

Raleigh, N.C., 2
Jan. 23, 1890 3

Judge A. W. Tongee,

Dear Sir:-

Please accept my thanks for your letter replying to my questions regarding the origin of the clauses in our constitution restricting taxation.

With your views in the main as expressed in your letter I am in entire accord. I rejoice in your criticism of a poll-tax. It is a relic of barbarism.

I am surprised that you justify the Supreme Court decision relative to the section about voting, for the Court is clearly wrong. It is wrong to make a man vote against a measure when he is for it but too sick to get out to the polls.

You and others justify it on the ground of our large illiterate voting class. An illiterate should not vote. I am convinced that but for the angry passions aroused by the war, the North would never have dreamed of forcing an illiterate suffrage upon us. If my information is correct, Massachusetts has had an educational qualification since 1857. I never have been able to see how she could force an illiterate suffrage upon us in 1868. Two wrongs don't make a right. I don't see why there should be one way to elect men to congress or the legislature and another much more difficult and altogether unjust way to raise money to carry on the government.

On account of this unfair and undemocratic decision of our Court I believe it is more difficult to get money for schools in North Carolina than in any ^{other} State in the Union. By the last report of the U. S. Commissioner of Education, I find that only about three per cent of all our school fund is raised by local taxation. It would be more but for the clause in the constitution which you wrote and for the anomalous construction put upon it by the court. I shall never believe that you intended to give the little children of North Carolina such a poor showing. The practical effect, however, is to keep them in ignorance from which as long as that

constitution stands there is absolute no escape, unless the general government comes to the rescue. Our little children can go to school but twelve weeks out of the fifty-two, generally to an incompetent teacher, not infrequently in huts unfit for pigs. And it appears that we are doomed to continue in this horrible condition for years to come. It is enough to move to tears any man with a heart in him.

All teachers ^{in the South} are not as you imagine "forever extolling what has been done." Recently I published an article on the subject in which I stated just as accurately as I possibly could the truth, and the whole truth about our deplorable condition. I hope I can get a copy of the paper. If I can, I will send it ^{to you}.

Respectfully, E. P. Moses.