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INNOCENT PRISONER GRANTED PARDON

GOVERNOR RICHARDS PARDONS BEN BESS

Governor Richards, who, when Ben Bess' case was first brought to his attention by an affidavit of the prosecuting woman that she had committed perjury, suspended Bess's sentence, has granted him a full pardon. Believing however that even a pardon was not enough for Ben's 15 years of service for a crime of which he was innocnet, the Governor has written the Attorney eGneral for his opinion as to whether it would be legal to assist Bess with money from the State's contingent fund. The following is the letter of the governor:

"You are I presume from newspaper reports familiar with what is known as the Ben Bess Case.

"This Negro was convited of [illegible] in Florence County, and sentenced to serve thirty years by the late Judge R. W. Munninger. He was convicted thirteen years ago, and has been serving ever since.

"It appears from the records in the Governor's Office that grave doubt existed in the minds of many as to whether or not he was guilty even at the time of his conviction. Continuously since his incarceration, efforts have been made to secure his release. These efforts continued throughout two Administrations, but the Executrix remained firm ni her charge that this Negro was guilty, and Executive clemency was denied.

"Only very recently has this matter been called to my attention. The woman in question has made an affidavit inw hich she says that she swore falsely against this Negro, and realizing that she cannog live much longer, she desire to correct in part at least, the injury that she had done. She now declares that the Negro was not guilty of the charges upon which he was convicted. As soon as the matter was called to my attention, I suspended the Negro's sentence, and he was released. Today I am extending a full pardon.

"It is evident General although it cannot be charged that the State of South Carolina is at fault that this Negro has been made to suffer unjustly. Convictions are secured upon the evidence submitted the machinery of the courts being administered under the law. Let; in this case, there was failure of justice.

"It appears from the records that this woman is directly chargeable, as well as other witnesses in the case some of them, at least, were perjurers.

"This Negro has served South Carolina as a prisoner for thirtgen years. During this time he has not only been deprived of his liberty, but the proceeds of his labor have been appropriated by the State. I feel sure that the people of this State unite with me in feeling that insofar as restitution is posible it should be made. There is no definite way of determining just what is jus. and proper. The Negro is in destitute circumstances and I am writing to request your legal opinion as to whether or not the Contingent Fund Committee has the authority of law for making some appropriation to provide for him until the matter can be submitted to the General Assembly for its consideration."

A. M. E. Church Making Progress

Chicago, Ill., May 18— (ANP) The African Methodist Church, in all of its ramifications, "is moving along." This fact is being firmly established by the reports submitted at the general conference of the denomination, which is in session here at the Eighth Regiment Armory, 25th Street and Giles Avenue.

Day in and day out the thousand delegates and hosts of visitors, who pack the Armory which extends a full block in length, are listening to the reports of the progress the church is making, reports that have been carefully compiled and which have been submitted to the delegates so that they may take an accurate record to their constituents. So that " not a word is lost by the vast audience a microphone and amplifiers have been installed. In many instances these instruments are unnecessary as numbers of the brethren are fully capable of being heard even in the far recesses of the building.

The Episcopal Address

The Episcopal address was scored as the " greatest treatise on civilization" and "the best approach to prostitution to the marriage altar" by the episcopal address, which is a message from the bishops to the conference and delivered by a series of bishops. The address pointed to the progress of the church declaring "that in every city of any size, churches had been built, purchased or rebuilt, the membership has increased and the ministers as a whole are more cultured and better trained."

Modernism and fundamentalism were [illegible] in the address concerning the belief that the greatest work could be accomplished through "unity of religion", "unity of the church" and the "unity of man."

In pointing out the problems faced by the church in the migration of the people from the south to the north, the bishops called the attention of the conference to the "superstitions and [illegible] segregation of the people to make use of the ballot in all cases." A few recommendations were referred to the [illegible] were submitted [illegible] segregation of the people to make use of the ballot in all cases." A few recommendations were referred to the [illegible]

[illegible] the financial department showed that the denomination is enjoying a healthy financial growth. More than a million and a half dollars have been paid into the treasury and in dollar money a[illegible] there had been an increase of more than $150,000. Through the financial department many churches [illegible] and other departments of the church have been helped materially. The report was made by Mr. John R. Hawkins, secretary.

In education the A. M. E. Church is doing a great work. Conducting fifteen schools, all which reported that they were making progress and were in better shape than at the last general conference, this denomination is touching the lives of thousands of young people who are endeavoring to prepare themselves for a larger and more [illegible] life and a well-rounded citizenship.

The Methodist Book Concern, and the management of D. M. Baker, now a source of pride to all members of the church. A new building has been purchased and is modernly equipped, the volume of work carried out, and the financial report, reported by Mr. Baker, met with the approval of the conference.

Dr. R. R. Wright, Jr., told of the advance made by the Christian Recorder, of which he is the editor, in doing so, made a mighty impression in favor of his candidacy for the bishopric. This organ of the church, according to Dr. Wright, has grown in circulation and influence.

The Sessions.

The sessions have been harmonious from the beginning and while there are "rumors of war" as yet nothing has really broken the serenity of the meeting. One of the most important resolutions passed has been that the bishops who have served two or more terms in one district must be moved. While it is rumored that this did not take so well with some of the bishops, there has been no [illegible] from the bishopric. Bishop [illegible] who was presiding over the time the resolution was adopted, however, warned the delegates that the bishops would appoint themselves.

Each night as pecial programs have been rendered and many distinguished speakers have addressed the conference, including Dr. Robert R. Moton, Mayor William Hale Thompson, Dr. Shailer B. Matthews, Dean of the Theological School of Chicago University, and Dr. George E. Haynes of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America.

CONFERENCE SHOCKED BY NUMBER OF [illegible]

[illegible] ESTABLISHED RIGHT TO CONFERENCE

Howard D. Gregg, former dean of Morris Brown College, an A. M. E. school and now dean of instruction and director of Education at South Carolina State College, declared the General Conference Wednesday that the great A. M. E. Church should concentrate its educational efforts. Instead of having seventeen schools, we should have seven; instead of having eight or nine theological schools we should have only three or four. We need to draw in the lines and raise the standard of our educational institutions instead of spreading over such a large field.

Mr. Gregg in speaking of A-grade colleges affirmed that Wilberforce alone could approximate the grade of an American College. We need fewer and better schools, said the speaker. Professor Gregg is executive secretary of the national association of Deans and is recognized as having first hand information about Negro colleges in the South.

Livingston College "Growing With the South"

St. Louis, Mo., May 18—(ANP) The eyes and interest of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Conference in session here were focused on the work and progress of Livingstone College, one of the foremost colleges in the State of North Carolina and perhaps the oldest conducted under the auspices of Zion branch of the Methodist.

Friday night was 'Livingstone College Night", and as such was devoted to the interest of the institution that has furnished several bishops to the A. M. E. Zion church, hundreds of teachers to our group and leaders in every field. The purpose of the meeting was to complete [illegible] to complete the campaign for $250,000.

As Dr. W. J. Trent, president of the college, explained, this $250,000 is to be used for buildings and equipment. It includes the Price Memorial Building, a modern gymnasium, a central heating plant, and men's dormitory. [illegible] far, Negroes have contributed [illegible] toward the fund, the General Education Board made a gift of $75,000, which is one of the largest ever recorded a Negro institution of higher learning. B. N. Duke, The North Carolina philanthropists, increased the endowment fund of the college by $25,000.

Livingstone College, a Class A College

Founded [illegible] by [illegible] Salisbury, North Carolina [illegible] College now ranks [illegible] ing institutions [illegible] for Negroes and is a Class A [illegible]

(Continued on Page Eight)

S. C. WOMEN MEET IN JUNE

[illegible] CAROLINA FEDERATION [illegible] CLUBS TO MEET IN ROCK HILL JUNE 12, 13 and 14

[illegible] in the South Carolina Federation of Colored Women's Clubs to meet in Rock Hill, June 12, 13 and 14, will undoubtedly eclipse all previous sessions of the organization in plans outlined by State and local officers are carried thru. For the past few months the women have been busy outlining a practical, constructive and elevating program which will be of interest of all persons connected with problems of [illegible]

Letters have been mailed from Mrs. M. B. Wilkinson and Mrs. L. B Rowe, State President and Secretary to all clubs, urging that names of delegates be sent Mrs. Rebecca Boulware, Clinton College, Rock Hill, who heads the committee there, under auspices of the Ever Ready Club. This club though located in one of the smaller centers, is active, energetic and enthusiastic and is putting forth strenuous efforts to bring things to pass at the approaching convention. It is expected that every club in the State will be represented by two or more members.

The first Negro old School dormitory containing accommodations for thirty girls is now in process of erection, the contract having been let to E. J. Entzminger and [illegible] Columbia, several weeks ago. The building, is being rushed to every respect to being rushed toward completion, and will, it is expected, be ready for occupancy July 1st. The women of the State, who have labored faithfully to house and care for the girls entrusted to their care by the public of the State for the past few years, are looking forward to moving into the building with happy anticipations. It is remembered that the new school site was donated to Trustees by the Episcopal Church of the State.

Recently a building campaign was waged to raise supplementary funds to complete the building, and it largely thru this medium of hearty response by ministers and other public spirited persons that a fair sum was realized, sufficient to go forward with the work. At the Rock Hill meeting general routine matters will be looked into as well as a program outlining future policies for social work carried on by the Federation, especially in connection with Fairwold School.

RACE THEATRE CHAIN INCREASES BUSINESS

THREE NEW THEATRES ADDED

STAR-SCALES CIRCUIT

Announcement [illegible] from the [illegible] of Nashville, Tenn., that three new theatres have [illegible] the Stary-Scales Circuit. These new acquisitions of [illegible] Liberty theatre of Greenville, S. C., the Negro Gem Theatre [illegible], N. C., with the [illegible] of the [illegible] the Star-Scales Circuit gains national recognition as the largest circuit of Race theatres in the country. The Liberty theatre of Greenville, S. C., is one the most important of the three newly acquired houses, and was built only a few years ago at cost of approximately $100,000. This theatre is one of the finest and largest of Race theatres in the country and will be utilized by the new owners as a combination house playing both pictures and vaudeville. The two smaller theatres taken on at this time will be used for the presentation of pictures only. In addition to these three houses, it is announced by official of the Stary-Scales Circuit that deals are pending for the purchase of [illegible] more houses located in the South, and further announcements of new purchases are to be anticipated in the near future. At present the line-up of the Stary-Scales Circuit comprises the following theatres: the Bijou theatre and Lincoln theatre of Nashville, Tenn.; the Lincoln Theatre of Winston-Salem, N. C.; the Lenox theatre of Augusta, Ga.; the Lincoln theatre of Charleston, S. C.; the Royal theatre of Columbia, S. C.; the Lincoln theatre of New Bern, N. C.; the Palace theatre of Lurley, Ala.; the Liberty theatre of Greenville, S. C.; the Negle theatre of High Point, N. C.; and the New Gem theatre of Reidsville, N. C.

National Benefit Commended on Statement

Washington, D. C., May 18 The [illegible] consolidated [illegible] statement of the condition of the NATIONAL BENEFIT LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY, has evoked [illegible] of [illegible] and praise throughout the country.

Mr. R. H. Rutherford, President and [illegible], in a recent statement regarding the Financial Balance Sheet which has been published in many [illegible] newspapers, refers to it as being "the most impressive from the standpoint of financial weight ever [illegible] by a business institution of Race.

"That is in itself no small thing", Rutherford says. "It is justly a matter for pride and we are proud of it. But we of National Benefit are [illegible] to [illegible] what these impressive figures mean, the inestimable [illegible] benefits they represent, the [illegible] economic force to which they [illegible] silent, but effective witness.

"This force, the slow accumulation of three decades of growth, stands behind the individual lives and means of [illegible] of our people, not in scattered [illegible] as a whole, and its power [illegible] in turning the [illegible] of our racial industrial machine [illegible] them turning and [illegible] to [illegible] it is reserved for [illegible] to [illegible] present; the progress [illegible] National Benefit, as recorded in [illegible] of our financial statement, is a triumphant part of the progress of the race, as well as of National Benefit.

An Act of Justice.

"They feel that justice to the many thousand policyholders of that Company, which they have purchased, warrants this action in the light of the facts in the case.

"In thus safeguarding the interests of their policyholders and making good the claim that they are really striving to build racial institutions without regard for the difficulties involved, they merit the appreciation of the classes and the continued support of the whole of the Race. The Express has pride in their far vision.

"And as it was one of the first to criticize them in their step, it now is among the first to commend them for this latest action. And for this policy of criticism and commendation, as for them, has no excuse to make. It is justified in its course. More strength to them. Best success to their latest venture."

NATIONAL BAR ASSOCIATION PLANS EFFECTIVE PROGRAM

Chicago, Ill., May 18—(ANP) To enable the Negro lawyers of the country to render an even more effective service to the organizations engaged to improve the civil status of the Negro in this country, officers of the National Bar Association convened here last week and laid plans for a comprehensive program to be developed at their annual meeting next August.

The rapid strides being made by Negroes in the legal profession, the recognition given in such cities as Chicago, Washington, St. Louis, Gary and New York, where legally trained men are occupying high positions of public trust, in several of the communities including judgeships, carries with our advanced position the responsibility of even greater service to our group" said Homer G. Phillips in addressing the gathering. "The Negro lawyer with adequate ability is better able as a rule to protect the interests of the Negro client, because first of all he has a sympathetic interest and a keener understanding of the conditions which confront the colored petitioner at the bar", said Mr. Phillips. The National Bar Association is as broad in its scope and purpose as the American Bar Association except that it has no color restrictions. In fact, we have white members, a judge in St. Paul being one of our members.