

QUOTATION: ILLITERACY IN VIRGINIA

THE proportion of Virginia's population unable to read or write in 1930 was larger than the proportion for the entire country, and the progress made in the state toward eradicating illiteracy was less than the average for the entire nation, according to an analysis of Federal census returns just published by the University of Virginia and reported in an Associated Press dispatch to the *Baltimore Sun*.

The state was shown to rank fortieth among the states in illiteracy, and made less progress during the decade 1920-1930 than it did during the preceding decade. Moreover, the analysis says, the common explanation of a large extraneous racial element in the South does not apply so strongly in Virginia, since the Negro population is only slightly larger than for the nation at large, and the percentage of native whites is more than twice that of the entire country.

The minimum education program of the State Department of Education with an additional annual outlay of \$2,000,000, would ultimately remedy this condition, in the opinion of Dr. Sidney B. Hall, state superintendent of public instruction. The census return demonstrated, he explained, that illiteracy in the state varied almost exactly with the amount of money spent on schools. The department now expends \$6,500,000 annually.

Although six southern states rank lower than Virginia in literacy, they each have higher proportions of Negro population than does Virginia, while the other two, New Mexico and Arizona, have high percentages of Mexicans and Indians.

Eradication of Negro illiteracy has made marked progress in Virginia, however, the analysis shows, having been reduced from 30 per cent. in 1920 to 19.2 per cent. in

1930. The percentage of illiteracy among foreign-born whites, composing only 1 per cent. of the population, was so nearly in accord with the native-born that they were not separately listed.

The problem of illiteracy in Virginia is primarily a rural problem, especially intense where there is broken topography or a sparse population, the report says. The prevalence of illiteracy tapers from the open country to the larger cities, and for the larger cities, in most cases, illiteracy fell below 1 per cent. in 1930. The study pointed out that the cities through the agencies of public schools have had a marked advantage over the country in eradicating school-age illiteracy.

The state over the decade ending in 1930 reduced native white illiteracy in the age group of 10 to 20 years from 3.7 to 2.5 per cent. In urban territory this reduction was from 1 to 6 per cent. and in rural territory from 4.5 to 3.2 per cent.

In general, in Virginia native white illiteracy was found to be more prevalent in each region from east to west: Tidewater, 3.2 per cent.; Middle Virginia, 4.1 per cent.; Piedmont, 7.6; Valley, 6.2, and Mountain, 10.1 per cent.

The 1930 census demonstrated that eradication of illiteracy has been spotted and regional, and twenty-six counties showed actual increases in illiteracy from 1920 to 1930. Of this number four are in Tidewater, eight in Middle, eight in Piedmont and six in the Mountain division.

—*School and Society*.

O BEAUTIFUL FOR SPECIOUS LIES!

In a kindergarten class, flags were shown, and in answer to a question a little girl gave the response that was expected of her: "This is the flag of my country."

"And what is the name of your country?" was the next question.

"'Tis of thee," was the prompt reply.

—*Pullman News*.