

PRES. EARLY REPLIES TO CHARGES

In a statement issued Sunday by Prof. Early he takes up in detail allegations made by State Superintendent Williams, the following being a portion of his statement:

"In Superintendent Williams' statement on June 22, he undertakes to assure the public that he was setting forth the facts in reply to my statement following the effort of the state board to dismiss me on June 18. If he construes these distortions of the truth to be facts, he must, indeed have the usual hazy idea of what constitutes a fact that so manifestly permeates the Roberts administration.

"Mr. Williams knows very well that he is speaking for the Governor and that his activity is nothing more than the expressed wish of the Governor. The facts do not warrant the shifting of this responsibility.

"I have been loath to believe that Mr. Williams would undertake to destroy my character, and I have, therefore given several days in which to correct this serious charge. He charges that I collected \$800 from the United States Government for the rental of buildings belonging to one W. D. Sloan and paid said Sloan only \$400. He tries to establish this fact (?) by a letter from some clerk in Washington without the slightest investigation of the record of the bookkeeper's office of Tennessee Polytechnic Institute.

"If Mr. Williams had put forth the least effort to find out the truth or falsity of this statement, he could have ascertained the facts. A true copy of every item charged to the Government is on file in the office of the bookkeeper, and he could have had access to these records any day.

"Only \$400 was charged to the Government on this item and \$400 was paid to Mr. Sloan.

"From Mr. Williams' statement one would infer that this overcharge was made and converted to my individual use. Every dollar collected from the Government and every check paid out went through the regular channels of the bookkeepers' office.

"If this charge of Mr. Williams is true, I am guilty of a grave felonious offense for which I should be prosecuted, and it is of such character that it should be thoroughly investigated by the Governor, and if, upon the closest investigation it is found to be untrue, the Governor in the interest of the public school system of the state, which receives more than one third of the gross revenues of the state, can do nothing more than call upon Mr. Williams for his resignation, for a man who would utter so slanderous a statement should not be retained at the head of the most important department of the state government.

"One would infer from Mr. Williams' facts that the board was unanimous in the effort to remove me. Four members of the board appointed by the previous administration voted for my continuance, while every member of the board appointed by Governor Roberts voted against me.

"And that was not all. In order to secure a majority of one against me it was necessary for the State Superintendent to vote against me, and he has no legal authority to vote at all.

"My information is that Prof. Q. M. Smith is an excellent gentleman and should be undertake the work of president he will have my co-operation, for the continued usefulness of Tennessee Polytechnic Institute is my greatest concern.

"Mr. Williams states that "it would be impossible to retain certain members of the faculty and still retain Mr. Early."

"Prof. C. D. Daniel's case represents another illustration of Mr. Williams' idea of a fact. Mr. Williams, perhaps does not know that immediately after the resignation of Mr. Daniel as dean of the institution, he made the statement to friends here that he offered his resignation because he believed the Governor had it in his mind to get rid of him, and also that he could secure a much larger salary.

"When I was elected four years ago several members of the state board had been personally acquainted with my work for a number of years. I have been reelected twice since then. The success and far-reaching influence of this institution speaks for itself as to my ability as an organizer and administrator. No member of the board or any one else has ever been told by me that I had a master of arts degree.

The price of success to me has been paid in toil and sacrifice. The essential factor in this discussion should be whether or not the work of the Tennessee Polytechnic Institute has been successful.

"Mr. Williams may also be assured that I have not the slightest fear of any mud batteries that may be organized by the methods indicated in his statement to the public. Those who know me know very well that the impelling motive of my life has been that of service. And in time, complete vindication will come to me from the people of Tennessee and from men who are big enough to see things in the aggregate and I have faith that I am going to be one of the men in Tennessee who will help to take our school system out of the mess of politics into which the present administration has plunged it.

THOS. A. EARLY
Cookeville, Tenn., June 27, 1920.