

November 21, 1920

Dear Mother, Father, and Pete:

I did not telegraph and about the arrival of the coat because I had already announced it in your Sunday special before I got your letter. I wore it to chapel this morning and it felt great. It is a bleak, cold, and icy day.

In accordance with my new custom, I slept till nine o'clock this morning, took my time dressing, made breakfast in my room, and then went to chapel. I had intended cutting, but one of my freshmen neighbors has been making such a fuss about the preacher of this morning that I decided to go. It was the bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Northern Ohio--I think his name is De Moulins, or some such thing. They had a real Episcopal service, the first that I have ever seen or heard. It was very interesting and very impressive, certainly the most impressive service that I have attended for a regular service--I mean, not a holiday one. He is a very dramatic speaker, and amused me quite a lot, inasmuch as his text was, "Not by power, nor by might, but by my spirit, sayeth the Lord". Only his Lord was honorable Jesus, and then he proceeded to give an enumeration of said gentleman's miracles. It was very interesting, only how those poor dubs can believe all that bunk is beyond me.

I just finished my topic on "Survivals of the Frontier". It is a masterpiece--in stupidity. I am now going to study for my midsemester in Ec. Everybody is cramming for it, but I don't think that I will follow the general example. I like to be individual. He always asks thinking questions anyhow, so I don't see much sense in reviewing a lot of stuff in the book.

I went to the first Marston New York Philharmonic Concert of the year last night. I enjoyed it very much--don't laugh, Father,--but I had the most helpless feeling when I left the hall, because I knew perfectly well that if they were to start over the play the whole programme through again, I would not recognize any of it. There are only to be two this year, as well as Kreisler, I could not go to any of them.

I expect to go off for supper tonight, inasmuch as it is goo-salad night.

Mother, I don't think I'll get a dress in New York for several reasons. In the first place[sic], I would rather see the doctor first and see what he says about my vacation programme. I have had too much experience not to see the wisdom of doing what I should in vacation, and I want to see what he says first. In the second place, I plan to take the three fifty-eight Tuesday, because it will not be such a rush getting away from here and because I don't want to spend any more time alone in New York than necessary. It is not so much fun.

Love, Fannie

THE PITTSBURG SUNDAY LEADER
SUNDAY MORNING, NOV. 14, 1920

Marcus Aaron Urges Scrapping of "All Antiquated Taxing Laws" For Benefit of Public Schools

Continued From Page One

Harrisburg, Nov. 13.—Making the broad charge that "the wealth of the different school districts in Pennsylvania is divided about as unequally as among individuals," Marcus Aaron, of Pittsburg, member of the state and Pittsburg boards of education, addressing the second annual education congress of the state department of public instruction here today, urged a "50-50" I plan whereby the poorer school districts would be helped by the wealthier school districts through a system of increased state appropriations to education. Urging that our present "antiquated taxing laws" be "scrapped," Mr. Aaron said of the "50-50" plan:

"The schools must have just so much money as will enable them to give full educational opportunity to every child in the commonwealth—just so much as will enable them to train, develop and retain for the teaching of all the children, able, contented enthusiastic and zealous teachers with minds and hearts free and independent.

"This means that at least in the matter of education no child in Pennsylvania shall be handicapped for life because of the accident of birth or communal environment, or because of a shortage of properly equipped teachers in such a district.

"It means an annual expenditure of at least double what was paid in prewar days, even assuming that the cost of living will rapidly approach the cost of those days.

"We have learned through the war, and particularly through the selective draft, that by saving money in public education, 'we are debasing the currency of the republic.' "The high cost of ignorance is greater than any possible cost of education.

"We have seen the results of the absence of education in Russia with its illiteracy and its ignorance, and the results of the absence of the right kind of education in Germany, where education was perfected to materialistic and militaristic ends.

"When in our own country 10 per cent, of our men between the ages of 18 and 25 years cannot sign their own names; when 25 per cent, cannot read a newspaper or write a letter; when a still greater proportion are physically unfit, we may well tremble for the safety of our institutions. At least 2,000,000 children in the United States leave school every year at about the age or 14, or under, to enter industry. More than three out of every four have not reached ; the eighth grade; hardly more than one in two reached the seventh grade... Almost half have not finished the fifth grade.

"These children have been in the hands of women teachers almost exclusively, a dangerously large proportion of whom had nothing above a grade school preparation for teaching, and practically all of whom taught for less than laborers' wages.

"What are the future prospects for a high human product with this quality of raw materials?

"In the past, and very recently, the American people as a whole have shown a gratifying ability to think straight through complicated situation and to

register their conclusions by a referendum which was as great and solemn as the occasion demanded.

"But we are facing an unknown future. While it seems probable that our nation may retain the power to think straight, to shoot straight, if and when absolutely necessary, and to vote straight, the dangers from an opposite course are by no means past.

"It is easy for a free people to forget how its liberties were won and the difficulties through which it labored to survive. An ignorant electorate is ever the prey of a Lenine or a usurper on horseback.

"Nothing is more difficult to preserve than the true love of freedom in a free country.

"Being habituated to it men cease to consider by what sacrifices it was obtained and by what precautions and safeguards it must be defended. Liberty itself is the greatest lesson and, in learning it, and encompassing it, we need teachers—the learned, the wise, the just, the free in mind and in spirit.

"Thanks to the sincerity, the vision and earnestness of Governor Sproul, who has gone from one end of the state to the other preaching educational preparedness, the controversy over teachers' salaries is over.

"Public opinion has crystallized upon the suggestions of Dr. Finegan and all that remains is to write into the statutes of the commonwealth a salary schedule for its teachers that will no longer bring the blush of shame to the cheeks of a Pennsylvanian.

"While the people are unanimously in favor of the immediate correction of the long-standing injustice to its teachers, and the consequent outrage to the most elementary rights of its children, there is only a negative unanimity behind the method of providing the means.

"Every group agrees that some other group should pay the bill; some urge that they are already over-taxed; some that they are sufficiently taxed, while others who have long been peculiarly exempted from forms of taxation commonly employed, have, come to believe that the exemption is by 'Gottes Gnaden,' or, by the grace of God.

"The average citizen unfortunately is usually too busy with his own affairs to pay much attention to the public's, or even to the affairs of the public's children. Certain legislative and executive machinery has been created, and to it has been delegated the management of the common interests of all the people: At rare intervals the public conscience has been aroused, and thought of the individual diverted from self to the good of all; the occasion over, it generally relapses into a state of indifference best expressed—'Why not let well enough alone?'

"The public conscience now awakened must not be allowed to go to sleep.

"It is hardly within our province to suggest to the legislature the ways and means of providing the funds. That is for the accredited representatives of the people to work out.

"Whether they will scrap our antiquated laws as we do with a piece of machinery out of date, and in their place give us a sample of modern thinking -- a system of taxation that will scientifically, equitably and automatically provide all the revenue a wealthy and populous state requires—or whether they will patch the old boiler in the hope that it will last yet, awhile, is for them to consider and decide.

"It is hardly likely that in this day and generation, and with the people in

their present temper, that the schools of the commonwealth shall again be told: 'You can have what is left. We are sorry it is no more, but we cannot see our way clear to levy new taxes.'

"Education is the primary business of the state—every child is entitled to a fair and an equal chance. The taxing machinery as at present devised is so framed as to make it impossible for many children to get that 'fair and equal chance.'

'The wealth of school districts is divided about as unequally as among individuals. The result is that there are very material disparities in educational opportunities for the different sections of our state. The great seriousness of these inequalities can only be realized when we stop to think of the fact that in the districts where the people are the poorest we generally find the most children and frequently the greatest poverty of opportunity. We have then the circumstances that the section of the population where there are the greatest number of children and where these children are in need of the most careful and the most intensive teaching, since they cannot remain as long in school as the children in the richer districts— that these very children are the most nearly neglected by our school system.

"The units of assessments for taxation are too small; the assessments are inequitable; the state has no control over assessments upon which local school taxes are levied.

"The school districts should be so enlarged and so organized as to equalize the burden as well as the opportunities. Wealthy neighborhoods should bear a portion of the burden of the more needy neighborhoods.

"All districts should be compelled to collect locally a substantial amount—say as a minimum of its requirements, one-half—and, above all, the state should contribute the other half.

"The state has reserved to itself practically every source of revenue but one.

"It has the means at hand to collect, if it but devises the method.

"It can place its charge where it will be least felt and supplement the revenue of the local district—narrowed in its source to real estate.

"Until the federal government becomes the third contributing member of the partnership, as it is already the profit-sharing member, the state can do nothing better than share 50-50 with the school district, the latter being so organized as to enable it more readily to meet the charge upon it.

"Education in America has been too long considered a purely local problem. There is an obligation upon both the state and upon the nation. At present 1 per cent, of our national expenditure is for education, while 68 per cent, is for expenses arising from recent and previous wars, and 25 per cent, is for the maintenance of the war and navy departments.

"England has learned to her cost that education is a national as well as a local responsibility.

"In the very midst of the war she passed the Fisher bill, providing millions of pounds for education, half of which is paid by the nation as a whole and half by the local community.

"Ours is the wealthiest nation upon the face of the earth and our state is at least second in population and in wealth of all the states of the Union.

"The "statistics of mine, farm and factory of Pennsylvania make a fascinating story.

"The earnings of our citizens would have seemed fabulous a few short years ago.

Our fortunes have accumulated by leaps and bounds and our balance sheet runs into many billions.

"Pennsylvania is properly proud of her history, of her traditions, of her wealth and of her industrial supremacy.

"But sometimes pride goes before a fall.

"Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey, where wealth accumulates and men decay.'

"The state's educational record is a blot upon her otherwise great record of achievement.

"The latest official reports show the following: In 1890 Pennsylvania ranked as the tenth state in education ; in 1900 Pennsylvania ranked as the fifteenth state; in 1910 Pennsylvania ranked as the sixteenth state; in 1918, Pennsylvania ranked as the twenty-first state. She was-passed by 11 states during that period.

"The question is. How long can Pennsylvania hold her industrial record level with an educational record running constantly and rapidly down hill? How long will it take the better-trained competitors to pass her?

"It is well to be reminded that much of the industrial supremacy of Pennsylvania is, after all, the result of the material treasure found in the soil of our state.

"It is very important for the happiness of our people that ^e hold our po sition industrially; that we grow from strength to strength. It is more important that we do not lose our souls.

"The final wealth of Pennsylvania is not its coal, its iron, its gas, its oil, nor any material thing-but its children.

"Industry can never hope to triumph while education dies.

"The industries of Pennsylvania successfully convert practically all of its raw material into gold. But thus far Pennsylvania has not been so successful in re-converting that gold into the only thing that gives it real value-human welfare. And just as the real wealth of Pennsylvania, the final asset, consists of the character of the children and the quality.of the youth, so the real conservation must concern itself not with the forest and the mine, but with the resources of intelligence and of moral worth. It is only through these that our people will become socially responsible, loyal and contented.

"Real wisdom as well as the soundest and most far-sighted business policy would be to make Pennsylvania and the nation safe by saving for future service every latent ability in every child in Pennsylvania.

"Col. Roosevelt once said: 'The most expensive crop is ignorance. And the best of all the crops is the children.'

"He might have added that the greatest of industries is that which develops from the raw material of childhood an approved American citizen, sound in body, free in mind and generous in spirit.

"For the conservation of that asset, to get the things done that are necessary to be done so that the 2,000,000 children now in the public schools of the commonwealth^ and those that will follow them, are given their chance; for the sake of our state and the permanency of our beloved country and its institutions, we must all of us get behind Dr. Finegan in the constructive work about to be inaugurated. We must, as I know Dr. Finegan intends to do, enlist the interest and support of our captains of industry. We must make them give us a few hours from out of their busy lives to help us in our undertaking. From

their efforts greater dividends, financial, and of the spirit, will come to them than on any investment they have ever made.

"I believe in the American business man, and particularly in the business man of our commonwealth. Nowhere else in the world, unless it be in England, can his equal be found in integrity, in vision, and in idealism. His greatest fault lies in failure to express himself more forcibly in the public's business.

"To have him think deeply for an hour upon our problem is to settle it for all time.

"He knows that the only practical protection of human life and of real property is by the careful, laborious education of that majority which will [...i...] whether right or wrong.

In any well managed industry, insurance is included in regular operating expenses. The cost of this insurance is always proportioned to the risk and the danger.

"There are three imminent risks to industry at present: (1) The risk from ignorant Bolshevism; (2) the constant risk and loss from incompetency; (3) the risk and loss from dissatisfied employees

It has been abundantly shown recently a social explosion is far more dangerous and costly than any other. [...] [...] industry to neglect this insurance would be to invite destruction.

"A good American public school is the cheapest and best social insurance in the world.

Above all, because our captains of industry have a sense of social justice we may depend upon their co-operation.

"Industry has been singularly shortsighted in allowing the radicals, the ignorant, the discontented to put out all the propaganda.

"Again, the only practical and permanent remedy for error is truth. Truth comes sometimes by inspiration, but for the most part it is the result of earnest inquiry and disinterested study. It may always be spread by education and training.

"Industry is justly proud of its part in the preparation for war. But war involves protection and necessarily destruction. Peace, on the other hand, is concerned with prevention and construction.

"The most profitable thing for industry is to prepare for peace. A nation will always more profitably and wisely spend money for its schools than for shot and shell.

"So, let us have our drive for education. Let us harness the same elements that during the war rose to the occasion to put across the Red Cross, Liberty bonds, the war chests, etc. Let us utilize these same forces and instrumentalities to create a sentiment throughout the state in behalf of our children that will place the Pennsylvania schools where its wealth and the spirit of its citizens would have them— at the very top of the list.

"If the public schools are our second line of defense, and I believe they are the first line, we may well conclude that in proportion as we succeed or fail in giving to all the children of all the people their full chance, will we 'nobly save or meanly lose' our last best hope on earth."

Today's was the closing session of the educational congress, in session three days. With Dr. J. George Becht, deputy superintendent of public instruction presiding, the speakers, besides Mr. Aaron, were: Auditor General Charles A.

Snyder, Representative John G. Marshall, Beaver, chairman of the state tax revision commission; Dr M. S. Bents, superintendent of schools, Cambria county; Dr. Tracy T. Allen, superintendent of schools, Du Bois; Maj. Fred Engelhardt, director administration bureau, state department of public instruction, and Dr. Harlan Updegraff, professor educational administration, University of Pennsylvania.

The congress was called by Dr. Thomas E. Finegan, state superintendent of public instruction, to find why Pennsylvania was placed twenty-first among states of the union in education, and for suggestion of members. Among the speakers was Col. Leonard P. Ayres, director department of education of the Russell Sage Foundation, whose report placed Pennsylvania as the twenty-first state in education.

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MONDAY MORNING, NOV. 15, 1920.

News Is Colorless.

A BLOT ON PENNSYLVANIA.

Pennsylvania has done so much for the Nation and so much for the world that its importance from the standpoints of patriotism and altruism can never be minimized. It pays one-tenth of the internal revenue of the United States, this amounting, for the year ended June 30, 1920, to \$555,725,086. It has furnished its share of geniuses in the realm of invention. Its industrial leadership is unquestioned.

But, while Pennsylvania has been so patriotic and so generous in meeting world calls for help, what has it been doing for its own people in the way of education and progressive legislation? What of statesmanship does it show in dealing with its own social problems? How does its standing in culture compare with its industrial record? While it is prompt, as it should be in view of its wealth, in subscribing millions to aid the needy of other lands, how is its wealth being distributed at home toward the end of providing equal educational opportunities for its own children?

While demanding, as we must, full recognition of the great things in patriotism and industry Pennsylvania has accomplished, patriotism and social justice also demand that attention be given to matters in which the Keystone state has been falling behind.

Marcus Aaron of Pittsburgh, a member of the state board of education and also of the board of public education of this city, has given the citizens of the commonwealth something- that should startle them into heroic action to place their state in a fitting educational rank. Among other things, in an address to an assemblage of school men in Harrisburg, he said: "'The state's educational record is a blot upon her otherwise great record of achievement.'" One of the explanations is found in the fact that in Pennsylvania today there are 4,500 teachers who have only an elementary grade education. Overcrowded buildings are another cause. Children in some districts are on half-day sessions. Lack of teachers has threatened even to close some of the schools. Relative to the state's educational rank, Mr, Aaron says:

In 1890, Pennsylvania ranked as tenth state in education; in 1900, fifteenth; in 1910, sixteenth; in 1918, twenty-first. She has been passed by 11 states during this period. The question is: "How long-can Pennsylvania hold her industrial record with an educational record running--and rapidly--down hill? How long-will it take better trained competitors to pass her?" It is well to be reminded that much of the industrial supremacy of Pennsylvania is, after all, the result of the material treasures found in the soil of our state. It is very important for the happiness of our people that we hold our position industrially; that we grow from strength to strength. It is more important that we do not lose our souls. The final wealth of Pennsylvania is not its coal, its iron, its gas. its oil, nor any material thing--but its children.

That is putting it plainly, but the time has come for plain talk. We must not forget that much of the wealth of the state, its natural resources, was stumbled upon rather than produced by extraordinary skill and mentality. It now remains to apply a just share of this wealth to intellectual advancement. The outlay for education should be in keeping with the financial capacity of the commonwealth.

In calling for increased state appropriations for the schools, Mr. Aaron emphasizes that "the wealth of the different school districts in Pennsylvania is divided about as unequally as among Individuals.'" He would have a system of tax distribution devised so that the wealthier districts would help equalize conditions in the poorer. Is not that merely in keeping with the functions of a government aiming to provide equal opportunities? Is not it in keeping with the spirit of civilization? In view of what is provided by Americans to aid the cause of education in foreign lands, there should be no drawing of the line by wealthy districts against aiding the weaker at home. Particularly when we recollect that Allegheny county, after freeing its toll roads and bridges, has

had to contribute to freeing those of other counties, some of them also noted for their wealth.

It all sums up to this: That Pennsylvania has fallen seriously behind in education and that only the broadest-minded views, backed by corresponding action, will enable it to catch up. The situation is one that will show us and the world just what our commonwealth has in statesmanship or its lack of it. A legislature devoted to small politics at a time like this would worse than humiliating.

Forbid that the children of the poorer districts of the state be cheated further.

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey.
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay.