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UA3/1/4 Rally Speech

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Rally Speech

President H. H. Cherry

There is no such thing as freedom without free education!

There is no such thing as liberty without a trained brain and a trained mind. When reduced to its final analysis, the Declaration of Independence is the greatest educational program ever presented in the world. In its last analysis the Declaration of Independence depends upon a healthy body, a trained mind, and a serving heart. Its fundamentals will go down if education fails.

I'm going to try to make a rally talk this morning, and I hope it will take up its place in your heart and make you militant--militant in a way you have never been before. The battle is on, and the reactionary forces are gaining some advantage in many states. Forty-one legislatures are in session in the nation today. In all of these states there seems to be a deliberate attempt to attack the advance of public education.

Now, for fear I shall not think to say it a little later, I shall say now that every teacher and every citizen must have the proper adjustment toward the economic conditions that exist. It is the duty of the teacher, of College Heights, of higher education as well as secondary education to adjust themselves to the economic conditions.

But hear me! It is hard to check the growth of the life of a child without destroying the child. It is hard to stop education without wrecking the country, and the treatment of education under these conditions should be just as liberal as possible. You can put your automobile in the garage and leave it, you can close your store and stop selling, you can stop the sails on a ship for a while, you can close banks and do other things that have to do with the development of the industrial world; but it is a dangerous thing to attempt to stop intellectual and spiritual growth of childhood.

I am a believer in public education. I am sold on it from the bottom of my feet to the top of my head, every inch of me is a champion of the child and free education. I think of any attack on public education as an attack upon the Flag, and I feel the same way about it.

Education is democracy, and democracy is education. You know that don't you? There isn't a bit of difference in the world between education and democracy in the sense that I speak. The larger democracy makes the larger education, and the larger education makes the larger democracy.

Tell me will you--I am deeply concerned! I have never won a battle in my life that I did not win before the battle came on. I am asking you to enter the cause and get behind the thing you believe in and commence now to sell education; and when the General Assembly meets, the morale will take care of education. Do it now, won't you?

I have told you the secret of the educational fight in this state. There are many things coming up. It is an unequal proposition. I want you to excuse me if I make a series of talks before you go home. I am calling upon you if you love Kentucky and the cause of education, to enlist as you have never done before for the cause of education.

I have no interest in the man who pokes around through the world. A man who could be free through education, a man who could think and won't think, is not a patriot. There is a patriotism of scholarship and higher things that is just as fundamental as patriotism on the battle line. The human being is not in the proper sense a human being until he is educated. Franklin said, "What a man adds to his head, no man can take away from him. Washington said, "Promote as a subject of primary importance institutions of general knowledge in proportion as the structure of the government gives force to public opinion; and it is essential that public opinion be enlightened."

I hope there is an unseen leader among you, a personality under your control that will spring forth into Kentucky and give the leadership that we need. If we will, we can find that super being. A generous education is one that fits man to perform justly. A man must be happy that can do skillfully and economically all the offices both private and public in peace and war. A militant education is a better safe-guard of liberty than a standing army. Can you think of a single statesman that has ever lead America in the large affairs of life that did not back up public education? There is not a president or statesman in history that has not been a champion of education.

In these times if we do not accept the challenge and do something, we will establish such an attitude toward education that would make it seem that we had to apologize. I am not going to apologize. I never have done it. I lead in a campaign for public education when there was not a high school in the state, and there were factions that were ready to drive me out of the community. Education has had a fight for every inch it has made. I am a more earnest believer in it and what it means to this country today than ever before. If you destroy education, you destroy freedom; in fact religion would go down. The cause is as high as the heavens and as deep as religion and as splendid in ideals as American freedom. Who couldn't win with that kind of a thing. Education is conviction. It is a patriotic responsibility. It is a cause. It is that thing a man possesses in life, an ideal that makes him serious. He goes forward as a soldier that can hear the bullets interpreting and selling education.

A man cannot sell anything unless he can interpret it.

I want to sell this pencil. What will you give for it? You have got to go into the need and use of it. You have got to show that it will write. You have got to interpret it before you can sell it. The same is true of the automobile and other things, you have got to visualize it. You have to interpret its use and fundamental need.

Hear this now! In salesmanship the sale takes place where you cannot see it with the physical eye. It is a decision of the mind. Real salesmanship is invisible. The next step in salesmanship is delivery. Now that is what I want you to do. I want you to interpret education yourselves and go out and interpret it to every individual in the country. You have got to know the school system and see what it means to the community, to your family, and to your kinsman. You have got to see that it is a universal proposition if you can sell it. If it is worth the battle, how many of you will go out and sell it? You cannot sell it unless you have the conviction to the point where you feel the responsibility to be a warrior and a soldier in the educational field.

The light of the world will never rise above the light of the American school house. No man can desert it without deserting his country and his flag. It is a fundamental principle. When some critic attacks it, it is because he does not understand it. Won't you become the interpreter and salesman and out there under that tree in front of the church sell education. Education is first to the individual. Find an individual and sell him. Education has not been sold. Sell education! Don't think you need an audience of two; an audience of one is a big audience if you will vitilize that life with the spirit of education and let him go out and sell it again and let it become an endless chain. Begin with the individual. Work on him. Go to his home. I am trying to sell education to College Heights so that you will go out and sell it everywhere. The biggest mission of College Heights today is to sell education. I plead with you that you get what I say and an attitude more militant than ever before.

Are you for education? Say so. If a queen were to come in here, we would all rise and cheer and wave the flag and do other things. That is right, but I want a champion for education. I want to feel that wherever you are, there is a champion of education. Go home and sell education to your brothers and sisters and get them in a state of life to sell it to somebody else.

I go back to the scene in the Northwestern part of Warren County to Halls Chapel where I attended a little log school house two or three months a year until I was twenty-one years of age. There I learned to read and write and cipher a little. You may put on one side what little I learned in that rural school and on the other side all the money in Kentucky and say to me, "Take the little learning got in that school or take the money and go through life without an education," and I will take what little I learned in the rural school. That is what I think of the public school system.

If we did not have a public school system, I have an idea this would be a convention called instead of a chapel to work out a school system. Then we would have our school system or what our school system is trying to be. You can not escape the responsibility of education. No man is a patriot who would injure the cause of education. The trouble with the whole thing is that we ourselves have not been sold on education. I believe just as firmly as I believe in education that if you were sold on education as I think I am sold, there is enough personality, power, and energy here to literally set Kentucky on fire and have every citizen behind a properly organized system of education.

What is education? What does it mean to you? What does it mean to your community? Does that farmer that sits down to the breakfast table understand that education has to do with the food on his table. The farmer who has been growing ears of corn for twenty years must discover that the nubbins are due to the thought behind the corn and not the soil. Has the somewhat mercenary individual learned yet that the source of all wealth is finally in the human brain, that all creative power is in the human brain. An ignorant people is always a poverty stricken people. Intellectual people, all things being equal, are always prosperous in the economic world. Wherever you find ignorance, you will find industrial poverty. The source of all wealth is in the creative power of the human brain. For every pound you save in education you will build five pounds in prisons and penitentiaries. Thomas Jefferson

John Ruskin says, "If the children are untaught

The school is the loom and the teachers are all weavers who weave the wonderful destinies of the nations. Horace Mann has said, "Man is not in any sense a human being until he is educated.