

Educators of Negro Youth.

National Association of Teachers, In Annual Meeting at Asheville, Discuss the Principles of Education—Bishop Warner Tactful—Dr. Wright's Famous Message Cited.

By L. M. WRIGHT.

There was recently held at Asheville, N. C., at the Young Men's Institute, an organization founded by George W. Vanderbilt, a most notable convention of educators of the colored youth known as the National Association of Teachers in Colored Schools. The association was formed some six years ago and is composed not only of Negroes, but also of whites who teach in Negro schools.

Being composed of the teachers of both races, the discussions were necessarily conservative and dwelt upon principles of education rather than matters merely of racial interest.

The president of the association is R. R. Wright, LL. D., who is also the president of the Georgia State Industrial college at Savannah. Dr. Wright is one of the most distinguished Negroes of America. It was he who when a mere boy, shortly after the close of the civil war, gave that now famous answer to a request for a message to the north from General O. O. Howard, who was then at Atlanta, "Tell them we are rising," and who was during the Spanish-American war major and paymaster of the United States army. Dr. Wright has been for thirty years a teacher in the state of Georgia, having established the first colored public high school in that state in 1880. He was also the first president of the first state college for Ne-



PRESIDENT R. R. WRIGHT.

gro youth in Georgia in 1891. As early as 1879 Dr. Wright organized one of the first associations of Negro teachers ever held in the south.

On the opening evening of the teachers' convention Hon. John E. Campbell, the mayor of Asheville, made the welcome address. Addresses on behalf of the teachers and citizens of the state were delivered by Professor T. S. Inborden, principal of the J. K. Brick school of Entfield, N. C., and Dr. J. W. Walker of Asheville. President Wright responded to the welcome and delivered the annual address on "The Teacher as a Factor in Race Efficiency." He declared that an efficient race, like an efficient individual, was one that was able to take care of itself, was energetic, self reliant, resourceful, provident, prosperous and hopeful. For the Negro to have all these admirable qualities he must be taught them in a large measure by the teacher, for civilization is the offspring of education.

"Our teachers are a powerful force in developing character and bettering social conditions, but the relation between the teacher and the home of the child must somehow be made closer. The teacher must work not only with the pupil, but with the parent. A great responsibility rests upon the teachers. It is taken for granted that they see the need of organization, and that they understand the task that is set before them, and that they know that in this age of electricity and combination individual effort must be strengthened and made most effective by co-operation with others working in the same sphere."

The roll of states showed on the first day that fifteen states and the District of Columbia were represented.

The following subjects were discussed during the sessions of the convention:

"Vocational Training In Our Grammar Courses," by Mr. W. H. Singleton, principal of grammar school, Chattanooga, Tenn.

"How I Have Interested My Public School Pupils In Agriculture," by Mr. J. H. Garvin, superintendent colored city schools, Winchester, Ky.

"How the Colored City Schools May Be Made to Fit City Conditions," by Mr. W. H. Valentine, supervisor colored public schools, Indianapolis, Ind.

Address, Dr. J. H. Dillard, president of the Anna T. Jeanes fund for rural schools, New Orleans.

"Some Suggestions For the Improvement of the Negro Rural Schools," by Mr. Charles L. Coon, superintendent public schools, Wilson, N. C.

"The Teacher as an Influence in the Business and Economic Life of the Community," by Mr. W. G. Pearson, principal colored schools, Durham, N. C.

"The Place of the Kindergarten In Our Educational System," by Miss Georgia F. Koontz, Anderson, S. C.

The final address was made by Professor R. R. Wright, Jr., who is the editor of the Christian Recorder and manager of the A. M. E. Book Concern of Philadelphia on "The Negro Teacher as a Social Missionary."

A reception was given to the dele-

gates by the citizens of Asheville, which showed their appreciation of the good work of these educators.

One of the most notable of the addresses of the session was that of Dr. Wertenbaker of the United States public health department. Dr. Wertenbaker explained with especial care the causes of tuberculosis, its origin and spread, its prevention and cure and was listened to by a most appreciative audience. Other specialists in tuberculosis who spoke were Drs. Dunn and Minor of North Carolina. Dr. Minor spoke on the susceptibility of the Negro to tuberculosis, claiming that his personal experience with many Negroes, reaching over many years, seemed to prove that Negroes were more susceptible to the disease than whites. But when questioned carefully regarding this statement by Bishop Warner of the A. M. E. Zion church Dr. Minor said that he felt that his statement had been proved and yet could not be proved from existing evidence.