

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN.

The Negro Industrial Commission appointed by Governor Frederick D. Gardner in February, 1918, was an act of justice to Missouri negro citizens and was at once followed by New York, whose legislature appropriated \$5,000.00 for its per diem and traveling expenses of its membership in May. Other states, viz.: Mississippi, Arkansas, Alabama, Texas, Georgia and Virginia quickly followed up same, calling theirs the "Negro State Councils of Defense," "Negro State Welfare Commissions," all now have them, but their several reports, although showing good results, yet, without boasting, none of these states' negro commissions have obtained, by solid work, by holding meetings, and by severally and collectively getting around and showing our people, step by step, how to select better seed, plow the land, plant crops and how better to cultivate, harvest, buy "Liberty Loans," "Baby Bonds," "conserve food," add pigs, increase acreage of wheat and rye, clean premises, improve health conditions; go without slacking to fields, farms, furnaces, mines or with "The Colors" as the twenty odd men and women of this commission—a mere bagatelle of present helps to ourselves, our state and nation is told by our Secretary in his summary of the written reports sent in from the various counties, towns and cities where the commission members worked. The commission especially calls attention (1) to their suggestions about the collateral inheritance taxes paid from deceased negro property or money savings which in some way should help educate country life negro children with no public school privileges; (2) to the urgent need of a better chance for reform by youthful negro boys, now servants in most servile positions and waiters only on the white delinquents and criminal white boys at Booneville and without a fair chance to learn any of the useful trades; (3) to some provision being made to care for our negro blind, epileptic, tubercular victims in the state; (4) to give efficient negro deputy places wherever and whenever more good for themselves and state can be done by using them for and among our own wayward delinquent and petty criminal classes; (5) to grant some definite aid to Missouri farmers in the way of a sub-experiment station under control of the state and U. S. through our white College of Agriculture, the same as Arkansas, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Virginia, North Carolina, South

Carolina and other states have for years given their negro farmers, to the great benefit of the state and to their country life negroes. Three successive Missouri general assemblies tried to give the same to the Missouri farming negroes but were balked each time. The commission members report talks and conferences held also with members of white Missourians, who have applauded the Governor for leading all the states' executives in letting capable colored citizens loose among their own along the lines he mapped out and many have expressed their whole-hearted approval and have helped some of us round up ours for the general good. This commission feels that no states' white people are broader minded nor more willing that negroes should have direct charge, when possible, of their own affairs, to survey, find the facts and report and make suggestions for bettering our general conditions, than our Missourian white citizens. The commission has also found that a great majority now see and are willing that every negro child shall have good and better public schooling. Our white friends, many, as never before, have testified gladly that they now believe and know that negroes fairly treated, as in war times and practically and rightly trained, is no menace but a truer, safer citizen than Turks, Bulgarians, Russians, and others whom America has received, welcomed and given fair, free and full privilege for fifty years, almost to its own sorrow. The commission submits this report to the Governor and through him to the members of the incoming General Assembly, believing that equity and justice will be done not only this commission, but that it or some similar commission will be legalized and continued in its strenuous, resultful work, in an advisory capacity to the executive and law-making powers of our great state, especially at this critical period when every effort as laborers as well as of the official classes shall need to be brought to its greatest efficiency as producers, users and conservers along all lines for the next several years.

Signed N. C. BRUCE, Chairman.

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