

THE LIFE AND CONTRIBUTION OF WILLIAM C.
LARRABEE TO EDUCATION IN INDIANA

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C. C.

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CHAPTER I

I. THE PROBLEM

Within the last few years several studies have been made to find out, if possible, what part certain officials or individuals have played in the formation of present trends in education. This thesis is a report of the contribution of William C. Larrabee

II. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The school system of Indiana ranks with the best of educational organizations. The present system was ushered in with the enactment of the Constitution of 1851. The Constitution of 1851 contained the long desired authority for the establishment of a free school system. However, the outstanding feature of the constitution was that it provided for a head of education in the state for administering the school laws of the state.

The new Constitution, after being submitted to the people, went into operation in 1852. It contained the long desired authority for the actual establishment of a free school system, and the necessary enactments followed. This blessing had not fallen easily into the lap of the State. Detail mention of the battle is made, that the present generation may not forget that their present extensive privileges did not come to them without a struggle.¹

¹ Julia H. Levering, Historic Indiana. (New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1909). p. 436.

The Indiana system has been fortunate in having at the head some of the outstanding educators of the State, William C. Larrabee, who was one of the leading educators, became State Superintendent of Public Instruction. To point out the important events of his life and to show how his leadership has contributed to the educational system of Indiana is the purpose of this thesis.

III. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study does not make a survey of all the activities in which William C. Larrabee participated. It is limited to finding out what his contribution to the development of education in Indiana has been.

IV. NEED FOR THE STUDY

During recent years much interest has been shown in the part the pioneers played in the development of school systems throughout the country. Attempts have been made to collect the available data and to evaluate their contributions that have influenced the formation of our present school organization. Since the educational history of Indiana contains many of these rather obscure pioneer educators, the writer selected just one for this study. Consequently the investigation is concerned with the life history and contributions of William C. Larrabee.

V. SOURCES OF DATA

The sources of data for this thesis are primary and secondary.

Primary:

Wesley and His Coadjutors. Two volumes
 Asbury and His Coadjutors. Two volumes
 Lectures on the Scientific Evidences of Natural
 and Revealed Religion
 Rosabower: A Collection of Essays
 Indiana Reports of Superintendent of Public
 Instruction

Secondary:

Indiana Histories
 Minutes of Methodist Conferences
 Circuit-Rider Days in Indiana--Sweet
 Historic Indiana--Levering
 Indiana Methodism--Holliday
 Indiana Reports of Superintendent of Public
 Instruction
 Indiana School Journals
 Dictionary of American Biography

VI. RELATED WORKS AND INVESTIGATIONS

In 1930 Clifford O. Keefer submitted a thesis to the
 Graduate School of Indiana State Teachers College in which he
 made the following contribution:

William Clark Larrabee
 Democrat
 Terms: 1852-1854; 1857-1859
 Born--December 23, 1802
 Died--May 4, 1859

William Clark Larrabee was born at Cape Elizabeth,
 in the District of Maine. Larrabee worked his way through
 Bowdoin College and graduated in 1828. After serving as

an examiner in the Military Academy at West Point, Larrabee came to Indiana to teach mathematics in the university at Greencastle. Larrabee became the first State Superintendent of Public Instruction in Indiana in 1852 at the third period of educational development within the state. Failing health forced Larrabee to resign in January, 1859.

Administration. Larrabee had no precedents to guide him; yet he shifted the control of the schools from the separate districts of the townships to the trustee of the whole township.

In the early years of the state superintendency the county auditors were expected to make their final reports concerning the school funds in Indianapolis, but so few went to the capital of the state that Larrabee had to guess how much revenue would be on hand from year to year.

School houses were built rapidly from 1852 to 1858. In 1858 there were 6,835 school houses in Indiana and the enumeration was 451,002. During the period 1857-1859 there were 650 school houses built, and from 1853-1858 there were 2,750 school houses built.

To be understood by that part of the population which could read only German, Larrabee's final report of 1858 was printed in two parts. Part I was in English, and Part II was in German.²

In 1935 Dr. Olis G. Jamison submitted a thesis, (The Development of Secondary Education in Indiana Prior to 1910) to Leland Stanford University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education. In this study he included two pages on the life of William C. Larrabee and his contribution to education in Indiana. The information given is similar to the data given by Clifford O. Keefer.

² Clifford O. Keefer, The State Superintendents of Public Instruction of Indiana.

VII. METHOD OF STUDY

This study is purely a historical study. The writer has relied upon primary and secondary material as a means of securing the necessary data. The material used was the property of the library of Depauw University, Indiana State Teachers College Library, and the Emeline Fairbanks Library of Terre Haute.

CHAPTER II

A SHORT LIFE HISTORY

I. BIRTH

William Clark Larrabee was born December 23, 1802 at Cape Elizabeth, Maine. His father, who was a sea captain, died soon after the boy's birth. Larrabee's parents were poor, uneducated, and irreligious.

II. EARLY LIFE

He spent the first few years in the home near Cape Elizabeth, Maine. At the age of seven he went to live with his grandparents and an uncle at Durham, Maine. While there he worked on the farm and attended school a short time. At seventeen years of age he left the farm and went to Strong, Maine where he found employment in the home of a physician. He was encouraged by friends to seek an education. The possibility of entering college was far from his mind at this time; however, encouraged by small successes, he decided to make the effort. Methodist meetings were being introduced into the locality about Durham at the time he was living with his grandparents. He soon professed conversion and in June, 1821, was licensed to preach. He united with the Methodist Church at the age of fourteen and was a constant observer of Christian duties.

III. EDUCATION

He attended grammar school a few months. He enjoyed reading, and while yet a boy living with his grandparents he read all the books in the neighborhood. Later he attended New Market Academy in New Hampshire, and then he went to Farmingham Academy, Maine. This training prepared him to enter the sophomore class at Bowdoin College. He was graduated from that institution in 1828. The same year he entered Bowdoin College, Longfellow, Hawthorne, and Abbott were graduated.

He was associated during that year with these noted people. In later years he met and worked with various outstanding ministers and educators. These associations influenced and directed to a great extent the education of William C. Larrabee.

IV. MINISTRY

He was licensed to preach and began preaching in June, 1821, at the age of nineteen. He was admitted to Oneida Conference in 1832. The following quotation tells of his ability as a preacher.

He was an instructive and entertaining preacher; but his great life work, and that for which he will be chiefly remembered is that of an educator.³

V. DEATH

William Clark Larrabee died May 4, 1895, after having been confined to his bed for a period of six weeks. His

³ F. C. Holliday, Indiana Methodism. (Cincinnati: Hitchcock and Walden, 1873). pp. 238-289.

remains, with those of his wife and daughter, lie in Forest Hill Cemetery, near Greencastle, Indiana.

VI. INSCRIPTION TAKEN FROM HIS MONUMENT

William C. Larrabee, LL.D.,

Born at Cape Elizabeth, Maine, December 23, 1802. Died
May 4, 1859.

First teacher in Wesleyan University, 1830

Principal of Oneida Conference Seminary, 1831-1835

Principal of Maine Wesleyan Seminary, 1835-1841

Professor of Indiana Asbury University, 1841-1852

First State Superintendent of Public Instruction of
Indiana, 1853-1854

In the same office, 1857-1858.

CHAPTER III

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

I. OUTSIDE OF INDIANA

From the time he entered Bowdoin College until he was graduated, he taught during vacation. From 1828 to 1830 he was principal of Alfred Academy, Maine, and in 1830 he was appointed tutor of a preparatory school at Middleton, Connecticut, which was the forerunner of Wesleyan University. In 1831 he was made principal of Oneida Conference Seminary, Cazenovia, New York, and in 1832 was admitted to membership in the Oneida Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. After four successful years at Cazenovia, he became the principal of Maine Wesleyan Seminary, Kents Hill, where he enlarged his reputation as an educator. In 1837 and 1838 he also assisted in the first geological survey of the state.

William C. Larrabee by this time had proved his ability as a teacher. The following quotation gives an idea of his standing as a teacher.

"Teachers are born, not made; and Larrabee possessed the teacher's gifts."⁴

II. IN INDIANA

In 1840 William C. Larrabee met Matthew Simpson, the president of Asbury University (now DePauw University).

⁴Indiana Reports of Superintendent of Public Instruction.
1881-1884. p. 8.

This university had just been established at Greencastle, Indiana and Dr. Simpson invited him to come to Asbury University as Professor of Mathematics and Natural Science. Mr. Larrabee accepted the invitation and went to Asbury University in 1841.

During the eleven years from 1841 until 1852, he remained as a teacher in the university. For one year during his professorship, he served as acting President of the University.

He was regarded by all as a great teacher. One writer has said:

I think I never knew one who had so much power over students in the way of reproducing himself among them, of stimulating the dispirited and of drawing all to him as to an Oracle.⁵

⁵ Indiana School Journal. (Indianapolis: Downey, Brouse, Butler and Company, 1868). Vol. 13. p. 92.

CHAPTER IV

HIS WRITINGS

Mr. Larrabee's writings were not extensive; however, they were a means of passing on to others his very high ideals. He wrote Wesley and His Coadjutors, in two volumes; Asbury and His Coadjutors, in two volumes; Lectures on the Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion; and Rosabower, a collection of essays.

The two volumes of Wesley and His Coadjutors and the two volumes of Asbury and His Coadjutors were the short life histories of Wesley, Asbury, and the men who worked with them in the field of religion. The book, Lectures on the Scientific Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion, dealt mainly with religion. The book, Rosabower, was a collection of essays which he wrote, dedicated to his daughter, and published in book form.

The nature of his writings can best be explained by giving quotations from them. The preface to Wesley and His Coadjutors clearly pointed out his purpose and plan in writing it. It read as follows:

I have endeavored, in the following pages, to present an accurate and vivid sketch of the life, times, and character of Wesley and his eminent coadjutors. I have collected my facts from every accessible source, and have arranged

them in their natural order, and described them in as clear and graphic style as I could attain. I have had, of course, in obtaining facts, to avail myself of labors of numerous able and worthy English writers. I cannot pretend to have discovered any new facts, but I may have succeeded in presenting some known facts in a clearer light, and in developing more fully, the motives of ever memorable founders of Methodism. At any rate, I may make old facts better known to general readers. I have conceived the design, formed the plan, and executed the work with the hope of meeting the wants of the American popular mind.⁶

Volume I of Wesley and His Coadjutors gives an account of the life of John Wesley, while Volume II gives accounts of the lives of his coworkers. Among them were George Whitfield, John Fletcher, and Charles Wesley, his brother. In the chapter telling of the life of Charles Wesley was the following paragraph:

On a bright May morning--the morning of the Holy Sabbath--he awoke, in hope and expectation of the coming of Christ. At nine o'clock his brother and some friends called on him, and sung a hymn. After they left the room, he breathed in the ear of the invisible, but ever-present One, a short, but fervent and humble prayer. He then composed himself in peace, and was falling into a gentle slumber, when he heard a soft and solemn voice, saying, 'In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, arise, and believe, and thou shalt be healed of all they infirmities.' Scarcely had the echo of the voice died away in the room, when light broke forth on his soul--peace glided into his mind--joy leaped into his heart.⁷

The two volumes of Asbury and His Coadjutors are biographic and historic. The preface of these volumes show the purpose and the style of the books.

⁶ William C. Larrabee, P. Wesley and His Co-Labours. (Cincinnati: Hitchcock and Walden, 1851). p. 3.

⁷ Ibid., p. 32-33.

In the following sketches I have availed myself of all biographic and historic materials accessible to me, and coincident with my design. I have not designed to produce formal biography nor stately history, but to present to general readers a graphic view of the prominent and interesting events in the career of Asbury, and some of his most distinguished coadjutors.⁸

As the preface to these two volumes state, they are graphic views of the prominent and interesting events in the career of Asbury, and some of his coworkers. A few statements from them will show the style used in writing.

Frances Asbury was born near Birmingham, England, in August, 1745. His parents were amiable and respectable people in common life. . . . At the early age of seven years he experienced the influence of grace in his heart His serious and thoughtful habits, which continued, without material change, till he arrived at the age of fourteen. . . . Soon after his conversion he began to hold meetings in his father's house. . . . He was received and appointed to labor on a circuit according to the Wesleyan form.⁹

Lectures on the Scientific Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion was a compilation of a course of lectures which he delivered to his students. The following quotations give an idea of the contents of the book:

My design in this course of lectures is to help you become wise and good--to improve your intellect and your heart--to add to your knowledge, your faith, and your charity.¹⁰

⁸ William C. Larrabee, Asbury and His Coadjutors. (Cincinnati: Swomstedt and Poe, 1853). p. 3.

⁹ Ibid., p. 13-17.

¹⁰ William C. Larrabee, Scientific Evidence of Natural and Revealed Religion. p. 19.

The next quotation will give an idea of his opinion concerning the make-up of the human body. In speaking of the joints of the body he said:

We shall see, as a mark of divine wisdom, that each of these joints is placed just where it is wanted--the hinge joint being never found where motion in every direction is needed, and the ball and socket never where simple swing motion is required.¹¹

The next quotation shows what he thought about divine revelation.

The ability of God to make, and of man to receive any communication or Divine revelation, cannot be doubted by any reasonable mind. God could make known to man truth, by his works of creation and providence; by audible communications in human language; and by insensuous and Spiritual inspiration. We believe that God is yet teaching man, by his works of Providence; that he did in older times address human being in human language; and that he did inspire 'holy men of Old' by the Holy Spirit to speak and to write truth.¹²

Rosabower; A Collection of Essays, was written in memory of his daughter, Emma Rosabelle. Short phrases from the book will give an idea of the contents.

Will you come, gentle reader, to my bower, and take a seat by my side, and let us commune with nature and with ourselves? . . . There are voices here, gentle reader: the voices of nature in her gladness and love. . . . And is it fancy, or do I sometimes hear, mingled with the melancholy of nature, soothing my soul with heavenly harmony, and cheering me onward and upward, the spirit-voice of my angel child, idol of my heart, and twin genius of my spirit, my own sweet Emma Rosabelle, whose grave, covered with violets and

¹¹ William C. Larrabee, Scientific Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion. p. 47.

¹² Ibid., p. 292.

myrtle, is made beneath the same tree whose branches incline over me? . . . Come, then, gentle reader, come to my bower and let us commune together.

From the deep, dark, recesses of the past, there comes to the ear of philosophy and of religion a voice of warning and of wisdom. . . . The past speaks of the perfectibility of human nature. Greatness is only comparative. It implies that one is above another. . . . In estimating greatness we usually limit out companions to the present, but in estimating the improvements of man and his progress toward perfection, we compare one age with another. . . .¹³

The essay, To an Absent Child, gives a good picture of his family life.

Come home, my lovely child, come home. Too long thou hast been absent. I miss thee, my dear one--miss thee at morning, when rising from my bed I hear not thy cheerful voice. I miss thee at the table, when looking around on my loved ones. I see thy seat vacant. I listen in vain for thy sweet voice, when we read in family circle, at the hour of morning devotion, the lessons of holy inspiration. I miss thee as I pass the window where thou thoughtful were seated with thy bird and thy book. I miss thee at Rosabower, where the violets are blooming over thy sister's grave. I miss thee at my study in the sequestered vale, where thou did not often come, with thy sweet smile and joyous voice to cheer my sad heart. I miss thee at twilight from the garden walks around our humble cottage. I miss thee at night when I look on my sleeping loved ones, but see thee not.

I think of thee when absent--think of thee too much. I think of the hours when first I heard thy young voice, and looked on thy infant features, and clasped thee to my glad heart.

I think of the pleasant summer evenings when thou, a tiny little child, wouldst run to meet me returning home, and trip along, light as the fawn with arms outstretched for an embrace, and lips ready for a kiss. I think of the blessed hour, on that vernal Sabbath evening, when I led thee to

¹³ William C. Larrabee, Rosabower. (Cincinnati: R. P. Thompson, 1855). p. 52-62.

altar of prayer, and saw thee give thy hand to the Church and thy heart to God. I think of the sad hour when I saw thee approach the bier, as the coffin lid was falling, forever to shut out the light of earth from the fair face of thy only sister, and imprint the last farewell kiss on her pale brow.

And now, my child, come home. Thy mother's eyes are sleepless for thy return. Thy little brother asks, 'Why don't Ellen come?' And I, Alas! hour after hours I wander sadly about the garden where together we picked the ripened fruit, and the forest where we gathered wild-wood flowers, and I sit under the old tree at the bower, pensive and lonely. Come back, then, My Child, and smile on me once more. Come back and sing me the song I love to hear. Come back, and let me hear again the halls of home resound with thy voice.¹⁴

Larrabee ends this book with the following quotation:

The beautiful pine that now waves and sighs mournfully in the wind over the grave of my child, may soon--alas! none know how soon--play, in summer breeze and wintry storm, the dirge of him who planted it. Who, then will come here at early morn, and at evening twilight, to watch over the trees, and the flowers, and the grave? Little do we know, when we plant a tree, who will gather its fruit, or sit under its shade.¹⁵

¹⁴ William C. Larrabee, Rosabower. (Cincinnati: R. P. Thompson, 1855). pp. 150-151.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 281.

CHAPTER V

STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

I. FIRST TERM: NOVEMBER 8, 1852 TO NOVEMBER 8, 1854

Dr. Larrabee was elected State Superintendent (the first to hold that office in Indiana) and entered upon the duties of his office in the fall of 1852. His duties were difficult because there were no court decisions or department rulings and few laws to guide him. He had to render opinions and establish precedents upon many points of school law. He had to reorganize the whole school system of Indiana. In his reorganization he traveled over much of the state, personally inspecting and assisting in the work of organization.

The importance of his labors in the office are shown by the following:

Dr. Larrabee remained at Indiana Asbury University (DePauw University) until 1852, when he was elected Superintendent of Public Instruction, and was the first the state ever had, and while in that office he laid the foundation for Indiana's present school system.¹⁶

The Superintendent was required to make a departmental report at the end of each year. Larrabee's first report was made in December, 1852, a little over a month after he assumed the office. The report was in the form of discussion of

¹⁶ William W. Sweet, Circuit-Rider Days in Indiana. (Indianapolis: W. K. Stewart Company, 1916). p.

topics such as school systems, school funds and their sources, free schools for all, women teachers, teacher training schools, school houses, institutes, and other topics relating to school work. This report showed Dr. Larrabee to be very "far sighted" in school work. The following quotation from his first Superintendent's report, shows what he thought the future educational condition of Indiana to be:

The day will come, when the blessed light of science shall greet the eye and cheer the heart of every child in Indiana. Might I but live to see the day, I would then contented die. Should I have the consolation of believing I had contributed in ever so light a degree to the glorious result, I should feel that I had lived to some purpose; I should feel that my work was done. Happy and cheerful would I lie down to sleep my last long sleep, by the side of the loved ones whom I have laid to rest in the soil of Indiana, leaving my surviving children denizens of the State, of whose position among her sister states, I could but be proud, and of whose destiny in the onward progress to the perfection of human improvements, I could but entertain the most sanguine hopes, and the most cheering assurance.¹⁷

The first section gives a good explanation of what he thought his duties as Superintendent were and some very fine arguments for free schools and a general taxing system for school support.

Mr. Larrabee pointed out the impossibility of giving a complete report so soon after having assumed the duties as Superintendent of Public Instruction. He did review the conditions of the school system and emphasized the fact that

¹⁷ William C. Larrabee, Indiana Reports of Superintendent of Public Instruction. (Indianapolis: J. P. Chapman, State Printer, 1853). p. 76.

to have a good and uniform system it was necessary for some to sacrifice. He explained to the people the duties of the legislature in making laws, and in correcting the errors which existed in the school laws.

He praised the system of public education provided by the act of the Legislature of 1852. He acknowledged some errors in the act, but said that when those errors and imperfections were removed, he believed the educational system of Indiana would be better adapted, to the wants of the people, than was the system of any other state in the union.

In his argument for a uniform taxing system for the support of schools, he argued for a display of public spirit. In his attempt to point this out to the people of Indiana, he illustrated by saying that certain sections of the country paid more to the support of the posted system than was expended in that particular section. He also said that we were unselfish in the support of the State Government, of the Army and Navy, and of religious and Charitable institutions. He then appealed to them to be public spirited in the support of the educational system.

The good points of the system were emphasized. He wanted the people to realize the value of a system in which all common schools would be open to the pupils without charge. He also said that a school system which makes possible equal opportunity in education for all serves as an intergrating agency for all classes of people.¹⁸

¹⁸ For complete report see appendix.

The second annual report of the State Superintendent was more elaborate than the first; however, the school laws enacted during the first legislative session (under the new constitution) were not yet in operation, and many trustees failed to make complete reports to the Superintendent. This condition prevented as complete a report as the Superintendent would have liked to have made. The second annual report indicated the most outstanding weaknesses of the system. Among the needed improvements were the following:

(1) The various duties of the trustees made it very necessary that the very ablest and best men in the township should be selected as trustees.

(2) Everybody should become acquainted with the new system of public instruction.

(3) Many new schoolhouses were needed. Indiana was the first state to abolish the district system.

(4) There was a great scarcity of able teachers. Qualifications for teachers were higher in cities than in rural districts.

The second Superintendent's report causes us to believe that Larrabee believed in a uniform school system, having the same branches and uniform textbooks. He also emphasized the fact that he did not think it the work of the school to give religious instruction. The following pointed out his belief:

In no other way than by general and uniform system of free schools, can we produce among us the oneness, the homogenousness, so essential to our political and moral health, our prosperity as a State, and permanence as a people.

In all our schools should be taught, as nearly as possible, the same branches, and from the same books. We should limit our instructions to matters of science, leaving religious instructions for the family, the Sunday school and the Church.¹⁹

Dr. Larrabee's term of office expired on November 8, 1854; therefore he did not make a third annual report which would have included a report on his second year in office. However, the third annual report of the State Superintendent was made by his successor, Caleb Mills. This report told very little of Larrabee's work for his second year.

Caleb Mills in his first Superintendent's report emphasized some of the accomplishments of the State Superintendent. He pointed with pride to the progress made in the number of schools added, the number of township libraries, the progress in organization, and the general attitude toward free schools. However, he does not mention Larrabee's name in connection with the above mentioned accomplishments, but this occurred before his superintendency, and undoubtedly should be to Dr. Larrabee's leadership.

II. SECOND TERM: FEBRUARY 10, 1857 TO JANUARY 1859

Larrabee's second administration was almost like building anew a school system because of the collapse of a false and unconstitutional system. The General Assembly of 1852 passed an act to provide for a general and uniform system of Common Schools and matters properly connected therewith. This act

¹⁹ William C. Larrabee, Second Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. (Indianapolis: Austin H. Brown, State Printer, 1855). p. 31.

brought on dissatisfaction which led to many law suits. The act was finally declared unconstitutional, and it was the unconstitutionality of the act which made necessary the revision of the school system.

Under the School Law of 1852 there were four different kinds of tax authorized: (1) a state property tax; (2) a township property tax; (3) a state poll tax; (4) a township poll tax. Money raised by all the four sources was to be used for support of common schools.

That part of the law which authorized the levying of township taxes was the first to be contested in the courts as to its constitutionality. The section which was contested provided that the voters of any township should,

have power at any general or special meeting to vote a tax for the purpose of building or repairing schoolhouses and purchasing sites therefor, providing fuel, furniture, maps, apparatus, libraries or the increase thereof, or to discharge debts incurred therefor, and for continuing their schools after public funds have been expended, to an amount not exceeding annually fifty cents on each one hundred dollars of property and fifty cents on each poll.²⁰

Those opposing this part of the law held that, while the state through its legislature had the power under the constitution to levy taxes with the state as a unit, it did not have the authority under the constitution to delegate this authority to local units. A case was carried to the Supreme Court²¹ and the decision rendered was most disastrous just at the time the

²⁰ Revised Statutes, 1852, p. 444.

²¹ Greencastle Township vs. Black, Indiana Reports, 557.

Public schools began to be appreciated. The decision stated that tuition revenues could only originate in the legislature, and should be uniform for the state.

Dr. Larrabee took an active part in the formation of bills, relating to schools, which became laws in 1855. While these laws had many defects they created a system upon which our present system has been built. It was his duty as Superintendent to point out the weaknesses of the new laws and to remedy those weaknesses where possible by means of departmental rulings and by influencing legislative measures.

To evaluate his services to Indiana education while he was the head of the school system is very difficult. However, being the first Superintendent his tasks were more difficult than they otherwise would have been. People generally accept a new form of government with criticism and Dr. Larrabee met a great deal of criticism.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY

I. HIS CONTRIBUTION TO EDUCATION IN INDIANA

The contributions of William C. Larrabee to education in Indiana is equal to that of the greatest of educators. He contributed mentally as well as materially to education. The six books he has written have been read by many people. The influence they have had cannot be estimated. Those who were fortunate enough to have attended his classes were inspired to higher achievements. They in turn have gone out among the people of Indiana and have carried to others some of the high ideals possessed by Larrabee. Thus, it is difficult to estimate just how much he has contributed to education in Indiana.

His greatest contribution was made while Superintendent of Public Instruction. He was the founder of our present school organization. He established precedents which are as effective as legislative measures. He advocated the increasing of public education. His ability to detect the weakness of a law and to point out this weakness to others brought about the elimination of such weaknesses. It was by his leadership that a taxing system was inaugurated which made possible free schools in Indiana.

He had the insight to see the importance of larger units for school purposes. Many of the things he advocated have come to pass in the present century. He set his goal high and worked hard to achieve it. He did not live to see many of the things he believed come to pass, but many have materialized since his time.

He, as a Methodist minister, was able to influence many who were deprived of the right to attend school. He was an instructive preacher, and we cannot dispute the fact that a person can learn from an able preacher.

Mr. Larrabee, by his simple and humble living, was an inspiration to those of his community.

II. QUOTATIONS SHOWING THE OPINION OTHERS HAD OF HIS WORK

The following quotations show what other educators thought of the work of William C. Larrabee:

When his work is measured, it will be found to have been second in importance to that of few, if any educators of his generation.²²

He retired from office in January, 1859, and, notwithstanding he failed to see the fruit of his labors as a general superintendent, as he desired, the results of his labors are yet seen; and the system of public schools inaugurated by him are now the pride and glory of the state.²³

He was a fine scholar, a great teacher, and an able administrator.²⁴

²² F. C. Holliday, Indiana Methodism. (Cincinnati: Hitchcock and Walden, 1873). p. 286.

²³ Ibid., p. 288.

²⁴ Fassett A. Cotton, Education in Indiana. (Bluffton: The Progress Publishing Company, 1934). p. 205.

Superintendent Larrabee, the first incumbent, was the pioneer for much of the work in the West. He organized the system and began the great work of the department.²⁵

In 1841 W. C. Larrabee was elected to the chair of Mathematics and Natural Science, and there are no two names in the History of Education in Indiana more important than Cyrus Nutt and William C. Larrabee.²⁶

III. CONCLUSIONS

After having studied the various written documents, both primary and secondary, which give information concerning the life and work of Mr. Larrabee the writer is convinced that his contribution has influenced education in Indiana, in several ways. First, our present organization of education had its beginning during his superintendency; second, education has been made richer by his contribution to it; third, his leadership has inspired others to higher accomplishments in education.

The New State Constitution (1851) made provisions for a uniform system of public schools, and Larrabee, the first state superintendent, was in a sense the founder of the Indiana public-school system.²⁷

We cannot definitely say that the contribution of any one person amounts to a certain quantity, but this study leads the writer to believe that the contribution of Mr. Larrabee

²⁵ Fassett A. Cotton, Education in Indiana. (Indianapolis: Wm. B. Burford, Contractor for State Printing and Binding, 1904). p. 20.

²⁶ William W. Sweet, Circuit-Rider Days in Indiana. (Indianapolis: W. K. Stewart Company, 1916). p. 66.

²⁷ _____, Dictionary of American Biography. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1933). p. 7.

to Indiana Education was and is still influencing the educational policies of our state.

CHAPTER VII

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CHAPTER VIII

APPENDIX

By law it is made my duty to present to you a report, containing a brief exhibit of my labors, the results of my experience and observations, noticing any imperfections in the operation of the system of Common Schools, and suggesting the appropriate correction. I am further required to append to my report a series of statistical tables with a statement of the condition and amount of all funds and property appropriated to purposes of education; a statement of the number of common schools in the state, the number of scholars in attendance, their ages, sex, and the branches taught; a statement of the number of private schools in the state, so far as the same can be ascertained, the number of scholars, their ages, sex and the branches taught; estimates and accounts of the expenditures of the public fund, and the plans for the management and improvement of the common school fund, and for the better organization of common schools.

So short a time has elapsed since I entered by law upon my official duties, that I cannot be reasonably expected to make a very imposing report of my labors. I have only had time to catch a passing view of the scene before me; to run a random line of operation; to draw a rough outline of the boundaries of the magnificent field; and to project plans of labor and of improvement. The statistical tables and the statement required by law, it is impossible for me to furnish in this report. The officers required by law to make the enumerations in the several townships of the State, and to report to this office, do not yet exist, except in a few counties. There is therefore, no means at our command of obtaining the materials of reporting to you accurate and satisfactory statements on several of the subjects specified in the law, and which it might be interesting and useful both to us and the legislature, and to the people to know. We will do, however, what we can. If the Legislature pleases to correct the few errors, and to remedy the few imperfections, which exist by accident, in the

school law, and which we will point out, we promise them and the people that there shall be furnished next year a full report on all matters required by law, and of interest, to the cause of public education.

With the conception, the maturing, and the passing of the 'act to provide for a general and uniform system of common schools in Indiana,' I had no lot or part. I am guiltless of the faults in the bill, if faults there be. I deserve no credit or praise for the excellencies and virtues of the system developed by the bill. When elected by the people of Indiana, Superintendent the law adopted by their representatives, and to develop to the utmost of my ability the system which they have chosen for the education of their children. If, however, I should discover 'imperfections in the operation of the system,' it is my duty to notice them, and to suggest appropriate corrections, and if I should still find, in the recess of the Legislature, imperfections in the system, I should most surely take the responsibility of correcting them so far as I could do it, in the administrative execution of the law. When once I become acquainted with the wishes, wants, and sentiments of the people, I shall most cheerfully involve myself in any personal responsibility necessary to carry out their views, and to insure the success of the enterprise, which I know they have at heart, the universal education of the children of the people.

The system of public education provided by the act of the last Legislature, is, in its fundamental principles, the only system on which we can hope for success, and which will, in the end, prove satisfactory to the people. With the exception of the errors and imperfections, which we shall point out, and which crept in unawares, and which may be easily corrected, the system is, I am fully convinced, better adapted to our wants, our condition, and our circumstances, than is the system of any other state in the union to the wants, condition, and circumstances of its citizens.

I am aware that some of the principles of the law draw largely on the public spirit, on the benevolence, and on the philanthropy of the elder and more wealthy counties of the State, and of the richer class of individuals. But what system of public education could be devised, which would not involve the necessity of some sacrifice of selfishness on the part of the more favored portions of the State, and the more fortunate class of citizens, for the

public good? Wherever any general system is adopted either for education or for any other purpose, and funds for carrying it on are raised by any species of taxation, voluntary or imposed, direct or indirect, some individuals, and some sections of the country, must, from the very source of circumstance, pay more than they receive, while others receive more than they pay. The same result will happen when several separate funds deposited among the counties are consolidated in one common State fund, and the proceeds distributed in proportion to population. But this is only a sacrifice of selfishness on the altar of public good and of philanthropy, to which we all cheerfully submit. The support of the general mail system of the United States involves great sacrifice of the selfish principle. The Atlantic States pay for postage vastly more than is expended among them for expenses of the post office department, while the Southern, and some of the Western states, receive much more than they pay. The post office system of the United States bears harder on the states of Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and New York, than does the school system of Indiana on the counties of Wayne, Dearborn, Monroe, and Franklin. And yet, when a system is evidently designed for the general good, individuals and sections, when they once understand the matter, will yield a cheerful submission to whatever burdens and inconveniences it may impose.

Immense sums are paid by the government for the support of the army and navy. We are all taxed, those of us who have families very heavily, though indirectly, to meet these expenses. And few of us derive any personal advantage from the war or navy department of the United States, we need no ships of war to defend Indiana. Yet who ever objected to bearing his portion of the taxation for army and navy purposes? The good of the country requires, the keeping up, even in peace, of the military and naval establishment of the government, and we cheerfully bear our portion of the burden.

For the support of our State government many of us pay, in the course of years, large sums of taxation, for which we personally receive little benefit. I know not how much I have paid during the last thirty years, for the judiciary administration of the laws, yet I never in my life have availed myself of the courts as a means of obtaining personal justice. And there are many citizens who never had a case in court, and perhaps never will have. Yet we all cheerfully submit to taxation for the support of the judiciary

department, because the public good is supposed to require it. I know not but I could get along very well without any legislative, judicial, or executive departments of government involving any expense. I have never yet lived in a community, among whom I would not be willing to trust myself, and my rights, without the protection of legal enactment, relying on the common sentiment, good sense, and humanity of the people. But since such condition of society might not generally exist, and such a voluntary system might not be generally practicable, we all submit to taxation for the common good.

We voluntarily act on this unselfish and philanthropic principle in all our religious and charitable associations. We build churches, employ and pay religious teachers, and support religious institutions, not for our own personal benefit. We usually fancy that we can be devotional and religious in our own quiet way. But the good of society requires expensive organizations for religious purpose, and we are willing to bear our part.

These principles of sacrifice, of selfishness, of submission to taxation of some kind for the public good, must lie at the very foundation of every form of civilized society on earth. If we proscribe the principle we must go back to a state of natural society, to barbarism, to savage independence.

The people of Indiana are a liberal, a generous, a magnanimous people. They have never demurred at any species or amount of sacrifice, which the public good might require. Among all the States of this Union, Indiana has stood forth proudly, nobly, gloriously, in the ranks of patriotism and of philanthropy. Let but our people understand that the good of this Union requires some personal sacrifice of selfishness at our hands, in favor of our sister States, and who among us would be found reluctant in making the oblation on the altar of the common weal.

And when the general interest of public education in the State requires some sacrifice from the more fortunate counties, and the more successful individuals, in favor of the more thinly peopled counties, and the poorer families, who will hesitate to act the part which honor and magnanimity require?

We have suffered ourselves to be taxed for a series of years to erect at our capital asylums for

the insane, the dumb, and the blind. We have done more. We have paid by taxation all the expenses incurred at the asylums for the support of the insane, the dumb, and the blind. This is more than any State in this Union has done. And yet no man in the State, not one, as I can learn, has ever been heard to lisp a complaint, or grumble an objection against the tax imposed for these purposes.

Such a people will most surely be slow to complain of the law, which, for the public good, consolidates the school funds of the State, and impose a slight tax on the property and the persons of the citizens, in order that we may maintain a general and uniform system of public instruction. The people have only to understand the principles we are endeavoring to sustain, and to see in practice the system we are endeavoring to develop in the State, when they will be ready with one heart and one voice to maintain the cause, and prove themselves emulous in making the sectional and personal sacrifice the system may require.

Before noticing the imperfections, I ought to call attention to some of the excellencies of our system of public education.

It is provided by the 135th section of the school law 'that all common schools shall be open to the pupils without charge.'

The principle of instruction, gratuitous to the pupil, lies at the foundation of the whole system. The townships have power, by vote of the people, at any annual or called meeting, and the cities and incorporated towns--either by a vote of the qualified voters of the corporation, or by an ordinance, to levy taxes for the support of schools, after the public funds distributed by the State are exhausted. But no rates of tuition can be required by the scholar.

This principle of free schools is not only in accordance with the genius of our free institutions, but peculiarly congenial to the social customs, the sentiments, and the habits of thought of the people of Indiana. We are pre-emminently attached to political and social equality. Among us distinctions of castes, arising from wealth, and from station, and from adventitious circumstances, are wholly unknown upper classes, middle classes, and lower classes, are not at all recognized in our social intercourse. We meet everywhere on terms of cordiality, of equality, and of mutual respect, for each other's rights, privileges and sentiments.

It is then peculiarly appropriate that our children should meet on terms equal and free in our schools. There let the poor and the rich meet together, and the State care equally for them all. The free school is ever the nursery of enterprise and of talent. It is the theatre of honorable ambition. It develops in the mind of the child the germ, which might otherwise have forever lain dormant, and it brings into efficient action principles which otherwise would never have been combined in loudable enterprise. The child of poverty and of misfortune, when once he passes the threshold of the free school, feels in his inmost soul the dawning of better days, the beginning of a new life; the uprisings of noble aspirations. He stands on equal ground with the favored of fortune, and the son of affluence. He sees open before him the way to honor, to usefulness, and to fame, a hand of encouragement beckons him onward, a voice of inspiration urges him forward and upward. Following the indications of that hand, and obeying the mandates of that voice, he knows he shall rise to the position, to which his industry and his talents may entitle him.²⁸

²⁸ William C. Larrabee, First Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. (Indianapolis: J. P. Chapman, State Printer, 1852). pp. 3-8.