

THE ADDRESS.

GENTLEMEN AND FELLOW-CITIZENS: The purpose for which we have assembled in this Conference is one of grave concern to us as a race, and as a part of the body politic of this commonwealth. The framers of the organic law of this nation and of this State foresaw from ripe experience in public affairs that just such assemblages as this of to-day would be necessary from time to time, to discuss the great needs of the people, set forth their grievances and adopt measures and courses of action that will lead to an improvement of their condition. Hence, the first amendment to the Constitution of the United States, and the ninth and tenth sections of the declaration of rights in the constitution of Florida declare that "no laws shall be made abridging the freedom of speech or of the press, nor of the people peaceably to assemble and consult for the common good, and petition the Government for a redress of their grievances." And in order not to abuse the privilege accorded us by the organic law of the land, it is important that such wisdom and cool judgment should prevail our council, and such careful thought and deliberation should characterize our work as will reflect credit upon this body.

We have met, then, to calmly, carefully, completely, and manly discuss our condition from every needed standpoint, and to determine upon a prudent course of united action that will commend itself to the cordial support of all lovers of justice and fair play to our people, and of the prosperity of the State of Florida.

The call for this Conference, which is the guide to the channel of our deliberations, sets above all other things our grievances; and to our views upon them, let us have your careful attention.

What are public grievances?

Public grievances are any injuries that are inflicted upon the people, or any class of the people of a State by the imposition of oppressive laws, without just cause; or injuries that arise from the failure of the Government to make and enforce such salutary laws as are necessary to a full and complete protection of the people, and to promote the peace, good order, and general welfare of the State.