

THE CONSERVATIVE INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND.

THE CONSERVATIVE learns with regret that Governor Poynter has removed Prof. Wm. A. Jones from the superintendency of the Nebraska Institute for the Blind, located here in Nebraska City. Our regret is founded on the fact that Governor Poynter makes the removal without giving any reason therefor and without any charge having been made against the efficiency, integrity and character of Professor Jones. It is regretted by every good citizen that this very capable, worthy and experienced pedagogue, who has passed most of the years of his useful life as a leading educator in the state of Indiana, should be removed for purely partisan purposes and merely to give place to ex-Lieutenant-Governor Harris because that gentleman was not renominated for office at the last populist state convention. Every decent taxpayer in the state must regret and sincerely lament the fact, which now is apparent to everybody, that the public institutions of an educational character carried on by this state are all regarded as proper homes for dependent politicians where they can be maintained and paid for being petty partisans and nothing else. Good qualifications, splendidly rendered service and general approval by the community have no weight seemingly with the present executive of Nebraska. The one thing he apparently considers is, how shall I billet my political adherents upon the public? How can I pay persons for being populists in my interests?

It is only fair that THE CONSERVATIVE (which does not agree with Professor Jones politically) should voice the unanimous sentiment of the best citizens of Nebraska City, relative to the notably faithful service which Professor Jones and his estimable wife have rendered to the sightless children entrusted to their care and tuition. Never since 1890 has the Institute for the Blind been so economically, practically and benignantly administered. The last annual report of Professor Jones, which we have read carefully word for word, is without exception, the best official accounting of a stewardship which has been rendered in the state of Nebraska during the last ten years by any one of its officers. This report has attracted the attention of the best scholarship and philanthropy of the United States. Prof. Wm. T. Harris, United States commissioner at the head of the bureau of education in Washington, writes, relative to that report and to Professor Jones' general character, under date of April 14, as follows (and we have insisted upon copying and publishing the same):

Your illustration of principles on pages 318 and 319 and subsequent is complete. I wish that you would send me another copy of your report at once. You have certainly made a remarkable paper; it

will suggest the true method of studying the blind children.

Mr. Timothy Nicholson, member of the Indiana state board of charities, writes under date of April 15:

The undersigned was a trustee of the Indiana state normal school at Terre Haute during its establishment and organization and for some years thereafter.

Wm. A. Jones, now superintendent of the Nebraska Institute for the Blind, was the first president. His ability and skill in organizing the faculty and school gave great satisfaction to the trustees. Faculty and students were enthusiastic under his inspiration and the school rapidly increased in efficiency and popularity during his administration. After a few years of remarkable success President Jones contracted malarial fever which so impaired his health that he was compelled to resign his position, to the sincere regret of the trustees, faculty, students and other friends of the school.

Mr. W. A. Bell, editor of the Indiana School Journal, writes from Indianapolis, February 14:

Having been editor of the Indiana School Journal for nearly thirty years, and having known all the leading educational men that have ever worked in the state, I am free to say that no other man ever did as much for the state educationally as did Wm. A. Jones. Others have worked more years, but their work was not so fundamental and far-reaching.

W. H. Mace, professor of history in the University of Syracuse, New York, writes on January 31, 1899:

The undersigned is personally acquainted with Prof. W. A. Jones of Nebraska City and knows intimately the work he accomplished as president of the Indiana State Normal school, Terre Haute, Indiana. I deliberately assert that as an educator Indiana has never seen his superior. The philosophical and pedagogical basis on which he founded the professional training of Indiana's teachers remains today, and in my judgment, is the best, in both theory and practice, in the United States. There are hundreds of able men and women teaching today who bless the good fortune that placed them under the personal and professional supervision of W. A. Jones. There is not an educator in Indiana who knows his work but still regrets the occasion which took him out of the state.

Prof. Arnold Tompkins of the department of pedagogy of the university of Illinois, writes of Professor Jones:

I have never known a normal school equal to the one he organized and conducted. His old faculty have uniformly praised the helpfulness of his thought and his deep insight into educational principles. Students were decidedly enthusiastic over his rational discipline and his invigorating touch in the classroom. He was distinctively the educational philosopher of the state.

Commissioner W. T. Harris, from the bureau of education in Washington,

wrote to Dr. A. Hugh Hipple, 200 Bee building, Omaha, Neb., relative to professor Jones, saying:

He is one of the most remarkable men that ever entered the work of education in the United States. His influence is the most powerful influence in the state of Indiana to this day, and Indiana has one of the best educational systems in the world.

Prof. W. A. Jones did more to create a spirit of thorough study into the principles and practice of education than any other man in the Northwestern states.

I think that Nebraska is to be envied in having such a man placed at the head of its institution for the blind, and I know that there is a widespread feeling among teachers in Indiana that Professor Jones ought to be called back to the work of education in that state. He left Indiana originally on account of his health, having lived for many years in the malarious part of Indiana.

The foregoing tributes to Professor Jones are given circulation by THE CONSERVATIVE as corroborative and concurrent evidence of the truth of what it has heretofore said as to the capabilities and practical usefulness of the present superintendent of Nebraska's Institute for the Blind. It is regrettable that such men should be removed to make places for those inexperienced in teaching, no matter how good they have been at preaching or as presiding officers of a state senate. It is barely possible that the last position was regarded by the governor as peculiarly qualifying Mr. Harris for directing and superintending the blind.

The logical ending of the partisan management of state institutions, like normal schools, insane asylums, reformatories and institutes for the deaf, dumb and blind, will be their abolition; and THE CONSERVATIVE is free to say that the sooner the state divests itself of all these institutions and leaves the fields which they now occupy to private enterprise, the better it will be for all concerned. The private sanitariums in the East, the private insane asylums in many states and the institutes for teaching the blind, the deaf and the dumb which are carried on by personal enterprise are much cheaper and far better than those paid for by the state. When the indigent insane or blind or deaf and dumb are sent from Otoe or any other county to a state institution, we are taxed to pay for it and it costs more than it would to send the same indigents to private institutions of the same sort. A comparison of the cost of keeping the inmates of our asylums and institutes in the state with the cost of keeping them in private institutions and asylums in New York, will show that this state is not an economist; in fact, as a rule, the comparison will show that it is cheaper to keep the unfortunate classes referred to in private asylums.