Rikansrud Writes on the School Law and Hancock County's Way With Her Schools

Editor Times-Republican:—

On page four of the Times-Republican of February 19th appears an article from the pen of one, J. S. Sumter entitled "School Legislation for the Farmers." While the article is nicely worded and rather soothing in its effect, yet to one familiar with the actual conditions in our rural schools sounds like the gushing and flowery oratory of a young college boy and carries about the same amount of practical sense. That hasty and superficial advice, if advice it may be called, might be expected from that source becomes apparent to any thinking, practical man when Mr. Sumter says in his introductory paragraph "The same afternoon the first copy of the proposed law was received here a protest was signed by some 200 citizens."

Now some of us farmers in this slow going locality were also favored with a copy of the bill, but most of us found that it would require a good afternoon simply to read the bill carefully and get a general idea of its scope, not to mention an intelligent understanding of the actual effect such a law would have on our schools and the education of our children. But here was a farming community of 200 members, (about the total number of farmers living in a whole township) who received the bill that day and, if Mr. Sumter's statement is correct, besides tending to the usual necessary daily work on their farms, actually studied the proposed law sufficiently to get an intelligent understanding of its provisions, and furthermore got a hustle on themselves sufficient to get together and sign a protest that same afternoon. While Mr. Sumter's community without doubt is an unusually interested, intelligent and active community, yet it can hardly be expected that practically every farmer in a whole township would get his mail in time to get thoroughly posted and even get ready that same afternoon to join this great procession for the intelligent and self sacrificing protection of our rural schools. So it is reasonable to assume that this movement must have extended even into some of the neighboring townships in order to enlist the 200 signers. This certainly is going it some, I regret that Mr. Sumter forgot to give his address or any information as to where this remarkably active and intelligent community is located so that some of us common and more ordinary and slow-going farmers might learn where to go to get inspiration or to learn how to get a hustle on us. In my judgment it would require at lease a thousand years, more or less, to raise any ordinary farm community in our state, outside of Mr. Sumter's, to the level where it could handle such momentous questions with the ease and expedition he would lead us to believe they did, and so no time should be lost in rendering us help. But enough of this. Any one knows that if a protest was got up at all in the manner stated, some one was "doing" that community, and did it proper, instead of the community doing something.

I will venture to suggest to that community, or any other community, that it take a little time to look up the "moving spirit" in the "sentiment of this community" as Mr. Sumter calls it. Perhaps the community may learn something to its advantage. This has been done in some of the slower going communities and frequently it has been found that the apparently selfsacrificing "moving spirit" was some bank or township school treasurer or interested members of the school board who had got into the habit of feeling a little "velvet" between their fingers and who, upon investigation, were found to be more intensely interested in the care of our "funds" than in the care of "our schools" as Mr. Sumter so affectionately calls them. Follow this suggestion. It may be an eye opener to you and pay you well. This initiatory statement of Mr. Sumter's would have been sufficient to make most men skip the balance of his article if it had not been that the ridiculous absurbity of it aroused in them, as it did in me, a morbid curiosity to see what else his fertile brain could produce. Likewise my reference to this first point would perhaps be sufficient answer to his article. However, with the permission of the editor, I will touch some of his other points.

Calls for Common Sense.

This revision of the school laws as well as the usual condition of our rural schools is a problem that is well worth the while for every farmer to bring all his common sense to bear upon. On the one hand we farmers employ altogether too little common sense in the management of our schools, and on the other hand we have left this management too much in the hands of men who manage our "funds" to their own financial benefits instead of managing "our schools" to the benefit of our children. It is from these men that most of the opposition to reform in our school laws and rural school management comes. As we farmers, little by little, begin to wake up and learn more and demand changes and improvements, these men realize that, in the same proportion that we get a new grip on learning and beneficial reforms, they will lose their grip on our "funds" and so they are the ones that become so active in opposition to anything that enlightens the farmer or common people. Mr. Sumter writes very affectionately about "us farmers," "our schools" and "our teachers," etc. This all sounds very nice, but I will call Mr. Sumter's attention to the fact, if he is not already aware of it, that "we farmers" does not mean only the township school treasurer and his friends, and possibly the bank they are interested in, but also includes the other 150 or 200 families and their children who live in the township, and who put up the "funds" year after year, and furthermore, that the rest of us are, little by litte, beginning to realize this fact and that in the near future these old-time managers will have to figure us in too, or there will be something doing. The people in some localities have settled this matter already, as, for instance, in my township, but they are few and far between. Yet this move is on and in a little while the cry will be heard: "We are coming, Father Abraham, a hundred thousand strong!" The first time this cry was heard, it meant the liberation of four million slaves from the cruel grasp of heartless, selfish masters. This time it will mean the liberation of the rural children from the cruel grasp of the equally heartless and selfish "fund managers" that rural school boards and officers have principally been up to this time. This may sound harsh, but it is nevertheless a fact that any one with his eyes half open has observed, and a fact that any one, who may not yet have seen it, may readily see if he will but look around a little and use his common sense.

A $100,000 Investment.

Without going into details now, I will make a statement that any one can very easily verify for himself. The township is now the so-called "unit" for school purposes. It is a small piece of ground six miles square. Our boys and girls have the privilege of attending school until they are 21 years old. Now we few farmers on this spot of ground six miles square, put up the necessary "funds." We have done so willingly as we expected it to be used for the education of our children so they may be a little better able to meet the world. How much have we put up for this purpose from the time our boy was born until he was of age and supposed to be ready to meet the world? Now, listen, some of you older men who have boys just grown up who have received their education in the rural school provided by your school school boards during that time. Listen: During the time stated, you or I, together with the comparatively few other neighbors on that small piece of ground six miles square, have, in round numbers, put up $100,000 for school purposes. Now look at your boy. Use common sense. Does it look to you as if he got it? Let us use our common sense a moment and investigate how well he is prepared to meet the world after he have put up this amount of money to prepare him. We few farmers on this same piece of ground six miles square put up each year a few hundred dollars to improve our roads. It needs a clerk and three trustees to manage this for us. Can your boy or mine when he is of age take that township clerk book and keep track of this little business for us in a creditable manner unless he has been to some higher school than our rural school to learn it? Or, can he be a trustee and take that book and check it up properly and know that the clerk has kept it right, unless he has been somewhere else to learn it? Now bring your common sense to bear on this point. Has your boy or mine been reasonably well prepared to meet the world when he can't take decent care of even the simplest little business matter that comes up on this little spot of ground six miles square? Be candid about it.

Did the Boy Get It?

Does it look to you as if he could possibly have got the benefits he ought to have got from the $100,000 you and your neighbors put up for his education, not to speak of all the extra trouble the parents had to keep him in school? If your common sense tells you as it has told me that the boy never got it, then the question hobs up, what became of all that money? I know what became of it in the localities where I have lived and am living now. You dig into it and see what became of it in your locality. Ask the managers of your funds and the protectors of "our schools." Perhaps they will know. Whether they will tell you, oh well, that is another matter. Fellow farmers, for the good of your children, look up matters along these lines a little bit. Perhaps you will learn something.

Parliamentary Training.

Our friend Sumter, very kindly calls our attention to the fact, that this proposed law will abolish many of our local public offices and that our boys will thereby lose the exceedingly valuable opportunity "to be schooled in parliamentary law and methods of transacting public business in our districts and board meets." Well as to that I have only this to say and I say it advisedly. The Lord deliver my boys or any other boys from being schooled in parliamentary law and the transaction of business done by the ordinary rural school board, and I know that any one who is in the least familiar with the parliamentary law and business methods employed by said boards will rise and support my prayer with a hearty "Amen." Among the offices that would be abolished he mentions the local school treasurer. Advisedly or perhaps accidentally, he mentions the treasurer last. He ought to have mentioned him first and in prominent type because there is where the "rub comes in." As a matter of fact the abolishing of the local school treasurer is the very change that causes the most opposition to the county unit and the proposed law. But, of course, it would not do to bring that out too prominently or speak too plainly on that point. These men that are so exceedingly and unselfishly interested in the welfare of "our schools" and our children know very well that even farmers have common sense enough to know that until we need our funds for our schools, they can be just as well left with our county treasurer who has collected them as to send them to our local treasurer to be managed by him and the board. Where the money is held until we need to pay our bills has no effect on the education or welfare of our children. Furthermore they also know that the farmers that live in Iowa and have to put up the taxes, do not dislike half so much to be relieved from paying a yearly salary to about 1,500 usless local treasurers as these local treasurers dislike to be cut out of that salary. So they do not say very much about the treasurer (except when they consult with each other in a low voice around the street corners.) but nevertheless that is the principal thing they are after. We may just as well call black, black and white, white and be done with it. But my article is getting too long.

What the "Hornets" Did.

As a pointer to other localities, Mr. Sumter's inclued, let me state what has been done in my locality by a few hornets who five years ago stirred up rural school matters which up to that time had been so "peaceable" as one of our old-time "managers" expressed it or as Mr. Sumter would have us believe it generally is. That fall our schools opened with six third grade teachers at $30 per month, two second grades at $33 per month. All hired for one term or two months. The township was supposed to furnish free textbooks, but there was hardly a book in the schools fit for a child to use. This was the customary order of things each term year from year. No blackboards except a small piece of the wall had been slated some twenty years ago. Stoves usually with the doors broken off the hinges and propped up on bricks as the legs had been broke, or perhaps frozen off. Everything else in comparison. Then those hornets began to get their disturbing influence in. The "peaceable" old-timers did all they possibly could do, underhand and overhand, to save the taxpayers, the rural schools, "our schools" and the community in general from the threatened wreck and ruin and with about the same amount of sense as Mr. Sumter shows. However those pesky hornets won out and have been in control for five years. What is the result? Judge from their doings.

Last fall all our schools opened up for the third successive year with teachers all of whom held first grade or state certificates, hired for full year at from $50 to $53 per month. "Radical change" enough perhaps, to make Mr. Sumter and his like shiver for the safety of "our schools" or perhaps more correctly for our "funds." But there is more coming. Those pesky hornets made all kinds of "radical changes" during the five years. Planted from 12 to 100 trees on the school grounds, put up about seventy-five square feet of natural slate blackboards in each school and furnish dustless chalk. Textbooks in vocal music, small dictionary in each seat, free writing material, paper, pens, ink, tablets, pencils, everything a child needs. More textbooks bought in two years than the "peaceable" board had done in seven years. Supplementary reading so that we now have several sets of readers for the teachers to choose from. Levied library fund to the full limit allowed by law. Nice hard oil finished book cases five feet by four feet, sixteen inches deep. A large number of small sized seats so that our children need not go to school four or five years before they can rest their feet on the floor. Large new up-to-date stoves. When the high grade teachers were secured the board added algebra, physical geography and civil government to the course of study and bought the books. Put up mail boxes for all schools. The old rusty tin pail has been replaced by a sanitary earthen drinking vessel with filter, etc.

What It Cost.

But enough about the "radical changes" these dangerous pesky hornets brought about. "Well," you say, "they certainly did good work for the schools in the short time of five years, but how about the "funds?" Am glad you reminded me of that. There is where my pointer comes in. These pesky hornets were so busy looking after the schools and the education of our children that they forgot all about the funds and so it was found last fall that for the five year period they have been tearing things up with all the above named "radical changes," they had spent a little less money than the old time "peaceable" board did the five years before. Do you see the point? The taxpayers in our community do. They have now three years in succession built a new modern up-to-date schoolhouse each year and propose to keep on until there are comfortable accomodations for the children while they are enjoying what the hornets have prepared for them. How did the hornets manage to do this? Well, in the first place, they are farmers, and till the soil for a living and need not be supported by the public tit. Then again, they used a whole lot of common sense in investing the money. School boards generally spend the money. The hornest invest it, that is, they mix a little common sense with it and that makes it reach a good deal farther. Then again, while they are busy men, they still have time to read school journals and keep posted. Every school officer in my township takes a school journal. By the way, I would suggest to Mr. Sumter that he take a school journal too, and if possible, get his school board to take one. The school board in a locality with such remarkable hustlers as those "200 signers" seem to be, would certainly find time to read a journal, and might, perhaps, learn some things that would go well with their "parliamentary law and business methods."

Go Thou and Get Hornets.

To the taxpayers and patrons of "our schools" in Sumter's locality I would suggest, get a few good, haltby, lively hornets started among your "fund managers" a little bit. Just for fun, you know. Perhaps you might incidentally learn something too. I will extend that suggestion to every school township in the state of Iowa and furthermore give you my word of honor that you will never have done anything that paid you as well or helped your children more. To our present legislature I will say that if you, before you adjourn, remove the local township treasurers you will have done more for the improvement of our rural schools than any other legislature has ever done or ever will do. Will you do it and save our children from the selfish grasp of the average "fund managers?" To Mr. Sumter I will say, I have waded thru the washy swashy gush you offered "us farmers," but when you use the endearing terms "us," "we," "our schools," etc., pleace excuse and exclude me. I will rather be among the hornets. Are you afraid of hornets?

OLE T. RIKANSRUD,
Kanawha, Iowa.

Ex-Mayor Frank G. Pierce Offers His Views on a Present Marshalltown Problem

I have noticed with great interest your account of the meeting of business men held at the call of the mayor, to devise ways and means to secure adequate service in the way of electricity and gas.

Believing that the correct solution of this question is of the greatest importance to all of our people and especially to the hundreds of consumers of gas and electricty, it seems to me that the entire proposition should be carefully and fully considered from all points before any decision is finally reached. For this reason I desire to call the attention of the people of Marshalltown to the following facts, and knowing that the best way to do so is thru the columns of your valuable paper, I ask that you give them publicity.

It was certainly a mark of patriotism for the many business men who have done so to subscribe for stock in another company to supply these necessities. But as a practical proposition, it is not as desirable to have a company operating these utilities whose stockholders are local citizens, as it is to have the same owned by outside parties. While these gentlemen, without doubt, agree at this time to put the money into the proposition from a purely patriotic motive, human nature is such, that within a few years they will begin to desire larger dividends on their stock and they would be in position to secure ordinances so as to bring this about. If these gentlemen were interested in electing municipal officials favorable to their interests, and of course they would be, it is readily seen that they would have a political influence that would be the dominating factor in local politics. With local ownership, public utilities are bound to be active in local politics.

If we must have a private company it is better to have parties owning the same who have no particular influence locally, as then politics does not enter the question of rates and control and these questions are decided on a purely business basis. With local private ownership it is always difficult to reduce rates but with the owners living elsewhere the tendency is generally to fix the rates at as low a figure as possible and yet give a reasonable return on the investment.

If it is necessary to have a competing plant, and unless the present company make very decided improvements at once, I believe that it is so necessary, it would be much better for the city to build and operate these plants than to grant a franchise to any private party. The city has successfully managed its water works and street lighting plant and there is no reason why a municipal electric light or gas plant or heating plant or all, would not be as successfully managed. With a municipal plant each taxpayer in the city would be a stockholder in the same in accordance to the amount of taxes that he pays, with the difference however, that each stockholder, irrespective of his holdings, would have one vote in the election of the directors, that is, the councilmen.

I believe that the great majority of the consumers of electricity and gas at the present time are not nearly so dissatisfied with the rates they are paying as they are with the service they are receiving. Nine-tenths of them would be willing to pay the present rate if the service they received were first class in every way. With a new and modern plant the city could furnish both gas and electricity at a reduction on the present rates and still make a large progit that would pay for the entire plant in a few years.

With municipal ownership the gas mains and electric wires could be extended to all parts of the city. If it were not desirable to pay for the plant in the first years of its operation, out of its earnings, but simply to pay the fixed charges and operating expenses, a very material reduction could be made in the present rates, and gas and electricity placed within the reach of all. And at the same time with a new equipment the very best of service could be rendered.

With a modern electrical plant the city could sell power to all of our small factories at a price that would be a considerable saving over the present expense in the way of steam power, and yet make a profit on the same. The loss of power with sufficient lines, none of them over two miles in length, would be almost nothing, and all will agree that a large central power plant would be much more cheaply operated by the different factories. This, in itself would be a great inducement for new factories to locate in Marshalltown, and under municipal ownership the price could be put at almost the actual cost and we would have a power that we could sell at a price that could not be met in any other city in the state.

Another great advantage of a municipal plant would be that the money invested in the plant could be secured at probably 4 per cent interest, while the bonds on a private plant would have to bear 5 or 6 per cent interest and then sold at a discount. This saving in interest alone would be enough to justify a reduction in the price of the output over the price that any private company could possibly give.

There could be no question but what the city would have the right to use its streets for the purpose of erecting electric wires or for laying gas mains, and instead of a long litigation, probably requiring several years, to annul the present franchise, it would be possible, in case the present company did not at once improve its service, for the city to erect its plants during the coming summer.

I believe that this is one of the most important questions before our people at the present time, and it should be carefully considered by all in order that it may be solved right. Municipal ownership of these utilities is, in my judgment, the only correct solution of the problem. Yours very truly,

FRANK G. PIERCE.

[Mr. Pierce has sprung a suggestion which will not be displeasing to Messrs. Jones and Hovey, for I have heard the mayor say that it has been intimated to him that Jones and Hovey would like to sell to the city on very easy terms, at a price of $300,000. Several engineers have given it as their opinion that this property is not worth in physical value more than $200,000 so that it is easy to see that municipal ownership can be accomplished on Jones' and Hovey's terms. However, if the city owned the street railway, it is probable that the opportunity to extend car lines would make politics out of real estate men, fully as [illegible] as the desire to overcharge [illegible] would debauch local stockholders [illegible]

This fear that local stockholders would prove dangerous and that non-residents are much to be preferred will arouse a smile in face of the success the city has had heretofore in scaring Messrs. Jones and Hovey into reasonable rate concessions.

When it comes to building a new plant at a cost of $200,000 to $400,000 it may be true that the city could borrow the money, but the experience of municipally-owned heating and lighting plants is not all in favor of public ownership or public management. What the public should seek is low rates and high service, and make the private owners hustle for their dividends. While a city can borrow money at a low rate of interest, a private owner [illegible] usually save more than [illegible] in interest in his money. However, it [illegible] would such [illegible] try their [illegible] the [illegible] power [illegible] public [illegible] upon.—

Gregg Makes a Strong Plea For the Preservation and Improvement of [illegible]s

Times-Republican:

The pleasure and advantage our lakes are to the public would be hard to estimate in dollars and cents. Parties often buy a location and pay an advanced price for it because it borders on, or is situated in the immediate vicinity of a lake. This is because it carries with it a variety of pleasure and profit, and whatever is a harmless pleasure to the people is of great value. It is not so often the worth of the fish we may take in an hour or two, but the great pleasure we have derived from the act. The camping, boating, fishing, bathing and hunting all go to make a variety of healthful sport. So any community which is so fortunate as to have a lake in their midst is naturally upset and very much disturbed if there is any effort made to injure the lake or destroy it, and that is the case at the present time here in Hancock county. Twin Lakes, situated in the south part of the county, and the only lakes in the south half of the county. The west lake was threatened with destruction a few years ago by parties endeavoring to drain the neck of this lake, but thru the efforts of our county attorney in office at that time, who was looking after the wishes and the interests of the people, and who took the matter to the courts and the supreme court, put its seal this lake for the people. Now it is the east lake, situated one-half mile east of the west lake that a few parties are seeking to drain by endeavoring to have a drainage district established on the west branch of the Iowa river.

This stream in its course flows across a neck of the lake and consequently is a governor of the lake to a great extent. This lake in its formation and its location in connection with the Iowa river, makes it one of the most important waters in the state as a source of supply of young fish for the Iowa river. In fact, if all the tributaries to the river were ditched and the bayous drained out and this lake left as it is, it would always produce an ample supply to maintain the river in a well stocked condition. As the river flows across the neck of this lake, great numbers of fish enter this lake in the spring at spawning time, this lake being such an admirable and natural spawning ground the fish are drawn to it by instinct. The margin of the lake at the average stage of water is shallow and well supplied with an abundant growth of aquatic plants, making the ideal spawning bed, and after the spawning period is past the most of the fish return to the river again and the eggs are left to hatch, and owing to the few enemies that prey upon them here and the natural abundant food supply, the number that is hatched and the growth that is made by them the first season is phenomenal. Great numbers of these young fry return to the river, especially in the fall and take their course down stream and this hatching process and its automatic system of distributing is annually going on and will go on so long as this lake is not drained, and an abundant supply of young fish will always be on hand to take the place of the large ones that are caught. It does not matter if a considerable number of the large fish are taken annually if the supply of young ones are on hand to take their place, but on the other hand if the river is ditched down to this lake, which would destroy all of the spawning grounds on the river above the lake, and if the state would permit them to continue down thru the lake, thereby taking a great portion of the water from the lake and preventing the ingress and egress of the fish in or out of the lake, this would wipe out all the spawning grounds on the head waters of the Iowa river. If there was a prospect of having another government fish hatchery established in our state, we would all be anxious to lend our influence to secure it, yet we have a natural hatchery in this lake with an annual output of young fish amounting to more than the combined output of ten government hatcheries. This lake is not only appreciated by the public as a breeding ground for fish, for hunting there is no better lake of its size in the state. There are a number of cottages on this lake, and in the fall and spring during the hunting season there are numerous camps of hunters from different parts of Iowa enjoying a week or two vacation at this lake. By a request of numerous people the state thru its representative has asked the county to not take any action toward the drainage of this lake, but there is an element that does not seem to take this action of the state as definite. This lake is one of the meandered lakes and one of the most important lakes so long as we wish to maintain a supply of fish in the Iowa river. Fish protection means more than simply game and fish wardens on guard to see there are no fish taken in the closed season, or to see that there is none taken in an illegal way, it means that what waters there are be[illegible] state should be zealously guarded, and any attempt to injure or destroy should be met with a strong protest by the state.

• • •

Would it not be a good plan in case a residence hunter's license law were enacted to provide that a certain percent of the money derived from the tax be appropriated each year for the purchase of land bordering on a lake or river of any suitable place convenient to the public, and to be known as state parks, and where the land was not timbered, or where it was not sufficiently timbered to plant it to forestry and improve and beautify it. With a working capital of from $50,000 to $70,000 annually derived from a $1 hunter's license we would in a few years have a state park in every county in the state, and it would be highly appreciated as camping grounds for the public on lakes and rivers, and an ad[illegible] of out-door [illegible]ose that [illegible]t into [illegible] state [illegible] there [illegible]ted by [illegible] people, one in each [illegible] be known as the state game [illegible] park commission. This commission would constitute a board for the location and purchase of parks and for their improvement, for the purchase of foreign game birds and animals such in their judgment would be adapted to the country and the clyimate, the parks to be under their control and their deputies. With numerous parks thruout the state, altho they were not so large the people would derive more pleasure from them than they would from one or two large ones at a long distance from them, as thousands of people would never get to enjoy them.

Goodell, Iowa. J. W. GREGG.

A School Man Suggests a Monument---A Substantial Collegiate Hint to the Cheerful Giver

In reading the editorials of Tuesday's semi-weekly, I ran onto a sentiment seconded by you as suggested by the Davenport Democrat, and as an old Marshall county boy, I want to applaud your remarks.

I told a friend of mine in a letter not long ago that the state of Iowa would never know with what longing a certain college professor in northern Iowa was looking upon that $10,000 to be spent for a pedestal, as he thought of the boys and girls of this country whom that amount of money might help to educate. This thought is not a selfish one. No idea of robbing Senator Allison of glory enters into it. But $10,000 rightly invested would pay half the salary of a professor of agriculture in some small college in the country, who could put more real patriotism and true religion into the hearts of the farmer boys and girls of Iowa than could a monument of brick and mortar reaching to the heavens themselves.

The boys of Iowa, and the girls, too, are the center of about all the legislation that is being seriously handled in Des Moines this winter. The school laws of the state are under discussion, and the chances are, I understand, that something really worth while is going to result. What the rural schools need more than anything else is good teachers. What the teachers need is some place to go to become good teachers. To be sure, we have a normal school at Cedar Falls, admirably equipped and managed, and doing a great work, but, as was well shown in the county superintendent's section at the State Teachers' Association in December, it is inadequate to meet the growing demand for trained instructors in the country districts. If any person does go to Cedar Falls to prepare for country school teaching, he changes his mind when, after graduation, the city board comes along and offers him about double the wages offered by the country school board.

All argument along these lines runs in a circle, and is bound to keep on doing so, under the very nature of things. The country boards say that they can not afford to pay half-trained teachers more than $40 per month, and that they have no opportunity to hire any other kind, while the teachers say that they cannot afford to teach for less than $60 per month after they have received needed training; and what is more, they don't have to take less than that. The question, in reality, is resolving itself to a matter of dollars and "sense." (Please don't change the spelling of the last word in the preceding sentence, as you read it).

The inability of the State Normal School to provide rural school teachers makes it mandatory for other schools to do this work. I have no right to question the motives of the faculties of the larger schools of the state, but it seems only fair to the smaller ones to say that we who had looked forward so expectantly to the passage of the law giving schools of certain standing a chair of agriculture at state expense, are very much disappointed in the report these college men handed in. They are wealthy enough to hire their own teachers of agriculture, while the younger colleges of the country need all the assistance they can get.

Our school here at Mason City, established by the patriotic orders of the country, having a hard struggle with poverty, as do all such institutions in their years of incipiency, would gladly welcome state aid. And this leads again to the thought that no monument could have been erected by the state, and the boys and girls of the state, that would have been more lasting, and of more success as a disseminator of loyalty to and reverence for the great statesman under consideration, than a chair of political economy and history right here in our school. It is unlikely that any trouble will be met with in reaching the $100,000 mark in this work. One hundred thousand dollars would put any one of half a dozen small colleges in this state on a footing where the good work already being done might be assured for all time to come. And when we talk of monument by endowment, where but in such an institution as the one here could such be better known, or be more in place?

The boys and girls of Iowa will erect this monument. Our question to them would be: "Why not also erect one to yourselves, by making the money you put into this great memorial come back to you, not in money, but in education, influence and character?"

This letter is to thank you, Mr. Editor, for calling attention to the matter. I hope you will agitate the question so that the next time we suggest anything of this kind the people will be educated to your way of thinking, and we can put up monuments that will be monuments in every true sense.

Very truly yours,
FRED D. CRAM,
Principal Normal Department.

Governor S. B. Packard on the Noxious Weed Law---A Farmer's Plea For the Iowa Farm

To the Editor:

It is desirable to have the press of the state lend its influence for the enactment of a bill pending in both houses of the general assembly for the destruction of noxious weeds in the highways, railway right-of-ways, and other public places, which bill was prepared by the state board of agriculture after a two years' investigation of the weed problem thruout the state. It is believed that the observation of your readers will confirm the facts we have ascertained that the conditions are not less than alarming of the rapid spread of those weeds which once infecting our lands will cost time and much money to eradicate. Two of the most troublesome are quack grass and the Canada thistle, the former a few years ago being found in northern parts of the state, is now plentiful in the central and indeed some all over, while the Canada thistle is located in nearly all parts.

The plan of the bill is to make the weed killing a part of the road work in the highways; the weeds listed and named as noxious are quack grass, Canada thistle, cockle burr, wild mustard, curled and smooth dock, squirreltail grass, buckhorn or ribbed plantain, wild parsnip, horse nettle, velvet or button weed and burdock; these weeds the bill requires the township trustees and road supervisors to make a part of the road work and exterminate; and railways will have to clear these from all of their lands and city street commissioners will have to see to the killing within city limits. All lands adjacent to the highways which will or do infect the roads will have to be cleared of these weeds and any complaining owner of lands can have relief from the infection of his lands from the lands of another.

The machinery for the enforcement is eminently practical. At the April meeting after the law is in effect the township trustees make the levy for taxes for road work and weed killing, when the tax collection from this levy is available the following year the work must be entered upon; the present 4 mill limit is raised to 6 mill limit in townships, but is not raised for road work in the annual levy by the county supervisors, but imposes the weed killing in the county road work; in counties where drainage laws are in force, when another mill is allowed if needed for road drainage by the county supervisors. The township trustees are given authority to enter upon the adjacent lands if the owners refuse to clear the lands which infect the roads after proper notice; a complaining owner of lands infected by the lands of another gets relief thru the township trustees. The Botanist at Ames College is made state botanist and in connection with the secretary of department of agriculture at Des Moines, make reports and issue bulletins and have general state supervision. The county supervisors have county supervision and make reports and can appoint a weed inspector; are required to convene the township trustees and the road supervisors at the county seat once a year between November and the following April to consider best methods for road work and weed destruction and can have an expert on these subjects present; for their time all are allowed the per diem compensation now allowed by law for other services in township and county work. To the general land owner whose weeds do not infect his neighbors' lands, this law does not apply.

S. B. PACKARD.