirds were from the rural districts; also that the greater part of these formerly unenlightened men came from the country; also that great areas of foreiners or in certain districts unassimilated, and these districts or country districts. The general disregard of public education was given as the cause of these conditions.

Among the problems to be solved before the rural education problem can be solved are the roads problem, the land problem, and the problem of conveniences for farm women. It is not possible to have good schools where the people or not home owners or stable members in the community. Hence the land problem has a direct relation to the problem of better rural schools. Good roads make it possible for country life to come in contact with the progress of city life and the life of other districts.

Much depends on the condition of woman in the country home. Modern conveniences in the home are necessary for the mental and physical welfare of the farm woman. In conclusion Miss Lathrop showed that, from the beginning of our nation, we have held the truth that the welfare of a democracy depends on the intelligence of its people, yet, after 150 years, we are seriously confronted with the problem of popular education.

—A. P.

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