

ADDRESS OF MR. MACGREGOR

Mr. MacGregor: Mr. President and my Friends: Here in Detroit during this convention of ours, time is very precious. I do not wish to take up too much of it. What am I to talk about? About my friends? I will say that we have many good friends with poor judgment. These friends know nothing about teaching the deaf. The other day, a press dispatch was sent broadcast over the country from Washington, D. C., saying that doctors have taken an interest in the deaf. I felt good. Then I found that it meant that they could fix deaf ears with a brace and bit, figuratively speaking. Doctors don't teach. I know doctors pretty well. If your leg is no good, let them cut it off. If your ear is no good, let them cut it off. That's their business. But when doctors trespass in the realm of education, they are out of their sphere. Doctors have much influence. You and I know that. If people find a child deaf, whom do they first consult? A doctor. The doctor takes out the child's tonsils, mayhap performs sundry other operations, and advises a school for the deaf. Do parents know anything about such schools? They generally do not. The doctor will tell them the child should learn no signs. He must be taught by speech, to say things with his mouth. Mayhap they will try to teach him to say "bread," but the child may die of starvation before he learns. Many deaf children are sent through the mill in this manner, and their minds are closed forever. That is poor advice. Are doctors to blame for this? No. The oralists mislead them with their literature. Shall we remain silent and do nothing? No. The National Association of the Deaf has the power to check such things. The oralists are going to ask Congress, according to this press dispatch, to give them money to put all deaf children in day schools. The report may be garbled, but it would be wise to select a committee in Washington to watch legislation in Congress. These oralists are slick, and the N. A. D. must oppose them with all its power. It is our duty, our business to enlighten the public concerning the deaf.