

National Educational Association Meeting

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WRITES OF THE GREAT GATHERING OF TEACHERS IN SAN FRANCISCO.

Editor Times:

Any comment on the recent meeting of the National Educational association at San Francisco seems inadequate; the gathering was so big in scope, spirit, excellence, numbers,—in everything. A few generalities, briefly told, may be of interest.

Attendance.

Owing to the hot weather in the East, the delegations of teachers from the states east of the Rockies were small; some of the Pacific coast states, too, were not generously represented—Oregon, for instance, California teachers were very loyal to their state and to their metropolis and turned out in large numbers. Their loyalty did much to increase the record of general attendance. The absence of eastern teachers brought feelings of depression to many western teachers who had gone to the convention with great expectations of attending its sessions with friends any many were ready to leave the city by Wednesday. Some did so. The press recently made the statement, unofficially I think, that this meeting of the association would rank about third in size with the meetings of former years. I hardly think it will rank so high.

Management.

The crowds of delegates were splendidly handled by the officers of the association and their assistants. There was no confusion or tedious waiting anywhere. Some credit for this should be given to Mr. Irving Shepard, secretary of the N.E.A., who has had large experience in managing these annual gatherings and some to the ample accommodations of the city of San Francisco,—the Ferry building, for instance, was almost perfectly adapted to the business needs of the convention, and the hotel accommodations were ample to a fault,—someone remarked that there were so pesky many hotels that he could not find anyone.

Hospitality.

In hospitality, the citizens of San Francisco outdid the ancient Greeks. They met visiting delegates at the Oakland pier, escorted them to the Ferry building, decked them with flowers, supplied them with postal cards with which to inform their friends of a safe arrival, looked after their hotel accommodations, assumed the responsibility for the safe delivery of their baggage, provided rest rooms for the weary, nurses for the sick, music for the depressed, refreshments amid dainty Oriental decorations for the hungry, and did everything in their power to make the stay of delegates in the state "a pleasure to themselves and a profit to the city" as the mayor expressed it in his address of welcome,—a statement which his auditors received with laughter and applause. Evidently, in the opinion of many, the city had already profited. And how these citizens boosted in the meantime! They loaded one down with tracts about "sun-kissed valleys," "placid lakes," "ocean-laved beaches," and did it with such confidence

enthusiasm that it compelled attention from everyone. The Californians certainly have advertising down to a science.

Sessions.

The programs were planned so that evenings could be given up to general sessions, mornings to departmental gatherings, and the afternoons to sight-seeing.

The general meetings were held in Pavilion Rink (except the opening one which was held in the Greek Theatre at Berkeley). The general session at Berkeley was a successful one; the others were not for the Rink in which they were held permitted so much moving about over its bare floors that only a few persons near the platform could hear the speakers. The Tuesday evening meeting at which the president of the N.E.A., Ella Flagg Young, gave the annual address, was almost farcical;—the first part of the program was spoiled by late comers tramping in, and the rest of it by disappointed delegates leaving because they were unable to hear satisfactorily. It was about the worst meeting I ever attended.

The departmental meetings were very satisfactory. Seats were usually available and one could hear well. Topics were usually discussed by selected speakers and were then opened for general discussion. Many of the general discussions were interesting to a high degree; speakers were enthusiastic and stated their opinions concisely and definitely as often the case in impromptu debate, and there was often the real clash of argument which makes debate interesting.

Benefits.

A great convention has much to offer apart from regular sessions and prearranged programs. Much is gained from the "fellows who are there and ones association with them" as David Thwing said of a college. It is inspiring to see and meet (if one can) persons whose books and literary compositions one has read and studied; to see and meet persons whose work in the field of education one has come to admire and emulate; to see and meet present and former associates in the profession. It is part of a schoolman's business to know what is available in the way of supplies and apparatus for schools. It is very profitable therefore to visit the exhibits made by the various school book companies and school supply houses, and it is always a satisfaction to form the acquaintance of their representatives. One of the best exhibits of school supplies at this year's meeting was that of Rand McNally & Co., of Chicago. They had a very fine collection of maps on display. Then there were many sight-seeing trips,—to the University of California at Berkeley, to Leland Stanford Jr., University at Palo Alto, to the Presidio where a special drill of coast artillery and infantry was given for the benefit of the teachers to United States gunboats in the harbor, to the mint, to large manufacturing plants, etc.

There is great inspiration in seeing persons do things successfully in a large way. It was worth a great deal to anyone to see and hear Dr. David Starr Jordan, president of Leland Stanford Jr., University, hold an audience of several thousand people to the closest attention on the much discussed subject of "Temperance" and this notwithstanding the fact that his address came at the close of a long program when his auditors were tired. His reasoning was so logical and his illustrations so apt that listening became a real pleasure and one gave attention for the duration of it. This is but one instance, there were many others.

A minor part of the program that was done in a large way occurred at the Tuesday night session referred to above. A priest of the Catholic Church of Chicago was called upon to explain the movement of the Chicago teachers for a children's national anthem. He spoke for five minutes with such eloquence and voice that the great assembly hall was quiet for once and only once during the evening. I never heard such a magnificent voice.

Not the least important to Oregon teachers, was the reception given by the teachers of our state at their headquarters in the Palace hotel on Thursday of convention week from four until seven o'clock. It brought out many Oregon teachers and their friends as well as many visitors who wished to learn about the state. It was a very helpful little affair whose

usefulness was in no way impaired by formality. It was greatly enjoyed by the few Coos Bay teachers in attendance who find it difficult to attend these gatherings when they are held outside in different cities of the state.

Of educational matters, much could be said. It will be a pleasure to do so at another time.
F. A. TIEDGEN.

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