

VIII. THE COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT AND SUPERVISING TEACHER

1. The County Superintendent an Important Factor

It must inevitably happen at times that men and women engaged in the training of country-school teachers enter upon their work strangers to the county whose teachers they are training. In very few cases are they in the beginning intimately acquainted with the country schools of the county. It is imperative that they become well acquainted with the county and country conditions.

Whether this can be done in a short time and under encouraging circumstances depends very largely upon the county superintendent. No person should be able to say after teaching two months in any school training country teachers, that she has not had at least a few conferences with the county superintendent or the supervising teacher in regard to conditions in the county.

The reports in the office of the state superintendent show that a number of county superintendents are visiting training departments several times a year; others do not seem to have yet come to the realization that such visitation is necessary.

2. Circulars Sent to Teachers

If a county superintendent has on file in his office annuals, reports, and circular letters which can readily be consulted by the stranger who is helping educate the teachers for his county, she should avail herself of these aids.

A number of county superintendents in this state are issuing excellent annuals and school papers. These deserve careful study by training teachers and students. The county superintendent should make it a practice to send to the training school enough copies of any literature which he sends out to provide every senior student with a copy. He should expect that training teachers will be ready to write articles for whatever publications he issues. He should ask them to help him in conducting institutes and meetings for country teachers.

3. Reporting on The Work of Alumni

The county superintendent may further cooperate by reporting to training institutions the kind of work done by their graduates. When the county superintendent or the supervising teacher visits a graduate of a training school he should send a duplicate of the report which he fills out to the training school. After a number of graduates have been visited by the county superintendent or the supervising teacher, a conference should be held with the training teachers.

If the teachers turned out by any school which trains teachers for the county are not doing work up to the standard of the teachers trained by

other schools, the county superintendent should discover the causes and help the training teachers to improve the training given students. It is profitable for county superintendents and supervising teachers to remember that an hour spent in a training school may do for thirty students what it will take thirty hours to do for them when they are scattered over a county.

4. The Importance of Diploma Examinations

The county superintendent may be of much help in advising the brightest pupils from country schools to take teacher training eventually. By the credit he gives for home project work and by the kind of questions he asks in his diploma examinations, and by the way he conducts them, he may be of still further assistance. We should realize the great role that these tests play in the progress of pupils.

Training students should be sent out interested in the fact that the Manual suggests that the regular oral work of pupils, their regular written work, their intelligence and their general reading should be taken into account by the county superintendent and supervising teacher during the year preceding their taking a diploma examination. When country teachers are ready to cooperate in regard to a high standard of daily work, we shall not have as many poorly prepared children sent out from country schools equipped with a diploma. (See the Manual for further suggestions, page 323.)

The central plan for examinations as well as the central commencement exercises for country schools, held in a number of counties, are to be highly commended. The extension of such exercises will do much to awaken a desire in many children to gain a country school diploma. Training schools are an important factor in furthering their extension, and so in helping to carry out the injunction of Dean Bailey of Cornell: "The man who tills the soil must be educated. There is more need on the side of the public welfare, to educate this man than any other man."