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EDUCATION IN THE SOUTH

In the latest annual report of Raymond B. Fosdick, President of the General Education Board, that portion dealing with the Board's activities in the South was prepared by Albert R. Mann, Director for Southern Education. Mr. Mann's comments on education in the South in general, and especially on the Board's activities specifically in white and in Negro education, are presented here.

THE activities in southern education assisted by the General Education Board during the period covered by this report have continued to be directed toward the objective adopted at the Board's foundation in 1902: "The immediate intention of the Board is to devote itself to studying and aiding to promote the educational needs of the people of our southern states." When the program was reviewed by the Trustees in 1933, this objective was reaffirmed for one phase of the Board's continuing activities. It was recognized that promotion of the educational needs implied unremitting study of the changes in southern education and of the capacity of the people to finance the requisite educational facilities, if the Board's program were to possess vitality and significance both currently and in preparation for the future.

Aid to Nation's Farms

At the outset of its work, the Board selected for chief emphasis two factors fundamental to the successful development of public education: the economic and financial resources of the people to support adequate schools, and the competent administration of public education. As to the first of these, it was recognized that, if the South were to develop schools in proportion to its needs and in fair comparison with the evolving school systems elsewhere in the nation, its agriculture should be placed on a more efficient and profitable basis. This fact suggested cooperation with

organized agencies in the regions that had rural improvement as their dominant aim. The most notable feature of this cooperation was undoubtedly the farm demonstration work which helped to pave the way for the later development of the nationwide, publicly supported extension work in agriculture and home economics administered cooperatively by the United States Department of Agriculture and the land grant colleges.

In the field of educational administration, for many years the Board provided grants to state universities to enable them to appoint professors of secondary education who should be concerned with the development of public high schools. The interest aroused by these officers led to more effective promotion of both rural elementary schools and high schools by the state departments of education. With the exception of support for the state agents for Negro schools, which continues, the Board has completed this phase of its program of assistance to state departments of education. There remain, however, opportunities for further improvements in the public administration of education, both in the state departments and in the county offices.

Marked Progress in Education

Judged by their relative readiness to apply available income to educational purposes, the southern states have demonstrated their desire to provide adequate educational facilities. It is significant that the southern states appropriate for the support of education a higher percentage of their revenues than other parts of the country. When viewed historically, the South has made marked progress in its provisions for schools during the past two generations. Large advances have been achieved in the

face of many very real handicaps.

The per capita expenditures for education in the South, however, are not only below those of the rest of the nation; they are also seriously insufficient to provide support for a reasonably complete system offering even moderately satisfactory schools for all the youth of both races.

During the past decade, especially, and generally since the close of the World War, the economic basis of the South has undergone serious changes due to both internal and external causes. These changes have produced a breakdown in southern rural economy in large areas, notably in the southeastern cotton belt, that affects a considerable part of the population. Events of the past decade have been forcing a reorganization of southern rural economy, the full nature and implications of which are difficult to appraise and to accept. The economic changes, which have caused dislocations of population and of opportunities, have brought new impoverishments. Unless and until the South finds means to increase its taxable wealth, its total income, and the rewards of the large low-income group, many of whom are on farms, it seems clear that the support for its schools and colleges and other social institutions and services will remain insufficient in large areas, except to whatever degree the situation may be altered if the proposals for federal aid to education become effective.

Long-Range Outlook

Urbanization and industrialization are proceeding apace. The movement of population and the relatively rapid expansion of industries, especially industries engaged in processing southern raw materials, are destined to alter the southern economic and population patterns most significantly. The composite economic situation is in flux. The time appears opportune for careful evaluations of the economic changes now in progress. Such evaluations could serve as a

useful guide to programs in education and in research.

The question is not simply what the South can produce with its extraordinary natural conditions for agriculture. It is rather what it can produce on an economically sound and profitable basis in the long pull, with reference not alone to available markets and income but also to the utilization of existing facilities and skills, the preservation of basic resources, and other factors.

The foregoing considerations raise again the question, as at the outset of the Board's work thirty-five years ago, whether the Board should not resume its former, but never wholly omitted, interest in the economic improvement of the rural South by means of education and research. Proposals for such a program are now being formulated by the Board.

Although industrial development in the South is still in its youth and at the moment reveals some of the vigor and hopefulness of youth, agrarianism is traditional and continues dominant. The South has a higher ratio of farm population to total population than any other section of the country.

The problems arising from surplus population in relation to the availability of economic enterprise are among the most fundamental conditioning factors in southern life. Broad generalizations as to the bearing of population factors on the solution of pressing economic, social, and educational inadequacies need to be buttressed by thorough, extensive, and detailed population studies. As a contribution toward the advancement and broadening of such studies already under way at the University of North Carolina, the Board appropriated \$15,000 to that institution.

Among the appropriations during 1936 and 1937 for the advancement of public education were gifts and grants for state curriculum studies and demonstrations in improved methods of teaching in Arkansas,

Louisiana, South Carolina, Texas, Alabama, Virginia, Mississippi, and North Carolina. Gifts were also made for cooperative studies between colleges and secondary schools, for a summer curriculum laboratory for studies and methods of teacher training and for a conference of university laboratory school representatives.

Appropriations in the field of higher education were made for the improvement of college programs at Louisiana State University, Hendrix College, Birmingham-Southern College, Furman University, George Peabody College for Teachers, and University System of Georgia, and to the State Department of Education of West Virginia. Assistance in the improvement of libraries and laboratory facilities was accorded Birmingham-Southern College, Hendrix College, Mercer University, University of the South, and George Peabody College for Teachers, while gifts for the improvement of faculties were made to Louisiana State University, Southwestern University, University of Virginia, Furman University, Mercer University, and the University of Kentucky.

Program in Negro Education

Cooperation with states and with selected institutions in plans for the development of more adequate facilities for the education of Negroes has been a part of the program of the General Education Board from its foundation.

For a period of twenty-five years the General Education Board has assisted southern state departments of education to maintain divisions of Negro education. No other activity has received continuous support from the Board for so long a time. The persons in charge of this work in the states are known as "state agents for Negro Schools" and are regular employees of the state departments. In eight states having large Negro populations there are also assistants to the state agents, and five states have Negro supervisors as

well. The agents have worked patiently and effectively for larger grants for Negro schools, better qualified teachers, the establishment of high schools for Negroes, and for other facilities enjoyed by white children in the schools. During the period covered by this report, grants were made to fourteen southern state departments of education for salaries and expenses of state agents, assistants, and supervisors. The total sum was \$145,000.

An appropriation of \$7,175 for the inservice training of teachers in small Negro rural schools completed a five-year project in this field. The funds were used for the salaries of demonstration teachers in summer schools and for the production and teaching of courses of study designated to meet the needs of rural teachers. A gratifying result of this program is the interest it has stimulated in the small rural schools for Negroes, which serve so large a proportion of the South's Negro population.

Development of Atlanta University

In the field of higher education of Negroes the General Education Board has cooperated during the past decade primarily with five major centers: Atlanta University and its cooperating institutions, Atlanta, Georgia; Fisk University and Meharry Medical College, Nashville, Tennessee; Hampton Institute, Hampton, Virginia; Tuskegee Institute, Tuskegee Institute, Alabama; and Howard University, Washington D. C. To the eleven institutions comprising these five centers the Board has voted about 72 per cent of the funds which it has given to Negro schools and colleges.

Since the reorganization of Atlanta University as a graduate school and its affiliation with Morehouse and Spelman Colleges, the expectation has existed that at some future time six of the institutions for the higher education of Negroes in Atlanta would be in close physical proximity to Atlanta University under a coordinated program, and that a strong center of higher

education would be developed there. At the present time five of the institutions are operating on adjoining sites, making use in common of such superior facilities afforded by the affiliated institutions as the library and the science laboratories. Clark University, the remaining one of the six institutions, is still situated across the city from Atlanta University and consequently is precluded from the full enjoyment of these advantages. For a new heating plant for Atlanta University and affiliated colleges, the General Education Board made a grant of \$352,000.

Early in 1936 the trustees of Clark University, with the approval of the Board of Education of the Methodist Episcopal Church, authorized the removal of the University to a site adjacent to Atlanta University that had been acquired with funds provided by the General Education Board. Plans and specifications for the new buildings have since been prepared. An effort is now being made, with every promise of success, to raise \$650,000 for construction of buildings and \$600,000 for endowment. Toward the total of \$1,250,000 the General Education Board has authorized appropriations of \$746,500. When Clark University shall have moved to its new site, all of the colleges for Negroes in Atlanta, with the exception of Gammon Theological Seminary, will work in a cooperative relationship at the new center. This development already reveals substantial gains in the way of higher standards, broader offerings, abler faculties, improved facilities, and economy of operations.

Fisk University and Meharry Medical College, both at Nashville, Tennessee, have been recipients of Board aid for a number of years. These institutions are rendering important service and in recent years have made marked improvements in personnel, facilities, and offerings.

Fisk University has been engaged in raising additional endowment, and is now seek-

ing \$1,500,000 to match the Board's pledge of \$1,500,000. By the close of 1937 the University had collected \$469,525, against which the Board had paid an equal sum. The General Education Board also appropriated the sum of \$163,500 for improvements to the heating and power plant of Fisk University and \$70,000 for current expenses during 1937-1938.

Meharry Medical College is also confronted with the need for a considerable endowment. Pending the raising of endowment funds, the Board has made grants over a period of years toward its current budgets. To assist with the current expenses during 1937-1938, the Board granted \$150,000; also, there was appropriated as a supplemental sum for 1936-1937 an item of \$10,000 for the development of clinical teaching in the Department of Medicine, bringing the total for that year to \$140,000."

Among the other gifts for Negro institutions were \$100,000 for a library building or for endowment of Bennett College, Greensboro, North Carolina; \$100,000 for a library building at Virginia Union University at Richmond, Virginia; \$40,000 for a library building at the State Agricultural and Mechanical College, Orangeburg, South Carolina; \$50,000 for equipment for mechanical industries to Tuskegee Institute; and \$50,000 for books, library, laboratory and other equipment at Virginia State College for Negroes.

THE CONSOLIDATION OF COUNTY SCHOOL BOARDS AND BOARDS OF SUPERVISORS

WE talk much about democracy in Virginia and worship the spirit of Thomas Jefferson, its patron saint. But do we really believe in democracy? Few states so violate the principles of democracy in the management of their school affairs as does Virginia. Few states