

FOREWORD

Country teacher training has been given special emphasis by the United States Department of Education during the past few years. Various ways have been provided to give country-school teachers that training which under existing conditions will best equip them for their work. A number of factors have to be taken into consideration when demanding certain qualifications of the prospective country school teachers. The most important of these factors are adequate facilities for those of teacher training and a sufficient number of teachers. Standards cannot be placed so high that the supply is inadequate. Neither can standards be imposed without providing an opportunity to meet them.

In the United States, four types of schools have been entrusted with the work of country teacher training,—namely, colleges and universities, normals, high schools, and a special type known as county training schools or county normals, such as we have in Wisconsin. But few of the persons trained in the first two groups go into country schools to teach. Some of their most efficient graduates have done much for country schools through training teachers for them. Wisconsin is training country teachers in high schools, in county training schools, and in some of the state normal schools. A few years ago a law was passed providing for the training of teachers in all high schools where application was made by pupils for such instruction. Almost invariably the instruction that was given at that stage of our development was perfunctory and bookish. Realizing that the high schools could not be counted upon to deal with this problem in a serious and efficient manner, the state established county training schools.

The course of study in the beginning was only one year in length and pupils who were graduates of a country school course or the eighth grade in a graded system, might enter. As time went on the schools found it possible to double the requirements for graduation and two year courses were established. At the same time more and more high school students or even high school graduates entered the county training school until today a fair percentage of the students in our training schools are high school graduates. A number of schools have gone beyond the two-year course. These schools have always been flexible in character and have adjusted themselves as best they might to the local condition within the limits prescribed by law and the state department of education.

Some of the normal schools in Wisconsin are paralleling the work of county training schools in respect to the training of country teachers. There is also provision in the normal schools at the present time for offering a two year course for country teachers beyond high school graduation. The state provides a bonus of \$10 per month for the first year and \$15 a month thereafter to be added to the salary of such teacher beyond the amount paid by the local school board when such service is rendered in country districts. There are twenty-seven high schools in which the state pays the salary of the teacher who has immediate charge of the pupils who are training for this work. Pupils taking the high school training course require four years beyond the eighth grade to graduate. The work of the last two years of the course is differentiated and at least one year of strictly professional work is given during these years. In these schools satisfactory work is being accomplished.

The laws of the state at the present time require at least one year of academic work and one year of professional training beyond the eighth grade, or graduation from a country school. This minimum standard is not satisfactory and it would seem that the time is not distant when the state will require at least two years of special training beyond a four-year high school course. This is the least amount of preparation that can be regarded as satisfactory when requirements for teaching in other schools are taken into consideration.

The county training schools have made an excellent record for themselves in the past fifteen years in this state. They seem to be an indispensable part of our educational machinery. The results of high school training have likewise proved satisfactory in the sense that the training classes are doing as well as could be expected of them under the circumstances. The aid of the high school is imperatively needed at this time to supplement the county training school and normal school output of country teachers. It must be expected, however, that with the exception of high schools in which the principal is to an unusual degree interested in the problem of training teachers, the work of training will not have the momentum and the singleness of purpose to be found in institutions devoting themselves wholly to the training of teachers. It is highly desirable to confine the work of high school training to high school graduates in the near future.

I trust that the information given in this pamphlet will answer the inquiries which have come to this department during the past few years, and will furnish a basis on which a better foundation for the future country schools may be built.

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State Superintendent.