

MAY 1914

which we feel toward Mrs. Anna Russell Cole,¹ the founder of this organization, for her generosity and foresight in making such a meeting as this possible.

I wish also to make known our gratitude to Governor Mann,² Dr. McCulloch, and other leaders who are devoting themselves with such unflagging enthusiasm to the task of making this great organization practically useful to both races in the South.

In the brief space that has been allotted to me on this program, I want to speak of some special ways in which it seems to me this Congress can promote the welfare of the people of the South.

First of all, it can serve as a medium for direct and candid expression of opinion on the part of the members of both races in regard to matters of common interest. No one living in the South, or out of the South, should expect everything to be done in a day. When we consider all that the South has been called upon to do and to bear in connection with the readjustment of its economic and social program, the wonder is that so much has been accomplished within so brief a space of time. What we want to be sure of is that progress in the right direction is constant and steady. One direction in which meetings of this kind can help is in bringing about a better understanding between the races. In spite of difficulties that grow out of the situation in the South, the races have many fundamental interests in common and there is much that should be done for the welfare of each race which can only be done with the hearty cooperation of both.

How can the negro in the South do his part, through this organization, to bring about better conditions? The leaders of our people, for example, can do much to spread the influence of this meeting to all parts of the South. They can let the masses of the people know that there is an organization made up of Southern white people who are interested in their welfare, to whom they can speak frankly about their desires and their needs. The influence of this meeting spread abroad among the masses of the colored people will lead them to feel that the South is their home, and that they have a share, no matter how humble, in all its weal and woe, in everything that concerns its welfare.

We should learn from this meeting, all of us, to manifest as much pride in whatever concerns our own community, our own city, or our own State as the white people do. We should feel as much humiliation on account of anything that hurts the reputation of the community in which we live as is true of the white race.