

# Button Defends Self, Staff At Morehead

Defends Teachers



DR. F. C. BUTTON.

## VETS OFFER HOOVER DATA

Letter to Hoover One of  
Three Developments In  
Dry Law Controversy.

The Courier-Journal Washington Bureau  
Washington, April 14.—Firing from  
three angles began simultaneously to

Survey Group Did Not Try to  
Indicate What Persons to  
Dismiss, He Asserts.

HANDS ARE TIED, CLAIM

Cites 'Dominant Personality,'  
Charges Regents Speak  
As 'Voice of One Man.'

By GERALD GRIFFIN.

Staff Correspondent The Courier-Journal.

Morehead, Ky., April 14.—The commission appointed to make a survey of Morehead State Teachers' College and Normal School "did not undertake to say what members of the faculty and what officials should be retained or dismissed," Dr. F. C. Button, ousted president of the institution, declared in a statement here today.

Dr. Button's resignation as president of the institution was "taken under advisement," nine other members of the faculty were dismissed and six teachers granted unsolicited leaves of absence by the Board of Regents of the Morehead institution at a meeting held at Lexington March 26. The motion regarding Dr. Button's resignation and the dismissal of the faculty members was made by State Senator Alle W. Young, Morehead, chairman of the board.

Says All Have Degrees Or Diplomas.

Although the report of the survey commission lists among the difficulties of the institution the "employment of too many teachers who have not had enough educational training," Dr. Button, in his statement, point out that "all of the teachers dismissed or granted leaves of ab-

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# BUTTON DEFENDS SELF, OUSTED TEACHERS AT MOREHEAD COLLEGE

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sence have either degrees or diplomas in special departments such as music and expression."

"These facts," according to Dr. Button, "indicate that the regents have not been acting in harmony with the recommendations of the survey commission."

Other criticisms of the institution, as set out in the survey commission's report, are "a loose organization, absence of understanding of duties," and "the fact that the purpose of the school has not been worked out."

These criticisms are not attacked by Dr. Button in his statement other than that he indicates that his "hands were tied" and that "the dominant personality of the Board of Regents" would not concede to him the freedom of action necessary to the management of the school.

## Regents Speak As "One Man."

The entire membership of the Board of Regents, according to the president, speaks "as the voice of one man."

Dr. Button declares in his statement that the survey of the Morehead school was made at his instance, in order to obtain expert advice on the organization of the institution preliminary to the meeting of the Southern Association at Lexington next December, as Morehead Teachers' College then will come up for full membership in the association.

The commission made a survey of the institution, Dr. Button stated, and made a "very excellent report," which, he declares, "insofar as it refers to the presidency of the institution, is predicated on the supposition that the board should grant the president all the power and authority necessary, in order to avoid looseness of organization on account of, which, faculty members and other employes of the institution were allowed direct and confidential communication with members of the board."

## Quotas From Report.

The following quotation from the commission's report is then placed in his statement by Dr. Button:

If members of the staff go to the board, the president is left without knowledge of the situation and his authority is undermined and usefulness ended. This is a tragedy, and one too frequent in American education.

Dr. Button concludes his statement with this paragraph:

I have also been asked why I stayed in the institution with my hands tied. I feel that I have made a great mistake in so doing, but are not the hands of the great electorate of the State as completely tied in determining the educational policies of the Commonwealth?

## Text of Statement.

The statement of Dr. Button in full follows:

The Morehead State Normal School and Teachers' College was placed on the "approved" or non-membership list of colleges at the meeting of the Southern Association in Houston, Texas, in December. This means that the college will come up for full membership at the meeting in Lexington next December, as this step is preliminary to final action.

Dean W. H. Vaughn represented the president at this meeting and presented a very clear report, which was presented to the board of regents for their consideration. As one of the members said he did not have time to read the report it was thought best to have some expert advice on the organization of the institution.

I, therefore, asked Dean Paul P. Boyd and Prof. Ezra L. Gillis, registrar at the University of Kentucky, to come to Morehead for the purpose of making recommendations for the benefit of the Teachers' College. This they very kindly did and, in conference with myself and some other members of the Morehead faculty, Mr. Gillis suggested that a formal survey of the institution be made. Mr. Gillis then saw Senator Allie W. Young and suggested a list of persons who would make a good survey commission.

The Board of Regents selected Doctors Works and Judd of Chicago University, and President Frank L. McVey of the University of Kentucky to make the survey. Dr. Judd, declining to serve, Mr. Gillis was appointed in his place. The survey commission came to Morehead and began its work.

## Calls Report Excellent.

The very excellent report of the survey commission, insofar as it refers to the presidency of the institution, is predicated on the supposition that the board should grant the president all the power and authority necessary, in order to avoid looseness of organization on

account of which faculty members and other employes of the institution were allowed direct and confidential communication with members of the board.

The report is so clear on this point that I cannot refrain from quoting the exact language as follows:

"One of the great friction points in college administration is found in the relations of the president of the board and of the board to the faculty and president. There must be some agency which acts as the responsible head of a project, be it commercial or educational. That head is the president. Through him, all matters affecting the business and instruction of the institution should go. If members of the staff go to the board, the president is left without knowledge of the situation and his authority is undermined and usefulness ended. This is a tragedy and one too frequent in American education."

#### **Says Authority Not Recognized.**

It was agreed by all parties, as I understand it, that the fundamental trouble with the school was that the authority of the president was not duly recognized in the organization. I then stated to the commission that if the dominant personality of the Board of Regents would not concede to me the freedom of action necessary to the management of the school, it would be better to have another president selected.

I went to Senator Young and talked over the matter with him, in a friendly way. It was conceded that I should not present my resignation in a formal way, but drop out of the picture if and when it seemed best to select a new president. It was understood that this matter should be kept in confidence, as the board did not want to be besieged by persons applying for the position. This was still my understanding of the situation until my return from the meeting at Lexington, March 29, but on returning to Morehead I found that I had been asked to resign, and this is also evidenced by a subsequent statement of Senator Young in the Lexington Herald.

I have been asked if there is any dissension in the Board of Regents. There is absolutely none. They all speak as the voice of one man.

Many good men have been mentioned for the position of president, among them, Dr. W. S. Taylor of the University of Kentucky; Dr. Jesse Adams of the University of Kentucky; Prof. Joseph Roemer of the University of Florida; Prof. J. B. Holloway of the State Department of Education, and Judge Earl W. Senff of Mt. Sterling, secretary of the Board of Regents.

Any good man can succeed as president on condition that he be given a free hand in the educational policy of the institution in conformity with the suggestion made by the survey commission.

#### **Would Diversify Representation.**

Fundamental to the success of the school is the reorganization, at an early date, of the Board of Regents. This statement is without any reflection on the board as now constituted, but the board is concentrated in three counties of the State and the great mountain constituency is without representation. Some members should be appointed from the great territory which the institution was founded primarily to serve.

Several different reasons have been given for the removal of the faculty and the report of the survey commission has been given as one of the reasons for this action. It has also been stated that the members of the faculty removed are not qualified for their positions. Of this number, Prof. S. H. McQuire has his Master's degree from the University of Kentucky. He is the principal of the high school or normal department and is eminently qualified for this position.

Miss Bettie Robinson, teacher of English, has the Bachelor's degree from Georgetown College and her Master's degree from Columbia University, together with a supervisor's certificate from the latter institution. Last year, in order to equip herself more completely for the teaching of English, she spent the summer in England and Scotland.

Miss Lola Traylor of the Modern Language Department is a graduate of the University of Kentucky and holds a Master's degree from Columbia University.

The survey report, instead of recommending her dismissal, recommended that, with a little more preparation, she could be placed at the head of the foreign language department of the institution.

#### **Regents, Survey Not In Harmony.**

All of the other teachers dismissed or granted leaves of absence have either degrees or diplomas in special departments such as music and expression. These facts indicate that the regents have not been acting in harmony with the recommendations of the survey commission. In fact, the survey commission did not undertake to say what members of the faculty and what officials should be retained or dismissed.

I have just seen a statement in one of the papers that the enrollment in the college department of the institution is only 130. I cannot believe that this statement was given out advisedly as the present enrollment in the college department is 324, and the enrollment in the normal department is 389. The persons who were notified that they need not return to the institution are not in the college department at all, with three exceptions. My understanding is also that the action of the survey commission was that they were not to make suggestions in regard to the high school or normal faculty but concerning the high school faculty.

I have also been asked why I stayed in the institution with my hands tied. I feel that I have made a great mistake in so doing, but are not the hands of the great electorate of the State as completely tied in determining the educational policies of the Commonwealth?