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THE DEVELOPMENT OF CENTRALIZATION IN ADMINIS-
TRATION OF EDUCATION IN THE STATE OF MINNESOTA.

A THESIS

Submitted to the Faculty of the
GRADUATE SCHOOL

of the

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

by

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In partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree

of

Master of Arts.

May, 1910.

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Chapter 1.

Introduction.

To establish a system of schools which will enable every child to secure the benefits of an education and to make such a system efficient are among the important functions which any state, founded upon the principles of popular sovereignty, must undertake. When the power of government reposes in the people it becomes necessary to educate them not only to follow and obey, but to give them a capacity for deliberation and self control, the more necessary when they are to be their own leaders.

An ideal educational system is one that offers to every child in the state an education which has at least these three characteristics. (1) It enables him to attain the greatest proficiency, which his mental and physical condition will permit, in performing the labors of the vocation which he selects for himself. (2) It creates

a deep realization of his duty and obligation to his community, his state and his country and enables him to perform these duties intelligently. And (3) it makes him acquainted with high ideals and gives him a keen appreciation of the influences that tend to lead into high planes of thought and activity.

To promote extensive education of a type that approaches this ideal is a work of such magnitude and of such importance to the individual and the state that the latter becomes the only agent capable of undertaking it with any assurance of success.

The importance of education has been recognized by the men who have been leaders in the political life of our country and they have given it a prominent place in their consideration. This is indicated by words like these.

"On the diffusion of education among the people rest the preservation and perpetuation of our free institutions". (Webster)

"Promote as an object of primary importance institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge. In proportion as the structure of a government gives force to public opinion, it is essential that public opinion

should be enlightened." (Washington)

The men of the Continental Congress expressed themselves in the ordinance of 1787 in the following words,

"Religion, morality and knowledge being necessary to good government and happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged."

But what speaks even louder than their words was the ordinance passed by that body in 1785 entitled "An Ordinance for ascertaining the Mode of disposing of Lands in the Western Territory," and which contained this clause

"There shall be reserved the lot number 16 of every township for the maintenance of public schools within the said township."

This was the first public land grant which concerns Minnesota. A second grant was made in 1848, when the Oregon Territory became established, by which section 36 of every township was also set aside for the support of schools. This made one sixteenth of the public domain which was set aside and reserved to be granted to the States and Territories for the development of their schools.

All states organized since that date have received two sections of land out of every township for the

support of education.

When Minnesota was organized as a Territory in 1849 this reservation was again made by Congress on behalf of the schools to be established, ⁽¹⁾ and the same was made in the Enabling Act of 1857, ⁽²⁾ giving this state about 3,000,000 acres of land for the promotion of education. ⁽³⁾ The grant was formally made in 1861.

In 1851 a grant of 72 sections was made by Congress ⁽⁴⁾ for the support of a university in the Territory.

These liberal grants can be taken as indicative of the national attitude toward education, and others both of land and money were to follow. No conditions were imposed upon the Territory except that these resources could be used for no other purposes than those for which they were intended. The planning and working out of a system was left to the Territory and the State.

Rapid development was rendered impossible by local conditions. The population was sparse even in the centers and most of the people were poor. Lack of railroads in the early years, financial stringencies, the Civil War, the Indian Outbreak, and the grasshoppers

(1) U. S. Statutes at large, 1848-49 Sess. 2 Ch. 121.

(2) U. S. Statutes at large, 1856-57 Ch. 60.

(3) U. S. Statutes at large, 1861 Ch. 10.

(4) U. S. Statutes at large 1851 Sess. 2 Ch. 10.

were all felt in Minnesota and each in turn tended to suppress development of every line of activity and our schools also suffered retardation. Besides these, indifference to education has been a force of opposition which has required time, and keen diplomacy on the part of its friends to overcome. People from many states as well as from many European countries were represented among the inhabitants of this State. Different ideals as well as different social and religious views were entertained. The first and foremost purpose of their coming to the frontier was not that of educating the children, but of bettering their condition in material ways or of gratifying a desire for adventure. It was with difficulty that the older children could be spared from work to attend school and the poor condition or absence of roads often made it difficult for the younger children to get to school. But the great obstacle at first was the difficulty of supplying the funds needed for carrying on the work. It took many years before the school lands became of value and the wonder is that there was as much willingness to sacrifice as was necessary for the pro-

gress that did take place.

Many of these conditions have changed now. The expenses of operating our school system are very heavy but are cheerfully met. Giant strides have been made toward efficiency in the system and progress is going on at present more rapidly than ever. Problems are becoming more capable of solution as the interest of the people is aroused so as to permit the operation of the best policy. Much of the progress that has been made is due largely to the control which the state has exercised over the schools, and it shall be the purpose of the writer in this paper to trace the development of this centralized control.

Chapter 2.

The Territorial Period.

The first schools within the boundaries of Minnesota were mission schools among the Indians. These may have been established as early as 1834.⁽¹⁾ In 1847, Dr. Thos. Williamson, a pioneer missionary to the Indians, undertook to promote the education of the white children of St. Paul. After examining the field and making inquiry he found that in said village there were some 36 children of school age whose parents, in many instances, were not themselves able to read, and that one woman with four children was willing to give board and room to a teacher for the tuition of her children. He wrote to the National Education Society, whose president was then Ex Governor Slade of Vermont, presenting these facts and requesting that a female teacher, free from prejudice, be

(1) Mrs. Jennie C. Gray's: Proceedings of Minn. Edu. Assn., 38th ses., P. 157.

sent there. In response to his appeal Miss Bishop came. She has left a description of her schoolhouse as follows.

"A log hovel some ten by twelve feet covered with bark and chinked with mud, and previously used as a blacksmith shop. On the sides, pegs were driven into the logs and upon them boards were laid for seats. This little log schoolhouse was located on St. Anthony Street- the old site of the First Presbyterian Church. It is also memorable in being the place where the first public school meeting was held in November, 1849, immediately after the organization of the territory." (2)

There were but two centers besides St. Paul which had at the time of the territorial organization developed so far as to furnish starting points for schools. These were St. Anthony and Stillwater with Miss Backus and Miss Hornbeck employed as teachers. These were all private elementary schools.

Other communities, though less advanced, felt or anticipated their needs, which, together with the magnificent gift of public land for school purposes suggested the propriety of prompt and positive legislation in the interest of public schools. The first territorial Governor, The Hon. Alex. Ramsey, in his message to the First Territorial Assembly, which met Sept. 3rd, 1849, expressed his keen appreciation of the importance of,

(2) Kiehle: Education in Minnesota, P. 9.

and the responsibility involved in laying a substantial foundation for a school system, in the following significant words.

"The subject of education which has ever been esteemed of the first importance, especially in all new American Communities, deserves, and I doubt not will receive, your earnest and most devoted care. From the pressure of other and more immediate wants, it is not to be expected that your school system should be very ample; yet it is desirable that whatever is done should be of a character that will readily adapt itself to the growth and increase of the country and not in future years require a violent change of system."

On Nov. 1st the last day of the session, the first school Code was passed, entitled, "An Act to Establish and (3) Maintain Common Schools". This act provided that every township containing not less than five families should be considered a school district but if any township contained more than ten families the county commissioners were authorized to divide the same into two or more districts as in their opinion would best secure the rights of the inhabitants of such township. For the support of the schools the county commissioners should lay an annual tax of 2 1/2 mills on the ad valorem amount of the assessment roll made by the county assessors for the same year, which

(3) Laws of Minn., 1849, ch. 7.

was to be collected in the same manner as the county revenue, also 15 per cent of all moneys paid into the county treasury arising from licenses granted for the sale of spirituous or other liquors, and fines collected for criminal offenses. Such moneys were to constitute a county school fund and at the annual meeting of the board of county commissioners in January of each year they were to make an apportionment of this fund among the several school districts according to the number of scholars in the district between the ages of 4 and 21 years. It was then made subject to drafts in favor of any person to whom such money was due for services as teacher and could be used in no other way. It was therefore available only after school had actually been held.

Every tax payer over 21 years of age and with 3 months residence in the district should be eligible to vote. A special tax, not to exceed six hundred dollars a year could be voted by any district for "the purchase or lease of a site for the district schoolhouse and to build, hire, or purchase, keep or repair and furnish such schoolhouse." Each district was to elect a clerk and

three trustees for a term of one year. The duties of the clerk were to keep a record of the proceedings of the school district, care for the schoolhouse, provide fuel, call meetings of the district, take the census of children of school age and collect the district school taxes. The duties of the trustees were to examine school teachers in regard to their qualifications, intellectually and morally, employ such teachers as the district might direct, examine schools and discharge such other duties as might be imposed on them by law.

If the apportionment of the county school fund was insufficient for the necessary expenses incurred in conformity with the vote of said district, the clerk was to call a special meeting to levy the balance upon the taxable property of the district.

This secured uniformity in the method of organizing districts and in providing the funds for the payment of teachers' salaries, and it made the support of schools obligatory in organized counties. The actual holding of schools was encouraged by setting the county fund aside for the payment of teachers' salaries only. Special

taxes were limited to \$600 a year. Except in case of deficiency the levying of such tax was optional with each district. The township was the basis for the district but at the same time indefinite subdivision was made possible. This freedom to subdivide was an unfortunate step although conditions may have fully justified it at the time. It made the neighborhood the basis of the district, a system which became at the same time both costly and inefficient. It was local self government reduced to absurd extremes. It was evidently the intention of the legislators that the apportionments should be made in proportion to the actual "scholars" between the ages of 4 and 21 years, but in practice the apportionment was made in proportion to the number of children in the district of school age whether or not they had been in attendance. Full records of this early period are wanting but in 1850 "St. Paul apportioned \$1,055 to three districts; St. Anthony, \$665.86 to three districts; and Stillwater had paid a teacher \$360 for nine months work, and we may presume that these sums were raised under the law of 1849."⁽⁴⁾

When the legislative assembly met in 1851 it passed

(4) Sanford Niles; Hist. of Edu. in Minn. Ch. 1, P. 18.

(In Report of U. S. Bureau of Edu. for 1902.)

an Act providing for the appointment of a Superintendent of Common Schools, by the Governor, with the advice and consent of the council, whose term of office should be two years and whose duty was to prepare and submit an annual report to the legislature containing a statement of the condition of the common schools of the territory, estimates on accounts of expenditures of school moneys, plans for the improvement, management and better organization of common schools, and all such matters relating to his office and to the common schools as he might deem expedient to communicate. He was also to introduce and recommend to the schools such text books as he deemed best adapted to their wants and to visit as many schools as practical within the organized counties of the Territory. (5) By amendments to this law it was provided that the Superintendent of Common Schools should receive an annual salary of one hundred dollars, payable semi-annually out of the treasury of the Territory. (6) This was the humble beginning of the office of State Superintendent of Public Instruction, the central adminis-

(5) Statutes of Minn., 1851, Amendments, Ch. 2, P. 30.

(6) Statutes of Minn., 1851, ch. 4, Art. 4, P. 42

trative department of Minnesota's public school system. It was endowed with no powers and given but few duties to perform. The nominal salary attached to the office did not make it possible for an incumbent to devote much of his time or attention to the work. The idea of allowing local affairs to be interfered with by any central authority was foreign to the sentiment of that time and as it later began to be introduced it met with no enthusiastic reception. The Superintendent was to give advice and make recommendations, but these had no binding force upon the districts. He was unable to compel district officers or county commissioners to make reports to him. As a result compiled reports of this early period are wanting. The nominal annual salary of this officer was increased to \$500 in 1856, but the powers vested in him remained the same, and for a part of the time, from 1856 to 1860 "The office was virtually if not technically vacant."⁽⁷⁾

The assembly of 1851 also made it the duty of the county commissioners to divide such portions of their counties, as were inhabited, into convenient school

(7) Polwell: Minnesota, P. 255.

districts, thus breaking down the township division lines and rendering the subdivision into small districts still more easy. The 15 per cent. of all fines and liquor license moneys, set aside for the support of schools, was increased to 25 per cent..

The first provision for the establishment of schools of a higher grade of work than the common schools was made at this session, by authorizing the trustees of any two or more school districts, by a concurrent vote, to agree to establish a grammar school for the older and more advanced children of the districts. ⁽⁸⁾ Here was an early recognition of the advantages to be gained from consolidation of districts for purposes which could not be accomplished by small or poor individual districts alone. It was also made the duty of every teacher to keep a register of all scholars attending school, their ages, names of parents or guardians, the time when such scholar entered and left school and the branches of study pursued, and to forward a copy of the same to the Superintendent of Common Schools at the expiration of every three months. This was perhaps more valuable as a precedent

(8) Statutes of Minn., 1851, Amendments, Ch. 2, Sec. 18.

than in producing actual results since no penalty for the neglect of this duty was attached, and the state could bring but little pressure to bear upon the teachers. Full reports were not forth coming until a later date.

An important step was taken in 1854 when the Assembly enacted a law which required school to be held for at least three months in the year before a district was entitled to its apportionment of the County school fund. The Act did not apply to very small districts which had not in excess of 12 scholars neither did it apply to new districts. This is the first attempt made by the legislative body to extend the influence of the central government in regulating local school affairs and is interesting as indicating the means which might be used as a weapon, namely, the granting or with-holding of funds. How strictly this law was adhered to may however be surmised when two years later, by a special Act the commissioners of Sibley County were authorized to "pay to the trustees of district No. 2, of said county, the proportion of the school fund of said county to which said district would have been entitled had a school been

kept in said district for the full term of three months,
any law to the contrary notwithstanding." (9)

The pecuniary conditions of the state prompted an act in 1856 which authorized the trustees of the several districts to draw from the county treasury all school moneys due the district in such sums and at such times as they deemed necessary for defraying the expenses of holding the school therein and for repairs of the school house: provided, that they first retain from such moneys a sufficient amount to pay teachers' wages for the length of time the district had decided to have school kept. (10)

This law remained in force for several years and was often an incentive to hold no more than three months of school and to employ cheap teachers so as not to be obliged to raise heavy special taxes.

In the more populous centers it was soon found that the plan under which rural districts could be organized and operated was unsatisfactory. The subdivision into several independent districts prevented cooperation, and in a town, which was naturally a unit with many interests in common, this might be desired for educational pur-

(9) Laws of Minn., 1856, Ch. 29, P. 58.

(10) Laws of Minn., 1856, Ch. 24, P.29.

poses. The need of better schools with facilities for doing advanced work developed in these urban communities. Such schools could be fostered the more easily if all were part of one system and regulated by a central board. Application for special legislation was made to the legislature and in 1856 the city of St. Paul was incorporated into one district under the direction of a Board of Education to consist of nine school inspectors to be elected from the various wards together with the mayor and the president of the Council who were to be ex officio, inspectors. ⁽¹¹⁾ This board was to have general charge of the educational affairs of the city, and have power to purchase school houses, receive the apportionment, establish bylaws and ordinances relative to the taking of the census of children between the ages of 5 and 17 years and the making of the necessary reports. They were also given power to establish rules relating to the visitation of schools, the length of time school should be kept, (which was not to be less than 3 months), the employment and examination of teachers, the books to be used, the appointment of officers etc.. The common coun-

(11) Laws of Minn., 1856, ch. 52, P. 83.

cil raised the funds for the support of the schools. A decided contrast is seen when the powers of this Board are compared with powers of the trustees of common school districts, where the authority rested very largely with the electorate, who could bind the trustees by their action in almost every instance.

In 1857 Minneapolis was organized into one school district. Here the Board of Education consisted of one person from each of the four wards and the chairman of the town council. The funds were levied by the Board and the town council. (12) Winona and Stillwater were organized into single districts a few years later. It is probable that some high school work was pursued during territorial years. The law authorizing the establishment of grammar schools and the creation of special districts, such as St. Paul and Minneapolis, gave opportunity for such work, and the list of books recommended by Territorial Superintendents indicate that it was undertaken. However the prevailing idea seems to have been that the field of secondary education would be taken care of by private academies and seminaries. A considerable num-

(12) Laws of Minn., 1857, Extra session, P. 168.

ber of these institutions were incorporated in various parts of the state during the territorial period. This was made possible by an act of the Legislative Assembly in 1853 authorizing such incorporations by any three or more persons. ⁽¹³⁾ These were in most cases under denominational auspices and some of them have attracted the attention and benevolence of wealthy men and have become recognized schools of high standing. Such was the Baldwin School in St. Paul, opened in 1853, which later, in honor of its benefactor, Charles Macalester of Philadelphia, became Macalester College. Also Hamline University, opened in Red Wing in 1857 and removed to its present location in 1859, was made a collegiate institution in 1880. Many others were incorporated during territorial days most, if not all, of which soon ceased to exist. Several others have been incorporated later and are today heavily endowed and in a flourishing condition.

Anticipating the needs of higher education as well as those of common schooling, Governor Ramsey in his message to the Territorial legislature in 1851 said

"And as the endowment of a university will also

(13) Laws of Minn., 1853, Ch. 22.

naturally attract your attention, it might be proper further to memorialize Congress for a grant of 100,000 acres of land, applicable and available at a future day for this most desirable object. The propriety of urging at this time the request arises from the importance of making an early selection with a view of securing a proportion of choice lands."

The suggested memorial was ordered on Feb. 10th and almost simultaneously, on Feb. 19th Congress passed an act authorizing and directing the Secretary of the Interior "to set apart and reserve from sale, out of any of the public lands within the Territory of Minnesota two entire townships for the use and support of a University in said Territory and for no other purposes whatsoever."⁽¹⁴⁾

On Feb. 13 an act was passed by the Territorial Assembly incorporating the University of Minnesota.⁽¹⁵⁾ This provided that the proceeds of all lands that might be granted by Congress for the support of a university were to remain a perpetual fund, the interest alone to be appropriated for the support of such university. Its government was to be vested in a Board of 12 regents, to be elected by both branches of the legislature in joint convention, with power to draw up all necessary rules and regulations, to elect a Chan-

(14) U. S. Statutes at large, 1851, Ch. 10, sec. 2.

(15) Laws of Minn., 1851, Ch. 3, P. 9.

cellor, who should be, *ex officio*, president of the board, and to appoint professors and tutors and fix their salaries, subject to the approbation of the legislature, to establish a preparatory course, to control any grant made by congress and to disburse the funds according to the provisions of that act. The University was to consist of five departments: Science, Literature and the Arts; Law; Medicine; Theory and Practice of Elementary Instruction; and Agriculture. Sectarian instruction was forbidden. This plan established another independent branch of our educational system. It was in no way connected with the common schools, but it was indirectly to be regulated and controlled by the Territory through its agent, the Board of Regents.

The first attempt to build up a university was undertaken too soon and proved a failure. A site was donated by Franklin Steele, one of the members of the Board of Regents, near the present site of the old Exposition Building. On that site a building costing \$2500, which was raised by private contributions, was erected in the summer of 1851 and school was opened

Dec. 1st with about 25 students. Work consisting chiefly of instruction in the common branches was carried on for three years at the end of which it was discontinued for the lack of funds. In 1854 the regents purchased 27 acres of the present campus for \$6000. By private contributions one thousand dollars of this amount was paid and the rest was secured by a mortgage. Mr. Steele proposed to pay into the treasury the amount which had been expended for the erection of the building on the site donated by himself, in lieu of donating the land, which proposition was accepted by the Board. In 1856 the Legislative Assembly authorized the Board of Regents to issue bonds for \$15,000 and to secure payment of said bonds with mortgages on university lands or lands which might hereafter belong to the university, \$5000 to be applied in liquidation of the debt on the site and the remaining \$10,000 to be spent in the erection of buildings. In the same year a contract was let for the erection of a building at a cost of \$49,000. In 1858 the Legislative Assembly again authorized the Board of Regents to issue bonds and to secure the same with

(16) Hon. John S. Pillsbury: Address before Alumni of the University, 1893.

(17) Laws of Minn., 1856, ch. 122, P. 173.

mortgages on university lands. This time to the amount of \$40,000.⁽¹⁸⁾ But even this did not enable them to complete the building and pay all bills. Notes were given to the contractors for various amounts to the sum of \$16000. Interest on the bonds was 12 per cent. and on money borrowed 18 to 24 per cent., which, in the absence of funds for making payments put the debt in a flourishing condition. By Feb. 26th, 1857 the total indebtedness amounted to \$76,000. This was unfortunate indeed since the expense had been incurred in advance of the needs of the Territory and the building stood unfinished and unused. However, no blame can be attached to the men who instituted the organization of the university. They were actuated by high purposes and their personal interest in the institution prompted them to contribute freely out of their own means for its erection. A property boom in the middle fifties followed by a financial stringency in 1857 left their blighting impressions upon the work and made it well nigh a hopeless task to carry to completion. This together with the fact that demands for the institution were not pre-

(18) Laws of Minn., 1858, ch. 91, P. 287.

senting themselves caused the work to be suspended.

Such were the beginnings of the school system in Minnesota.

The general taxation of all property for the support of schools, the office of State Superintendent of Common Schools for supervisory purposes, the principle that no apportionment of the school funds could be received if no school was held, the city as one district with extensive powers vested in the local Board of Education, and the government of the University by a Board of Regents were firm foundation stones for the future State educational system to rest upon.

Chapter 3.

The Early Statehood Period.

The forces making for public education had, as we have seen, been at work in Minnesota for several years before she entered upon her career as a State.

The convention that drafted her Constitution met in July 1857. One of the problems before that body was the establishment of fundamental laws regarding the schools of the State and the disposition of lands granted by the United States for the support of such schools. Opinions differed regarding details and as a result we have no definitely outlined plan established by the Constitution for the organization of schools. This was left for subsequent legislatures to work out. It was made incumbent upon them to "establish a general and uniform system of public schools."⁽¹⁾ The necessary provisions by taxation should be made which, with the income arising from the school fund, would secure a thorough and efficient system of public schools in each township of the State.⁽²⁾

(1) Constitution of Minn., Art. 8, sec. 1.

(2) Constitution of Minn., Art. 8, sec. 3.

"A general and uniform system" and "a thorough and efficient system" are phrases indicative of the ideals held in common by the framers of the Constitution when differences of opinions regarding details were laid aside. By the mention of the township it was meant to establish the township system. The report of the committee on education provided that the proceeds of the lands should be applied to the "maintenance of common schools of each school district." A motion prevailed to amend by striking out the words "in each school district" and as a result the word township was used instead. This motion was made by a Mr. Peckham who argued in the following significant words.

"It seems to me we ought not to inaugurate a system of district schools at the very commencement of our state organization. A more unfortunate arrangement for common schools has never existed than that of the district system. If we are to have township organizations it seems to me that the schools should be left to the management of towns, instead of to smaller portions called districts. Let the townships elect a competent committee to select teachers and establish a graded school if possible with as many other schools as may be necessary. Let the school houses be built by the township and all special taxes be laid equally on its property."

There were also differences of opinion regarding the disposition of school lands and the application of the funds. It was maintained that the counties should

be made the guardian of the school lands within their own limits. It was also argued that the income from the school fund should be used in part to support academies and normal schools. Several other plans found supporters, but it was finally decided that all proceeds from lands that had been or might be granted by the United States for the use of schools should remain a perpetual school fund to the state, to be forever preserved inviolate and undiminished. The income arising from this fund and from the lease of school lands should be distributed to the different townships throughout the State in proportion to the number of scholars in each township, between the ages of 5 and 21 years, to be faithfully applied to the specific objects of the original grants or appropriations. This plan was well adapted to further the uniformity and efficiency of the system. With the State as the guardian of the school funds the proceeds could reach every township in sums proportional to the number of scholars being educated, and thus be used only for the one purpose intended by the grantor. It gave the state an indirect control of its schools since it

could stipulate conditions under which the State aid could be received. The minimum price of school lands was also established and the manner of their sale. The location of the University of Minnesota was confirmed and said institution declared to be the University of the State of Minnesota. Such were, in the main, the provisions of the constitution which pertain to education.

To legislate in accordance with these provisions and work out details of a system which would prove satisfactory was not a simple undertaking as we shall presently see. The new State Legislature first of all proceeded to establish an additional branch of the system.

As the population had increased the demand for teachers had grown and there was a need of institutions for their training. In 1858 an act was passed to meet this demand. It provided for the establishment of three normal schools, the first to be established within five years after the passage of the Act, the second within ten years and the third within fifteen years. However, none were to be established until some city had donated \$5000 to the state for the support of such an institution.

A like sum of \$5000 was appropriated by the State for the use and benefit of each of these schools. The Governor was to appoint six electors, one from each judicial district who, together with the Superintendent of Public Instruction should constitute the State Normal Board of Instruction. This Board was empowered to contract for the erection of buildings, appoint professors, arrange courses of study and to adopt all needful rules for the government of said schools. ⁽³⁾ It is interesting to note the establishment of a connecting link between this new branch of the educational system and the common schools, by making the State Superintendent a member of the Normal School Board.

The citizens of Winona soon complied with the terms of this Act and the first Normal School was opened there in the fall of 1860. The state building, however, was not completed and used until 1869. The city and citizens of Winona contributed liberally toward this school for years, their donations in all amounting to \$25, 787. The second Normal School was opened at Mankato in 1865 and that at St. Cloud in 1869. For many years these schools

(3) Statutes of Minn. 1858. Ch. 23, P. 353.

suffered unmerited criticism which made the road to success a hard one to climb.

In 1860 the first changes in the Territorial school code were made. ⁽⁴⁾ The special district tax was reduced from \$600 to \$300 per year unless the town supervisors certified in writing that a larger sum was needed and specified the sum, in which case such an amount could be raised. The pecuniary conditions of the State no doubt justified this.

The Chancellor of the University was made, ex officio, State Superintendent of Public Instruction. He was vested with no powers and his duties were confined largely to the making and submitting of his annual report. He was to publish amendments to the school code and to prepare suitable forms for making reports and conducting proceedings and distribute the same among school officers. This was more important as a precedent than from immediate results. The same officer acting as Supt. of Public Instruction, Secretary of the Normal Board of Instruction and a member of that body, and Chancellor of the University was a plan which placed a unifying and connecting

(4) Laws of Minn. 1860, Ch. 46, P. 209.

element between these branches.

The district trustees were shorn of their powers to examine teachers and an office of Town Superintendent of Common Schools was created. The holder of this office was to be elected at the annual town meeting, for a term of one year. He was to divide the town into districts, keep a record and submit a report to the county auditor who in turn was to submit a report to the State Superintendent, examine candidates for teachers and issue certificates of qualification to the successful ones, visit schools and give advice. This was the first step toward centralization of administration, in the examination of teachers and supervision of schools, but it was a very small one. The law was passed in March, too late to bring the knowledge to the people before the town meetings were held that year.

The legislature of 1861 ⁽⁵⁾ undertook to modify the school laws in several respects. In accordance with the suggestion of the Constitution each township was made a school district with the town clerk, treasurer and board of supervisors, ex officio, district clerk, treasurer

(5) Laws of Minn., 1861, Ch. 11, P.54.

and board of trustees respectively. The town Superintendent now became the District Superintendent and instead of being elected he was to be appointed by the trustees. This plan which brought about the establishment of the township district certainly had in it the elements of improvement, but was made unsatisfactory by the authorization of subdivisions of the district to have their own independent board of trustees with power to perform the usual functions of the boards of independent districts.

The recommendations of the State Superintendent regarding text books had evidently not been heeded for at this session the State Normal Board of Instruction was directed to select and prepare a list of books to be used in the public schools such a selection to be "authoritative and binding upon said boards, superintendents and teachers for the period of five years."

It was made the duty of the State Legislature in joint convention to elect a State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and his term of office was to be two years. His salary was raised to \$1000 a year with

a contingent fund of \$300 for expenses, and his duties were extended to spending annually "on an average, at least six days in each judicial district of the state, superintending and encouraging teacher's institutes, counselling teachers and other school officers, visiting schools and delivering lectures on topics calculated to subserve the interests of popular education." These changes were superceded by the Act of 1862 which re-established the independence of the sub-districts; made the officers of each a director, a treasurer and a clerk; made it the duty of the county auditor to levy the district taxes; made it the duty of the county commissioners to appoint an examiner in each commissioner district of the county, who was to examine teachers and grant certificates; reduced the county school tax to two mills; set apart the proceeds of all fines in the county for the support of schools; and made the Secretary of State ex officio, Superintendent of Public Instruction without additional pay. In this year the first school lands were sold and provision was made by this Act for the apportionment of the available current school funds among the various

counties. These frequent changes rendered development in those days very difficult. Several of these provisions scarcely became operative before they were superseded by others.

Let us see what some of the problems were which the state in its infancy attempted to solve. First that of supervision. The examination of teachers and their appointment and the supervision of schools had been unsatisfactory while in the hands of the district trustees and remained so after they were placed in the hands of the Town Superintendents. Frequently these officers were men who were not themselves versed in the subjects in which they were to examine the candidates. They set their own standard of scholarship, or rather they had none, frequently, and favoritism could be practiced without restraint. To remedy this the plan of an examiner for each commissioner district of the county was tried. It was unsuccessful. It placed within each county several examiners from whom candidates could select the man to examine them and this might not be the one reputed to give the most thorough test. Competition among examiners

for the 50 cent fee, to which they were entitled for granting a certificate to teach, might be an incentive to examiners to vie with each other in being lenient. The story is told in a State Superintendent's report that in one instance in a year of presidential election the examiner coming in from the field saluted his candidate with the question, "Who'll be the next president"? The young man guessing at the politics of his questioner from his general appearance at once replied "I think it will be Mr. _____" "Thats right," said the examiner, "You'll du, Mary write him a stifekit." ⁽⁶⁾ It was a very loose system admitting of no thoroughness of regulation or supervision.

Edward D. Neill, the first State Superintendent, had recommended in his report to the Legislature of 1860 that provision for county superintendents be made, but it was not in accordance with the sentiment of the time to surrender any of the local powers and not until 1864 was the office of County Superintendent created. The legislature was either advancing very cautiously in passing this Act or it was looked upon as an experiment. By it

(6) D. Burt; Report for 1878, P. 31.

such counties as elected so to do might, through their commissioners, appoint a "fitting person of high moral character, and literary and scientific attainments" to be county superintendent of schools. He was to hold office for one year and his duties were, in addition to examining teachers and visiting schools, to hold one institute each year if he deemed it necessary, and to be an advisor to teachers and others as to the best modes of building schoolhouses, best methods of teaching, best books to use, etc..⁽⁷⁾ The new law was taken advantage of in 1865 by 14 counties and by 1868 35 counties had adopted the plan. This was taken to indicate that it was satisfactory and in the following year the legislature enacted that the commissioners of each and every county should appoint a Superintendent, and his term of office was extended to two years. There were some decided advantages in having one officer instead of several. He received a salary, set by the county commissioners, which enabled him to devote more of his time and attention to the duties imposed upon him, and he would naturally work toward some degree of uniformity in the schools of his

(7) Laws of Minn., 1864, Ch. 1, P.17.

county. The examinations of teachers were thereby also made uniform. They were to be written and oral, and held on the same day for all candidates. Three grades of certificates were issued by him, a first grade, which was good for two years within the county, a second grade good for one year, also within the county, and a third grade, good for six months within one district. The examinations became more of a real test of the candidates qualifications and a stronger incentive was thereby given the best qualified persons to apply since now merit counted for something while before the individual caprice of the petty officer was an important factor in settling the outcome. And since the districts were obliged to employ teachers whose qualifications had been certified to, a higher grade of instructors entered the schools. But some men, who performed their duties, when in office, in an unsatisfactory manner, received the appointment, perhaps through the spoils system, and to remedy this defect the Legislature in 1873 enacted that the County Superintendents should hold a first grade certificate from the State Superintendent of Public Instruction or the President of the University.

His salary was to be not less than \$10 for each district, except in the case of counties containing over 100 districts where the maximum was placed at \$1250.⁽⁸⁾ This law was a practical one and contained excellent features but it was rendered inoperative by making the office elective, in 1877, in every county of the state,⁽⁹⁾ it having, by a special law of the previous year, been made so in 7 of them.

This did not remove the office from politics. It made it possible for incapable men to find their way into the office provided they could secure a majority or a plurality vote. The judgment of the electorate may be more or less perverted by unreliable influences. This is made the more easy when the territory is large enough to render personal acquaintance with the candidate impossible. For this reason poorly qualified men have sometimes received the election. Changes also have sometimes been made when a continuance of the same administration would have been wiser. But on the whole the office of county superintendency is a marked improvement over the preced-

(8) Laws of Minn., 1873, Ch. 1, Title 2, Sec. 58.

(9) Laws of Minn., 1877, ch. 74, sub. ch. 4, P. 133.

ing trustee, township, or commissioner superintendency. It gave an opportunity to select, from a much larger number of men, the man to hold the office. It became this officer's sole duty to devote his attention to the schools of his county. It gave opportunity for uniformity of examinations of the teachers and uniformity of the work in general. However in a position when efficient work requires that special training shall have been taken some requirements of qualification ought to be made. It may be of interest to state here that an amendment to the constitution designed to give the Legislature opportunity to pass an Act requiring educational qualifications of candidates for the office of county superintendent, was voted upon in 1908 and failed to be adopted.

The amendment to the constitution adopted in 1876 and subsequent legislation of the following year, granting woman's suffrage in all matters pertaining to schools, gave opportunity for women to become candidates for the office of county superintendent and as such they have not infrequently won the race.

The Secretary of State continued to be, ex officio,

State Superintendent of Public Instruction until 1866 although both of the gentlemen who held the double office protested against it. In that year Governor Marshall urged the legislature to reestablish the office of the State Superintendent, representing that the children of the State, of school age, exceeded 100,000 and that the school fund had grown to nearly a million and a half. ⁽¹⁰⁾ His request was heeded and a law was passed which provided that the Superintendent of Public Instruction should be appointed by the Governor, by and with the consent of the senate. His term of office was to be two year and his salary \$2500 with a ⁽¹¹⁾ contingent fund for expenses not to exceed \$500.

Two years later he was given the power to issue State certificates to teachers found worthy to receive the same upon due examination by himself. Such certificate was to be valid in any county for 7 years and should super- ⁽¹²⁾cede the necessity of other examinations. This eventually led to central control of teachers' examinations. At first, however, there were but few instances of its use, and presently, for some reason, no use was made of it. The law was removed from the statute books

(10) Folwell: Minn., P. 256.

(11) Laws of Minn., 1866, Ch. 7, P. 7.

(12) Laws of Minn., 1868, Ch. 4.

and not until 1893 was it placed there again.

Mark H. Dunnell, of Owatonna, who later became the Representative to Congress from the first district of this state, was appointed the first State Superintendent after the reestablishment of the office. He had seen service as principal of an Academy in his native State of Maine and came to the office with experience in educational matters. He took up the work with zeal and undertook a better organization of schools by a revision of school registers and the preparation of a complete set of blanks for the use of teachers and officers. He was succeeded by H. B. Wilson in 1870, who came to the office with experience as a county superintendent. Rev. David Burt followed in 1875 and held the office until 1881.

A second question was that of the need of teachers training. Mr. Dunnell gathered the teachers together in convenient places in the various counties for pedagogical instruction. The organization of a teachers association was promoted which permitted the exchange of thoughts and stimulated pride in the profession of teaching. (13)

Upon his recommendation an Act was passed in 1868 making

(13) Folwell: Minn., P. 256.

it the duty of the State Superintendent to hold "teachers institutes" each year in as many counties as practical, a second one not to be held in the same county until the whole state had been covered. The institutes were to continue in session at least one week, and an expense not to exceed \$100 might be incurred by each session. He was to have the cooperation of county superintendents and might employ other suitable instructors. For the support of these institutes an appropriation of \$2000 was made. (14)

Five years later the work of conducting normal training schools in the more thickly settled localities of the state, in addition to the institutes, was allotted to him. These were to be of from 4 to 6 weeks duration and it was made the duty of the teachers to attend or show cause for non attendance to the County Superintendent. Not more than \$100 was to be expended each week on one of these schools. An annual appropriation of \$3000 was made, of which \$1000 was to go toward the support of institutes and the remaining \$2000 for the support of normal training schools. (15)

By bringing these schools and institutes, which

(14) Laws of Minn., 1868, Ch. 13.

(15) Laws of Minn., 1873, Ch. 1, sec. 81.

were under the direct management of the head of the educational department, to the various counties the state undertook to train its teachers, for more scientific work. The normal schools were not able to train the vast numbers of teachers that were needed, hence, the necessity of supplementing their work with these short sessions. Instructors from the normal schools were often called upon for training school and institute work.

Another problem was that of education in the city or village. The conditions to which the original code of school laws was made applicable were rural, and as these changed in the cities and villages it was found to be less well adapted to cover the needs. By an act of 1866 any city, village, or town with 500 inhabitants or over could become an independent district with a Board of Education consisting of 6 members, who were elected to this office, and who had extensive power in all matters pertaining to the schools. ⁽¹⁶⁾ This enabled the cities and villages to extend their courses so as to embrace more advanced studies and to include secondary education when conditions were ripe for such. But each city was

(16) Stutes of Minn., 1866, Ch. 36, Title 3.

independent of all others and could set up its own standard. Each board had full control over the course of study, length of school, text books, grade of instructors etc., of the city. This would not tend to uniformity nor did it encourage strongly the more expensive secondary education, but at the time it was all the state could do and when the cities required more freedom of action the State granted it and allowed them to pursue their own course unmolested except in regard to the minimum length of school and the general plan of organization.

Another problem was that of taxation for the support of schools and the basis of apportionment. The distribution of apportionments from the current school fund, derived from the proceeds of the sales of school lands, was begun in 1863. The various counties received their share which was added to the county school fund and together with that was distributed by the County Auditors to the various districts of the counties in proportion to the number of children, of school age, within the district. The law of 1856 allowed whatever money was left, after paying the teacher's salary, to be used for any

purposes connected with the school and this was taken advantage of by many districts. School was held for the period of three months only, the minimum set by law, and teachers who would work for low wages were employed so as to keep the total expenses of the school within, or nearly within, their apportionment. The necessity of self taxation was thereby avoided.

Not until the year 1877 was this difficulty remedied. An Act of that year provided that no money for teacher's wages, derived from the current school fund should be applied to any other purpose. ⁽¹⁷⁾ This encouraged the employment of better teachers for the schools of districts where special efforts had formerly been made to secure a teacher for a small salary. It had been considered of little importance, by many school officers, that the candidate was young and inexperienced, and poorly prepared to teach, if only he were in advance of the pupils in the common branches. Now, since the money was there to be used only in payment of teachers' salaries a better one might as well be hired. The other expenses of the schools had to be provided for by district taxation after the en-

(17) Laws of Minn., 1877, Ch. 74.

actment of this law.

An amendment to the constitution, adopted the same year, prohibited the use of State funds for sectarian schools. The State Superintendents had found it necessary to urge, for a number of years, the wisdom of this amendment.

If land was situated at a considerable distance from the school-house, the owners objected to school taxation on the grounds of receiving no benefits from the school. The distance made it inconvenient for the children to attend and the school did not enhance the value of their property. To exempt lands that were over five miles away from the school-house was tried but this led to such abuse of the "gerremander" that as a remedy the territory of any district was limited to a tract six miles square. A year later the lands left outside the district boundaries by these limits were again joined to some district and made to bear a portion of the tax.

Rich districts objected to the county school fund being apportioned to all districts within the county upon the same basis. This resulted in a law ⁽¹⁸⁾ by virtue

(18) Laws of Minn. 1875. Ch. 25, P. 58.

of which the exact portion of the county fund collected from a district should be returned to it. This left each district to support itself entirely except for the State aid. It proved a great hardship to poor districts some of which were obliged to raise a tax of 7 or 8 mills in order to maintain a three or four months school while there were rich districts which maintained a nine or ten months school on a 2 or 3 mill tax. ⁽¹⁹⁾ This Act was certainly not in accordance with the ideals of public education. A reduction of the county school tax from two mills to one was provided for by the same Act.

The matter of the proper basis upon which to make apportionment of the school funds occasioned a hard struggle. The word "scholar" was used in the constitutional provision with the evident intention of signifying such children, of school age, as actually attended School. But in drafting the school code a deliberate change of terms or else a slavish copying of the laws of certain other states was to blame for the insertion of the word "person" instead of "scholar." The school fund therefore was apportioned to the districts in proportion to

(19) Sanford Niles: Hist. of Educ. in Minn., (in U. S. Bureau of Education, 1902) P. 19.

the number of persons of school age, residing in the district, whether they attended school or not. This was a sad perversion of the original plan. It caused the amount of money actually received by different districts, for each scholar in school, to range between wide limits. Superintendent Burt urged the need of a remedy for this difficulty and in 1876 the laws were changed so as to provide for the apportionment to be made according to the number of scholars "in good faith enrolled in the public schools."⁽²⁰⁾ Besides directing the funds to the use for which they were intended this Act resulted in an increased attendance in the schools. The large number of children not attending school at all was a problem of the greatest import but one which did not seem capable of solution at that time. This Act had a salutary effect but did not afford a remedy. At a later period the State took definite action designed to solve this problem.

Another problem was that of uniformity of text books. In this matter the State exercised a stronger control than in any other. In the early sixties, as already noted, it was made incumbent upon the State Normal

(20) Laws of Minn., 1876, Ch. 13, P. 26.

Board of Instruction to select a list of books to be used in the schools, except those of special and independent districts, and when such selection was made it was to be authoritative and binding on all officers and teachers for a term of five years. In 1868 a commission, consisting of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Principal of the University and the Secretary of State, was authorized to make a similar selection, to be binding for a term of five years. The aim was to have the same books used in all the schools. But the inability to substitute any other publications for the ones selected gave their publishers an opportunity to hold the people up by charging exorbitant prices. It was evidently not lost. Cognisance of this fact was taken by Governor Austin in his message to the Legislature of 1874. Efforts to relieve the people from the grip of the publishing craft were made in subsequent legislatures. Ignations Donnelly, who was then, in the senate, advoated a plan according to which the State was to print its own text-books and distribute them free to the schools. Two bills for this purpose were passed by the Senate but defeated by the House. (21)

(21) Polwell: Minn., P. 321.

In 1877 Danial D. Merrill, a book dealer of St. Paul, proposed to furnish text-books to the State, as good as those in use and for about half price, on the condition that he be given a fifteen year contract. The Legislature agreed to this and the proper officials were authorized to execute the contract. The Act fixed the standard of quality and the maximum price at which they might be sold, and it provided a commission to approve the books. The text books was to be revised every five years if the Superintendent of schools so directed. The law was made binding on all rural districts but did not apply to special or independent districts. In this case local self government was completely abandoned in order to bring about a certain result.

Although prices were reduced and uniformity established dissatisfaction was rife. A case ⁽²²⁾ was brought in the district court of Ramsey County to restrain the execution of the contract and test the validity of the law. The plaintiff, a Mr. Curryer, alleged among other things that if the contract be made he would be obliged to purchase the new series of books without the benefits of a

(22) 25 Minn. 1.

competitive market and at a higher price than that at which he could buy the standards named in the Act. The case found its way into the Supreme Court of the State where the act of the Legislature was upheld but in an obiter dicta the Court said,

"Conceding, therefore to the fullest extent, the contention of plaintiff that the powers assumed by the state under the provisions of the statute in question, in prescribing what kind of text-books shall be exclusively used in the public schools, in directing how, by whom, and on what terms they shall be purchased, distributed and sold, and in giving to one individual for a definite period of time, the exclusive contract and monopoly of furnishing the same, work a radical change in the administration of our common school system, by withdrawing from all local supervision and control matters which have hitherto been regarded as most wisely left to the district authorities and the patrons of these institutions, and that such change is vicious in principle, unwise in policy, and utterly subversive of those principles of local self government which have heretofore prevailed the system."

Is it any wonder that, with this type of sentiment prevailing, the state proceeded very cautiously to administer even slight control of local school matters?

In order to have a full view of the whole system as it grew during the early days of the State we must pick up the thread of development pertaining to the University which we laid down at the close of the Territorial period.

That institution was then heavily encumbered with

debt. The legislature in 1860 passed an Act reorganizing the institution and providing that it should be governed by a Board of regents to consist of the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Chancellor of the University and five electors of the state to be appointed by the Governor. It also provided that a collegiate ⁽²³⁾ and a normal department be attached to the university, and that the necessary professors and officers be elected to begin work. A school was, however, not opened until seven years after the passage of the Act.

The new Board grappled with the problem of settling the debt and concluded that the only way to do this was to surrender the university property and lands to the mortgagees. Governor Ramsey embodied this sentiment in his message to the legislature of 1862 when he recommended that a commission be appointed to make this transfer. But providence had not decreed a fate so cruel. In 1863 Mr. John S. Pillsbury became a member of the Board of Regents and upon his recommendation the law of 1860 was repealed and a Board of three members created for the express purpose of liquidating the debt. The members were nam-

(23) Laws of Minn., 1860, ch. 80, P. 214.

ed and appointed by the Act and were John S. Pillsbury, John Nicols, and O. C. Merriam. 12000 acres of the university land was placed at their disposal and the work was entered upon with earnestness. Within four years the old indebtedness was wiped out and the building and grounds together with 32,000 acres of the University lands were saved from the impending wreck. In 1867 the Board of Regents asked the legislature for \$15,000 to put the building in order and open a preparatory department. It was granted. On Oct. 7th of the same year the preparatory department was opened with W. W. Washburn as principal. The question of co-education arose. The regents held that the state owed to the girl as much as to the boy, the privilege of a college education. The faculty held the opposite view. The Regents view prevailed whereby the University of Minnesota became the first state institution which offered to men and women the same facilities for education. (24) The attendance of the first year was 72, 16 women and 56 men.

In 1868 the University was placed in the hands of a new Board of Regents to consist of nine members. The

(24) Hon. John. S. Pillsbury: Address delivered before the Alumni of the U. of M. June 1st, 1893. P. 18.

The Governor and Supt. of Public Instruction were to be, ex officio, members and the remainder were to be appointed by the Governor. The President of the University was added as a member, ex officio, in 1872 without a vote. The Board was to have full control of all the affairs of the University and the lands pertaining to it.

When Congress passed the enabling Act the Hon. H. M. Rice was our Representative in Congress. Being familiar with the financial standing of the University from his service on the Territorial Board of Regents, he succeeded in having a clause included in said Act which set aside another tract of 72 sections of land for the support of
(25)
the University.

A memorial to Gov. Ramsey was adopted by the first State Board of Regents, Rev. E. D. Neill being the Chancellor, setting forth the claims of the University to this grant of land and asking him to make the selections. The commissioners of the General Land Office, rendered a decision adverse to the validity of the claim. The Secretary of the Interior was appealed to. An attorney was employed to press the claim for the state, The Sec-

(25) Ibid. P. 21.

retary did not feel himself warranted in reversing the decision of his predecessors but recommended that a bill be introduced in Congress to allow the claim. (26) The bill was passed July 8th 1870, securing a second grant of 46000 acres for the University. (27) The Secretary of the Interior decided that the lands of the Territorial grant which had been certified since Minnesota became a state and which amounted to 9785 acres were to be deducted from this second grant. (28)

By the Morrill Bill of 1862 Congress granted to the several states which might provide colleges of Agriculture and Mechanic arts a quantity of land equal to 30000 acres for each Senator and Representative that they were intitled to at the time. (29) Minnesota received nominally 120,000 acres by this Act. When it came to certifying these lands this amount was reduced by the terms of selection to about 96,000 acres. This grant was turned over to the University, after a considerable struggle, in 1868, thereby endowing the department of Agriculture and making out of it practically a college in itself. An agricultural college had been chartered in 1858 to be lo-

(26) John. S. Pillsbury: An address before the Alumni of the U. of M., P. 22.

(27) U. S. Statutes at large, 1870, ch. 227.

(28) D. Burt: Supt's. report, 1878, P. 59.

(29) U. S. Statutes at large, 1862, ch. 130.

cated in Mc.Leod County. The Board in charge was desirous of having this grant turned over to them, but they were unable to erect a building and the grant would lapse unless this were done.

The friends of the normal schools fought violently to have the grant divided so as to endow three of these institutions. But it was finally settled by consolidating this grant with the University. A grant of so called salt lands had been made to the State in 1857. It consisted originally of 72 sections but a large share of it had been lost and the remaining 18,754 acres were turned over to the Regents of the University in 1873 to aid in a geological and natural survey. An additional donation of 24 sections was secured from Congress in 1876 to make good some of the losses.

Appropriations began to be made for new buildings and these were erected. More students came every year and the once almost hopeless institution was beginning to fill a place in the State system of schools.

We have noted now the beginnings of the system. The State had undertaken the entire support of the normal

schools and the university, and had launched them with their respective Boards in control. It had required taxation to be levied on all property for the support of common schools, and had attempted to make it possible for schools to be established as rapidly as required. It had decided that its aid should go to help the children who were in the schools. It had settled the text book question for the time being. It had attempted to improve its teachers, and establish a more uniform supervision of the schools. It had granted liberal privileges to cities and towns, but it had paid no special attention to the gap existing between its common schools and its university. The next step in its progress is in the direction of secondary education which gives rise to a new chapter.

Chapter 4.

The Period of High School Development.

As the State developed along social and civil lines and the pecuniary condition of the people improved, the need of an opportunity for a higher education than that offered by the common schools began to be recognized. It was felt that the common schools should lead somewhere and also that better preparation for the activities of life should be made possible. Very few of the young people of the state could go to the University to receive the benefit of that institution, but an increasing number stood ready to take advantage of an opportunity to receive a higher education at home. The independent and special districts had met this demand in part. It had been made possible by the liberal grant of powers to their school boards or by special legislation which made it their duty to open schools of a certain grade. Many had

extended their courses of study to embrace subjects belonging to a secondary course, but few had offered a full equivalent. Supt. Burt reports for 1877 that several schools offered greek but it was studied in but three, St. Paul, Minneapolis and Winona. The students taking it numbered 46. Latin was offered in 22 schools and 444 students were taking it. The graded schools prepared the ground for the highschoools, but the heavy expenses which would be incurred in operating them, added to the expenses of carrying on the common schools, was an obstacle which checked their progress to a considerable extent. School taxation in many cities was heavy ranging even as high as 17 mills. The argument that not all children in the city or village could take advantage of higher studies and therefore general taxation for the support of high schools was unjustifiable was a forceful one with all who were unfavorably disposed toward them. But the popular spirit of education was gaining ground, and objections gradually had to give way. The university, from the time of its opening, had urged the encouragement of preparatory schools. It found itself

handicapped for want of these. It was necessary to maintain a preparatory course to fit its own students for collegiate work, and for a number of years this was the most important work that the university performed. But the necessity of being supported by a larger number of students, prepared to enter the freshman class was recognized. It was desired to suspend work in the preparatory department as soon as possible so that attention could be devoted exclusively to the collegiate work. Admission was sometimes denied to applicants who were candidates for the preparatory department if facilities for such preparation were offered at their homes. It was hoped thereby to show the people that the elementary work should be done before students tried to enter the university.

There was, therefore, pressure brought to bear from below to obtain better opportunities for something more than primary education, and from above to have a source from which to supply students for the university. The question arose as to how the demand should be met.

Strong opposition to state support of high schools, on the ground that only the cities would be benefited, and

that the rural population was to be called upon to share in the support of schools which were of no advantage to them, had to be overcome.

In 1878 the State took action. It enacted a law⁽¹⁾ entitled "An Act for the Encouragement of Higher Education," which created a board of commissioners, to consist of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, the President of the University, and one other person appointed by the Governor, to be called "The High School Board". This Act provided that any public graded school in any incorporated village, or township having the township system, which would offer regular and orderly courses of study embracing all the branches prescribed as prerequisite for admission to the sub-freshman class of the university, and which would admit students of both sexes from any part of the state without charge of tuition, and would submit to visitation and examination of its classes by said board, should receive the sum of \$400 each year if the board, at its discretion, considered it entitled to such aid. A sum of \$9000 was set aside for this use. The board was given power to establish any necessary and

(1) Laws of Minn., 1878, ch. 92.

suitable rules and regulations for examinations, reports, etc..

The objection to general state support of high schools was met by opening those schools, without charge for tuition, to students from all parts of the state if possessed of certain qualifications. This provision also answered the call that came in some instances for higher schools into which the pupils of the common schools might enter if they were inclined to further study. This has proved of importance and value to many young people from the country districts as it brought within their reach, other things being favorable, the same advantages of a higher education that was enjoyed by their city cousins. In 1879 the law was amended so as to include cities and the appropriation, raised to \$20,000. The omission of the word "annually" in the appropriation clause rendered the law incapable of perpetual operation. This was remedied in 1881. By the Act of that year the Governor of the state, the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the President of the University were to constitute the High School Board, and the courses required of the schools

were raised so as to prepare for entrance into the collegiate department of the University. At an extra session of the legislature that year it defined by enactment what the powers of the Board should be. It was to have full discretion to consider and act upon applications of schools for state aid, and to prescribe the conditions upon which said aid should be granted. It should be its duty to aid only such schools as would, in its opinion, if aided, efficiently perform the service contemplated by the law. If a school once accepted and continued to comply with the regulations, aid was guaranteed to it for three years.

It is interesting to notice the policy adopted by the state to further its ends. It exercised persuasive powers by offering encouragement in the form of special aid to offset the extra expenses that would be incurred. Each district had full authority to act for itself as to whether or not it would accept the state aid and submit to the regulations of the Board. But the aid was made ample enough to be attractive to the districts which were desirous of carrying on high school work, and where

conditions were ripe for such institutions to be opened. After its offer of aid had been accepted the State could exercise control of the grade of work done and in part as to how it should be done by specifying conditions upon which the aid should be granted.

But the state vested its powers very largely in its commission of three men. Full power of supervision of this branch of the system reposed in this administrative committee. It could set the standard for all high schools and thereby bring about a state of uniformity otherwise impossible. By the appointment of the Supt. of Public Instruction and the President of the University to serve on this Board harmony and cooperation of the different branches were promoted.

The Board adopted rules containing among many others these requirements: any school which applied for state aid should, in order to be entitled to the same, have a well organized graded school of not less than three departments below the high school and including not less than eight years of elementary and grammar instruction; it should have suitable rooms and be equipped with suffi-

cient furniture an apparatus for doing good work; it should maintain a school for at least nine months each year; each teacher was to be certified to by an authorized examiner. The high school itself was to have at least 20 pupils of which 5 should pursue an outlined course called the university preparatory course.

Examination of the students by this Board was placed at the option of the schools and if taken no entrance examination would be required of their pupils when coming to the university. A minimum course was outlined which was, at first, to cover three years. This course might be supplemented but all the studies included in it were to be taken before the high school work was completed. The course was outlined so as to meet the definite end of preparing for the university and thus, at the very beginning, the high schools were led into the line of work which has been followed quite persistently, namely, that of furnishing preparation for collegiate work at the university or some other institution of higher education. The matter of making the high schools the colleges of the masses who could never go beyond them and of making them

most useful in giving to these the best preparation for the activities of life and the responsibilities of citizenship does not appear to have carried much force of conviction home to the educators in those days. It was well to establish uniformity in the grade of teachers to be employed and in the length of time school should be held, as well as to establish a uniform and high standard of work to be attained in all the schools, but there can hardly be any doubt that a more flexible curriculum ought to have been provided from the beginning. That all of the studies included were of educational value goes without saying but their value was not the same for the students who entered immediately upon their career as farmers, merchants or artisans as it was for their more fortunate fellow students who could continue their education in higher institutions.

According to the report of the secretary of the High School Board for the school year of 1879-80 there were 42 schools which qualified for the aid. The next year there was no appropriation but the report of 1882 gives 38, that of 1883 gives 49 and that of 1884 gives 53.

The State Superintendent Mr. Kiehle in commenting on this, said in his report for the year last mentioned that 34 of these were in towns of less than 1500 inhabitants which indicated that the state aid was accomplishing its purpose and helping to build up the schools of the villages and small towns. The number of high schools increased steadily and by the year 1898 it had reached 100 with 11,500^{11,500} pupils enrolled. The plan had proved successful. Towns had been encouraged to undertake high school work as soon as possible, and they had done so in ever increasing numbers. The opportunities for a high school education were extended to new localities every year. Large and costly buildings were erected and equipped and the people of our cities took pride in their schools. No such spirit of enthusiasm for education had been known in this state as that awakened in the interest of the high schools. The appropriations for the state aid, although increased from time to time were often insufficient and the aid was given to the schools in ^{the} order in which their applications had been received. If there was a shortage of funds the last ones to apply were left out and all the expenses had

to be met by the districts themselves. Still the interest continued.

It is to be kept in mind, of course, that the special aid was granted in addition to the regular apportionment from the current school fund.

The effect on the graded schools was salutary. Good work could not be done in high schools unless the preparation gained in the grades could support it. The work of the grades was therefore strengthened so as to furnish the basis needed for good work in the higher studies.

In the meantime the University had felt the effect also. In the year 1898-99 it enrolled 2925 students. Here was a growth as marvelous in proportion as that of the high schools. This was not due altogether to the development of secondary schools, but it is certain that their growth furnished strong assistance. The preparatory course at the university had been dispensed with a few years after their establishment, and collegiate work alone was given. A strong faculty had been secured to give instruction, and liberal appropriations for the support of the University were usually obtainable from the Legislature without

much difficulty. In 1869 W. W. Folwell, Ph. D. was elected to the presidency of the University and in 1884 Cyrus Northrop, L. L. D. accepted this position. The administrative sagacity of these gentlemen must not be minimized when considering the reason for the rapid growth of the institution which they so ably served.

It was a period marked throughout by a rapid development of the high schools and the University, encouraged by the policy of the state in putting a premium upon good work and by the people's efforts to make their schools rank high.

But these branches did not claim the whole attention of the state. The hardship which had been occasioned in poor localities by returning to each district the exact sum collected from it for the county school fund was in a large measure relieved in 1887 by an Act⁽²⁾ which authorized a state tax of 1 mill on all property for the support of schools to be added to the current school fund and apportioned in the same manner. The current school fund had already been doubled by adding to it an equal amount from the general school fund.⁽³⁾ With this

(2) Laws of Minn., 1887, ch. 41, P. 99.

(3) Laws of Minn., 1877, ch. 74.

1 mill tax added the apportionment became sufficiently large to relieve the situation in the weak districts. The strong districts now found it necessary to raise but very little money by self taxation and the tendency to avoid this became so strong that a remedy had to be provided. In 1887 the Legislature passed a law which required that the sum of the local 1 mill tax and the special tax of the district should equal the amount received from the current school fund.⁽⁴⁾ This law imposed the obligation upon every district of meeting at least one half of its own expenses and encouraged better schools in many districts but it did not effect districts where most of the expenses had been met by local taxation before. The State found it advisable to levy a tax to aid in supporting the University. In 1893 a bill was passed authorizing a levy of fifteen one-hundredths of a mill on all taxable property⁽⁵⁾ and in 1897 it was increased to twenty-three one-hundredths.⁽⁶⁾ The amount raised by this tax was added to the university current fund.

The term of school necessary, in order that a district might draw its apportionment, was lengthened from

- (4) Laws of Minn., 1887, ch. 41, Sec. 2.
- (5) Laws of Minn., 1893, ch. 110.
- (6) Laws of Minn., 1897, ch. 75.

(7)
 3 to 4 months in 1883 and to 5 months in 1887. At the same time an attendance at school of 40 days each year was made a requirement before a pupil could be counted for apportionment.

(8)
 The first compulsory school law was passed in 1885. It required every child between the ages of 8 and 16 years to be sent to some school for 12 weeks each year and 6 weeks' attendance was to be consecutive. To prevent this law from working injustice in exceptional cases a number of loopholes had to be made in it which have been found out by others as well as by those for whom they were intended. Poverty, mental or physical weakness of the child, instruction at home, no school within two miles and having mastered the ordinary branches were made valid excuses for non attendance when passed upon by the district board. A \$10 to \$25 fine was placed as a penalty for this neglect but the law was to be enforced by the local officers and since they were not inclined to create neighborhood trouble about matters that did not concern themselves it became almost a dead letter on the statute books. Since

(7) Laws of Minn., 1887, ch. 41.

(8) Laws of Minn., 1885, ch. 197.

1899 the truant officer in the cities has done some effective work on behalf of this law.

In order to encourage libraries in the schools the State offered to pay one-half of the price for a library, selected from an approved list of books and purchased by any district, said amount paid by the State not to exceed \$20 the first year or \$10 in any succeeding year. ⁽⁹⁾ This stimulated the schools to equip themselves with libraries adapted for reference work and outside reading. By 1899 the State Superintendent reported that 40 out of every 100 rural districts had provided themselves with libraries. The percentage of semi-graded and graded schools equipped was greater.

To encourage the use of "Webster's Unabridged Dictionary" the State agreed to furnish at cost to all its schools, members of its Legislature and state officers, ⁽¹⁰⁾ copies of this useful book.

The text-book contract expired in 1892. An Act of the following year gave districts the opportunity to vote ⁽¹¹⁾ to adopt free text-books. This met with general ap-

(9) Laws of Minn., 1895, ch. 85.

(10) Laws of Minn., 1883, ch. 115, P. 158.

(11) Laws of Minn., 1893, ch. 23.

proval and many schools soon adopted this plan. The books after having been approved by authorized officers were purchased by the districts and loaned to the scholars. The inconvenience due to a scarcity of books or to delay in procuring them so frequently experienced in many rural districts was thereby avoided.

The teacher's institutes and training schools were continued with increasing interest during this period and liberal appropriations were made for their support.

An important control was assumed in 1899 when the state took charge of teachers examinations. (12) It was provided that they should be uniform and held on a date fixed by the state Superintendent and the papers were to be marked under his direction. By this the state took complete charge of the examination of its teachers so far as scholastic qualifications were concerned. The county Superintendent gave the markings for professional requirements.

It was in this period that the College of Agriculture was removed from the University proper to its present location between the twin cities. The first exper-

(12) Laws of Minn., 1899, ch. 101.

mental farm consisted of 96 acres of land located east of the University campus. ⁽¹³⁾ In 1881 this was platted and sold and the new farm bought and improvements made for the accommodation of the department. The Hon. John S. Pillsbury, as Regent of the University, directed the transactions and the new farm of 155 acres was paid for and improvements made upon it with the money received in payment for the old farm. The department of agriculture had been patronized but very little while attached to the University proper nor did it become very popular during the first years in its new location. The enrollment of one, two or three students often completed the list.

Credit is due David L. Keihle, who ably filled the office of State Supt. of Public Instruction from 1881 to 1893, for a plan which proposed the inauguration of the agricultural school on the principles that it should meet the demands of the boys from the farm and offer to them courses that were practical, taking them when they were through with the common school and arranging the term so that they could attend during the winter months when they were at leisure on the farms. The plan was adopted

(13) Keihle: History of Educ. in Minn., P. 71.

by the Board of Regents and in 1888 a building was erected costing \$40,000, and a school opened.

The first year it had 47 students. It entered upon a successful career from the first. The second year it enrolled 78 and the third 104. A steady increase has marked its progress ever since. An increase in the enrollment of the college of agriculture accompanied the progress in the school. A \$15,000 annual appropriation was made by congress in 1887 for the support of an agricultural experiment station. ⁽¹⁴⁾ The management of this fund was turned over to the administration of the Regents. In 1890 another appropriation of \$15,000 was granted for the more complete endowment of colleges of agriculture and the mechanic arts, which fund was to be increased by \$1000 each year until it reached \$25,000, ⁽¹⁵⁾ when it was to remain permanently at this figure. These gifts constituted a very material support for this department of the University.

This school met the needs of those who were able to come to it and it furnished to such students the training which they sought. It remained under the direction

(14) U. S. Statutes at Large, 1887, Sess. 2., chap. 314.

(15) U. S. Statutes at Large, 1890, Sess. 1, ch. 841.

and control of the Board of Regents of the University. With its department of agriculture rapidly growing larger and with the endowment of the combined national land and money grants, the University entered upon a career so promising that its narrow escape from ruin a few decades earlier can hardly be comprehended.

In the development of this period the State has caused a minimum term of 5 months school to be held. It has offered a fair solution of the text-book problem which gives it an opportunity to stamp with its approval the texts used. It has caused each district to pay at least one half of the expenses of its schools. It has assumed the power to decide who shall be its teachers and it has asserted a controlling influence over the high schools and graded schools. It will now extend its activity to a new field.

Chapter 5.

The Period of Rural School Development.

While the university and high schools grew rapidly and became flourishing organizations, and the graded schools were improved so as to give preparation for the high schools, the rural schools did not keep pace.

The state had obliged the districts to hold school for five months each year and to raise an amount of money, for the support of the school, equal to that received from the state. But no inducement had been offered to stimulate the districts to exert themselves more than was necessary to entitle them to the ordinary state apportionment.

The state had undertaken the certification of teachers and could therefore reject all candidates with insufficient scholastic qualifications but so long as there was no likelihood that better salaries could be received for their services the incentive to better preparation was

very small. Suppose a teacher had spent a year or two in acquiring the knowledge necessary to secure a first grade certificate, and when applying for a position asked, as a just compensation for the extra time and money spent in preparation, a salary higher, by a few dollars, than that asked by the competitors holding a second grade or third grade certificate, then the logical question which the trustees of the district would ask themselves would be, "Can this teacher instruct our children any better than the low grade competitors?" The advanced subjects that had been studied for the first grade certificate were not to be taught in their school, hence the teacher without these qualifications and whose services would be given at a lower price might do just as well. The result was that the ambitious teachers sought and received the positions in the graded schools of the cities and villages where they were in demand, and left the younger, more inexperienced and poorer qualified teachers to give instruction throughout the rural districts. The large percentage of candidates for certification, failing to pass the examinations, indicates

the tendency that existed among prospective teachers to enter the ranks with a very limited preparation.

The old ruts into which the school work had fallen were often followed with great tenacity. The school houses were frequently old, unattractive and poorly equipped structures. The attendance was often irregular and interest, on the part of both parents and scholars, at a low ebb. Not infrequently the quorum of 5 voters was not exceeded at the annual meeting, and that with women in the enjoyment of full right to vote on all matters pertaining to schools. Often the more progressive farmers removed to the villages and towns where better facilities for education could be found. To improve the rural schools so that they would possess the same degree of efficiency that could be found in the better organized and graded schools of the towns was impossible for the small districts where but one teacher could be employed. The hopelessness of the case turned the rural citizens to the cities and villages if they wanted their children to have better school opportunities. Yet in these country schools and in grades below the high schools three

fifths of the youth of the state received all their scholastic education. The character of these schools would inevitably reflect itself in the future citizens of the state. It was becoming a problem of grave proportions and one the solution of which had to be undertaken by the State itself.

The success attained by the method employed to encourage the high schools suggested means by which rural schools might be encouraged to make improvements.

The first step taken with this in view was an Act of the Legislature of 1899 which provided that semi-graded schools which were organized into at least two departments, employed two teachers of whom at least one held a first grade certificate, maintained an 8 months term each year, whose buildings and apparatus were up to a certain set standard and possessed a suitable library, should receive a pro rata apportionment not to exceed \$100 out of an appropriation of \$11,000. Also rural schools not graded should each receive, when complying with the same requirements except that of maintaining two departments and employing two teachers, a pro rata share, not to ex-

ceed \$75 out of \$40,000. ⁽¹⁾ This enabled the rural districts, which were struggling to make their schools as good as possible, to offer to first grade teachers a small increase in salary, and to prolong their school term and make improvements since the whole extra expense did not have to be shouldered by themselves. It stimulated teachers to work for first grade certificates and it also induced the districts to put forth stronger efforts to merit the distinction of being entitled to the special state aid.

In 1901 the minimum term for all schools was made ⁽²⁾ 5 months and the maximum 10 months.

In 1903 the appropriations for the support of semi-graded and rural schools were increased to \$67,000 and \$100,000 respectively to be divided among them pro rata, the maximum which could be received in the case of the former being raised to \$250 and of the latter to \$125. ⁽³⁾

In 1905 rural schools under charge of second grade teachers could, if they complied with certain requirements share in the State aid, the maximum to be received ⁽⁴⁾ being \$50.

- (1) Laws of Minn., 1899, ch. 352.
- (2) Laws of Minn., 1901, ch. 218.
- (3) Laws of Minn., 1903, ch. 277.

When this law had been in operation until July 31st, 1906, the close of the school year, there were 309 semi-graded schools which were entitled to the special aid, 1,094 first class rural schools and 492 second class rural schools. The appropriations were not large enough to make the maximum aid possible in any case but the semi-graded schools received not \$250 but \$216, the first class rural \$75 instead of \$125 and the second class rural \$30 instead of \$50. ⁽⁵⁾ Indeed the state's offer of aid did not have to go begging. The districts qualified rapidly to receive the aid, which indicated that it was as easily possible to institute progress in the rural districts as it had been in the case of the city schools. The Superintendent of Public Instruction was given considerable discretion in making requirements which should entitle to the state aid, such as those relating to the size of library, condition of building, heating and ventilating the same, amount of apparatus, etc.. The result has been that great improvements have taken place in the character of the heating systems and equipment of many schools.

The laws of 1909 raised the maximum amounts that

(5) State Superintendents Report, 1905-6, P. 21.

might be received to \$300 in the case of semi-graded, \$150 for the first class rural and \$100 for the second class rural. (6)

To make it less difficult for small and weak districts to merit a portion of the special state aid it was enacted in 1903 that districts could elect to consolidate or could become annexed to other districts, (7) and transport the children to and from school at public expense. The report of the State Superintendent for 1903 gives two consolidated districts and that of 1904 gives three. These five took the place of 12 smaller ones. In the report for 1905-6, 8 are reported as having consolidated and in 1907-8 the same number.

Here appears to be the best solution of the rural district problem. By consolidation the district can be made large enough to maintain a graded school with all the advantages of organization and of the impetus to study given by pleasanter surroundings, better constructed and more properly heated and ventilated school houses. It put such rural schools in the same rank as the graded schools of the towns and has in it the possibility of

(6) Laws of Minn., 1909, ch. 334.

(7) Laws of Minn., 1903, ch. 277.

great development.

That the districts are slow in adopting this plan need not be wondered at. They have their school houses some of which are comparatively new and they dislike the proposition to abandon these and erect a costly new structure to be used in their place. The old system has been in vogue for so long that any innovation so radically different from the established customs as this is will have to be content with slow progress. But when the new plan has been tried in a few instances and has proved itself satisfactory, as in all probability it will, more rapid progress can be expected. It is practically a return to the original plan of the township as the school district.

At the same time that the state was interesting itself in its common schools it did not neglect the interests of the other branches of its system. In 1899 the State High School Board was given supervisory power over graded schools as well as high schools. It was authorized to hire inspectors, one for high schools and one for graded schools. These officers devoted their

whole time to the work of inspecting the schools and aiding them in any way possible by advice or recommendation. They submitted a report to the Board immediately upon completing a visit to any school stating the condition it was in, the grade of work done etc.. The granting or withholding of the aid was left to the discretion of the board as formerly. (8)

In the same year the plan of granting the aid was changed so that the appropriation was divided pro rata among all the schools that were entitled to a share of it. This gave to all an equal amount. The old plan of paying the full allowance so long as it lasted and then allow the rest to go without was unsatisfactory. Sometimes an extra appropriation was made to make up the deficiency. The maximum amount that could be granted to any high school was placed at \$800 a year. Heretofore none had received more than \$400. Graded schools were provided with a fund which could be divided among them in amounts not exceeding \$200 a year. They were to comply with the rules adopted by the High School Board, keep nine months of school, have at least four well organized departments below the

(8) Laws of Minn., 1899, ch. 352.

high school and employ a principal holding a State Certificate. The appropriation for high schools was raised to \$85,000 a year and that for graded schools made \$26,000. A plan was inaugurated whereby schools of any class, rural, semi-graded or graded could, if their work was of a sufficient excellence, be promoted to the class above. ⁽⁹⁾ If they could get into the next higher rank the aid given was a larger sum which would offset in part the heavier expense and thus it proved a strong incentive to better the schools.

In 1901 the amount that could be received was raised to \$1000 for high schools and \$400 for graded schools. ⁽¹⁰⁾ At the same time the Governor was relieved from the duty of serving on the High School Board and in his place he was to appoint, subject to confirmation by the senate, a superintendent or principal of any high school in the state. In 1903 these laws were again revised and the appropriation for high schools raised to \$217,000 and that for graded schools to \$79,000. \$1500 was placed as the ⁽¹¹⁾ maximum amount that could be received by any one school.

The Board was strengthened by the addition of the

(9) Laws of Minn., 1899, ch. 352.

(10) Laws of Minn., 1901, ch. 189, P. 263.

(11) Laws of Minn., 1903, ch. 184, P. 274.

president of the board of normal school directors and one other person appointed by the governor and confirmed by the senate.⁽¹²⁾

An important provision appears as an additional requirement imposed upon high schools.⁽¹³⁾ They must maintain an optional English or business course besides the regular course or in lieu thereof. The High School Board had always possessed the power if it deemed it advisable to require the high schools to offer additional courses to their students but the attempt to articulate the high schools and the university led instructors to specialize along certain lines, and to lay the emphasis on such subjects as were required for entrance to the university to the neglect of any others that might be offered. It now became a requirement of law that other courses should be offered. It was a step in the direction of making the high school serve a practical purpose for such pupils as were not likely to enter an institution of higher learning but would like to gain the most practical benefit possible in their high school period.

The many high school pupils who became teachers

(12) Revised Laws of Minn., 1905, Art. 1390.

(13) Revised Laws of Minn., 1905, Art. 1340.

in the common schools suggested that normal instruction in the common branches might be given in the high schools to enable those who wished it to have the benefit of such training. To induce them to add this course the state offered an additional aid of \$750 a year to any school which should provide such instruction and perform the work required in a manner satisfactory to the High School Board. ⁽¹⁴⁾

The maximum amount that may be allowed any high school since the last amendments to the school laws in 1909 is \$1750 and that to the graded schools is \$600. ⁽¹⁵⁾ Graded schools which maintain a course of study equivalent to two years of high school work, and which meet the requirements of the high school board are entitled to a special aid not to exceed \$500. ⁽¹⁶⁾ This is in addition to the regular aid.

The Legislature of 1909 made it possible to put the high schools to another use. It provided special aid for the maintenance of departments of agriculture, manual training and domestic economy in high schools, graded and consolidated schools. Any such school fitted by location and otherwise to do agricultural work may apply to the

(14) Laws of Minn., 1903, ch. 359.

(15) Laws of Minn., 1909, ch. 334.

(16) Laws of Minn., 1909, ch. 444.

state high school board and be designated to maintain an agricultural department. It must employ instructors trained to teach agriculture, manual training and domestic science (including cooking and sewing) and have at least a five acre tract of land connected with it within two miles distance and fitted for gardening and experimenting. Instructions should be given in all the subjects relating to agriculture. An annual appropriation of \$25,000 was granted and not more than 10 such schools could be opened within the next two years so each could receive \$2500 as state aid.

Rural schools desiring to have the influence and supervision of such school extended over them and to have the teaching of agriculture, manual training and home economics introduced into their schools may by the process of petition and election become associated with such central school. ⁽¹⁷⁾ It had already been made possible for counties to establish schools of agriculture and domestic economy. The State Superintendent should be dean of such schools and with the advise of the dean of the college of agriculture of the University of Minnesota he should pre-

(17) Laws of Minn., 1909, ch. 247.

scribe the courses of study, qualifications of teachers,
etc..⁽¹⁸⁾ But special aid was uncertain as not more than
two schools could, under the law as originally passed,
become entitled to it. The new law for establishing
agricultural branches was no doubt intended to make them
more easy of attainment by establishing them as depart-
ments of regular schools and promising a substantial aid
to them for establishing such departments.

During this period the whole system of schools has
been growing stronger and more pupils have received the
benefits than ever before. But in particular has it been
a period of development for the rural schools. They have
become the recipients of a share of the aid so generous-
ly distributed by the state and have improved in quality
accordingly. New developments have been set in motion
along new lines such as consolidation of small districts
into independent districts, and the transportation of the
pupils to and from school at public expense, also the
consolidation of districts for agricultural schools or
the annexation to central schools of this character. The
industrial training of these schools as well as many of

(18) Laws of Minn., 1905, ch. 314.

the high and graded schools. All these will no doubt prove themselves possessed of great capacity for usefulness in making the schools efficient.

The high schools and the graded schools have continued their progress under the generous aid of the state. The University has enlarged its enrollment list until it ranks among the largest of the country.

Chapter 6.

Conclusion.

We have traced the steps by which the schools of the State have grown from the humble beginnings of a few schools in three counties to the present magnificent proportions. Special attention has been paid to the successive legislative acts which have expressed the will of the state with reference to the education of its children. We have noticed how it exercised authority in requiring the organization of school districts as soon as wanted and in providing what officers should have charge of them and deciding what their powers should be. How it required all property to be taxed for the support of schools, and established a limit to such taxation at a certain maximum rate. How it took upon itself to decide what the qualifications of its teachers should be. How it required all

children of a certain age to attend school and decided the conditions under which its aid to the various districts should be given. How by virtue of its trust funds, the income from which it divided among its schools, it was in possession of a power almost equal to authority by which it first required that school must be held and later established a minimum term for all districts. How by authorizing a state tax of 1 mill it strengthened this virtual authority and compelled all districts to raise an amount as large as that which they received from the State and forbade the use of the latter for any purpose except teacher's salaries. We have also noted how it used the method of encouragement where it could not well compel and stimulated to special efforts by offering aid as a premium for excellence and we have seen the marvelous development which took place under this policy. If a district would make specified improvements and adopt certain courses of study the State offered to share the extra expense. If a school would adopt a new course for a line of work asked for by the State, such as normal instruction, agricultural or manual training and would qualify for the proper

performance of it the State would help it to do so. If a district would equip its school with a library the State would pay half of the expense. If it found itself called upon to erect a new school house the State would loan its money at a low interest, the district giving its bond for the amount. It was a plan which stimulated to extra efforts and it did more; it made the improvements possible.

The State also established and undertook the entire support of institutions of higher learning such as the University and normal schools and institutions for the education of defective or indigent children. With the exception of the university and normal schools in their relation to the other branches of the system, we have made no mention of these institutions simply because the purpose of this paper did not require it. They were under the control of the State entirely and subject to central administration from their beginning. They have been improved and enlarged as the demands upon them have increased and at the discretion of the State. Boards have been appointed to have charge of them, vested with powers sufficient for the administration of their affairs. Ef-

forts have not been spared which could make them better fitted to accomplish the purpose for which they had been established.

In order to have a better comprehension of the scope of the work in its present day application we will here cite a few facts.

The school lands of Minnesota have generally been saved to the State and those sold have yielded fair returns. At the close of the fiscal year July 31st. 1909 the permanent school fund had reached \$20,252,332.42. The University fund \$1,432,866.35 and the Swamp Land fund \$1,347,221.69. ⁽¹⁾ These funds are represented by land contracts, school district and other bonds of this state and bonds of other states. The income is used for the support of the schools.

There are left approximately 1,500,000 acres of school land and 23,000 acres of university land unsold. The funds will be materially increased as these lands are sold. The State has suffered the loss, among other lands, of some of its school lands. For instance, it had come into possession of a section in the iron range district, as in-

(1) These figures were secured at the office of ^{The} State Auditor.

demnity land, which proved to hold valuable iron ore deposits. It was relinquished by the state Auditor. This was the section on which the "Mountain Iron Mine" has been developed, and which it is believed would have been worth millions of dollars. Even the royalty on the ore, it is estimated, would have added many millions of dollars to the school fund. No section of such value was received in its place. But most of the school land has been saved and the proceeds constitute a permanent fund which will forever yield its income to the schools of the State. The men who adopted the principle of saving the school fund inviolate deserve our gratitude for the benefits which have been derived and will continue to be derived therefrom by the schools of this state.

The last biennial report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction ⁽²⁾ gives the number of high schools in the state, for the year ending July 31st 1908, as 206. These received with few exceptions a special aid of \$1400. It will be remembered that in 1881 there were but 36. There were 152 graded schools which received \$520 each, 340 semi-graded schools which received \$230 each, 1305 first

(2) Report for 1907-8 P. 250 ff.

class rural schools which received \$105 each and 632 second class rural schools which received \$40 each. The high schools enrolled 24530 pupils and the graded schools 24792. The total enrollment in all schools of the above classes was 430,748 out of which there were 49074 scholars who were not entitled to draw State apportionment. The total disbursements of these schools were \$11,495,615.80. The total sum expended for various educational purposes including the university, normal schools etc., was \$13,463,211. There were 7768 districts in the state of which 1937 received special aid. The remaining 5831 received only the regular apportionment of the current school fund.

This indicates at a glance that the work of improving the schools still has considerable ground to cover. It is the small rural districts with but few scholars that are unable to reach the standard required for the state aid. They have not even qualified as second grade rural districts. This means that they lack some part of the proper equipment necessary for thorough work. Here is a problem which merits due consideration. The plan of consolidation naturally presents itself as a solution. But this plan

makes headway slowly. The people are loath to accept a proposition which breaks so completely away from the long established customs. The high taxes that would be brought on by erecting a substantial school edifice and the bad condition of the roads in many parts of the state (for if there is another problem in this state that should receive attention besides that of bettering the educational facilities it is that of improving the roads) are obstacles of grave proportions to overcome. An opinion of the attorney general, recently given, to the effect that if a territory is annexed to a district with outstanding bonds it must assume obligations in the payment of those bonds, may be another hindrance where one or more of the districts about to consolidate has a debt charged against it. The present condition is an inevitable result of the splitting up of territory until the district is so small that nothing but a weak school can be maintained. By consolidation the advantages of the city graded schools can be approached and conditions can be adopted to favor the teaching of the most practical things pertaining to the community. For instance, when the law authorizing the

establishment of agricultural departments in ten high schools, graded schools or consolidated schools had been passed by the last legislature a consolidated school at Lewiston, Winona County succeeded in getting its application favorably considered. This district has replaced four small ones. It has a territory, therefore, large enough to give some strength to it. Is it any wonder that this school, situated right on the agricultural lands, should want to give its pupils an opportunity to study for the work which most of them are likely to follow? It was possible for the consolidated district to meet the requirements and receive for the children this advantage. It could not have been done with the several small districts.

The increasing attendance at the agricultural school has indicated that there was a crying demand for that kind of education. When the committee met to consider the applications and to select ten schools to become the ones to adopt the new department of agricultural training there were 52 which applied, each having one or more representatives present to plead its cause. The law provided that no more than ten could be established each two years and

the ten selected were the high schools of Albert Lea, Alexandria, Canby, Cokato, Glenco, Hinckley, McIntosh, Redwing, Wells and the consolidated school at Lewiston, Winona County. This movement is yet but an experiment and time alone can tell what the exact results will be but it appears to have in it the possibility of giving to such students as are interested in that kind of work an opportunity to secure a part of their education along a line which makes them more proficient for their work when they leave school.

The normal schools send out increasing numbers of well qualified teachers. A fifth one was opened at Duluth in 1903. The money expended on these schools in the year ending July 31st. 1908 was \$285,311. A comparatively small number of high schools have undertaken to give normal instruction in the common branches. This year there are 26 by which it is offered and this number is in advance of the number for some years previous.

In the matter of industrial training it is interesting to note that many of the high schools are adopting it. A number also offer music. It has been found

that applications for permission to keep children out of schools are frequently due, at the basis, to the childrens wanting to stay out rather than to other legitimate causes. The child, not finding that in the school which could interest it, wanted to get away. We have fallen into the way of producing by our schools, nearly the same type of persons for all purposes. It is inevitable that preparation such as is being offered generally should become monotonous to some who might take a keen interest in a business or industrial education. After all people ought to be trained for what they are going to do. What is the object of spending years in school if when school is over we have nothing which has qualified us for that which we all must face or die, the making of a living? The interest of such children as well as that of many parents would be increased if more practical subjects could be offered, and the usefulness of the training received would reflect itself in the man and woman of tomorrow. Denmark has bettered her condition very materially, believed to be due to agricultural education, taught in her schools. Germany has become prominent in the line of manufacture,

believed to be due to her industrial and trade schools.

It was Bismarck who said,

"Whatever you would find in the life of a nation you must first put into its schools."

There are this year out of the 206 high schools 78 which offer music and drawing, 127 which offer manual training, 59 which offer domestic science. 30 of these offer all three and 50 others offer two of these studies. (3) But something along this line should also be done for the vast number of children in the country districts. They merit the consideration of the state. Perhaps some more favorable legislation might be enacted in favor of consolidation of rural districts so that after getting them into organized schools better courses could be offered and work of a higher quality performed. The school with one teacher cannot possibly do as good work as the one of two or more departments.

The state began to build its educational structure from the top. First it constructed the university which should be the crowning glory of the system. It had difficulty at first in keeping it from toppling over. Then it built up the high schools and they became a support to

(3) These facts were obtained from a circular issued by the State Superintendent and pertains to the school year 1909-10

the university. It was found that the graded schools must be built up to support the high schools. Last of all the common schools came into the favor of the State. It is among these that the greatest work of improvement is left to be done. The few students who are destined to pass on to secure a college training will be taken care of but what about the thousands who never reach or who never pass beyond the high school? Let the children's cry for bread be heard.

Mr. David L. Kiehle who filled the office of State Superintendent of Public Instruction from 1881 to 1893 recognized the advisability of offering studies of such a nature that the interest of the pupils might extend to other things than the requisites for entrance to the University and he was instrumental in having such studies incorporated in the curriculum. In this he had the support of President Northrop of the University. His successors, Mr. Wm. W. Pendergast who held the position till 1899, and Mr. John H. Lewis who held it till 1901, and Mr. John W. Olsen who held it until 1908 when he was appointed to become dean of the agricultural college, have

championed the cause of consolidation of districts and the adoption of industrial training.

We shall look to the State for guidance in the steps yet to be taken. It has found a method of supervision and control that is effective and yet it does not overthrow the local control. It simply regulates it by making the people want to reach the standard set up by the State. We have as a result a well organized system which articulates in every department. The lower and secondary branches need to be broadened and strengthened so as to become of more use to the masses. Some preliminary steps in this direction have been taken. The present tendency to create a gap between the high schools and the university by more stringent entrance requirements should not be encouraged. They ought to meet at the point of graduation from the former. It is well that the high school course be thorough but when completed it ought to admit to the university. We believe the agricultural high schools should ultimately be made such that they could admit to the college of agriculture. Making this possible is the only way the university can serve the

best interests of the State in the capacity of carrying education to a higher plane for those of its children who can apply themselves to its pursuit.

It costs the people of the state of Minnesota over 13 million dollars to operate its schools one year. No other undertaking compares with this in magnitude. None compare with it in importance. To undertake the administration of this great system is to shoulder a heavy responsibility. It rests today largely upon the State itself. Its officers who serve in this capacity should therefore be the most efficient who could be secured regardless of cost or effort. If a private corporation owned an industry the operation of which cost, 13 million dollars a year it would search for the best qualified man in the world to place at its head. The State would do well to follow the same policy. If it is necessary to select with care and deliberation the man to serve as chief executive of the university it is far more important to select with great care the man to stand at the head of our whole educational system. His appointment should be farther removed from politics than it is at present. For,

although the appointments made during the administrations of our late Governor, and perhaps many of those made before, were based upon considerations which superceded those of politics, there is the possibility of the office being bartered away. We believe the appointment should be made by a competent committee similar to the Board of Regents of the University, and that the salary should be made sufficiently large to enable them to secure the best man for the place. This committee should also have the power to appoint competent men to act as county superintendents. Or else these officers should be appointed by a county board of education in the same manner that superintendents of city schools are appointed by city boards of education. Such committee or state board of education should consist of representatives men of the state and should be granted power to adopt rules and regulations for the management of the whole system, replacing the State High School Board and articulating with the Board of Regents of the University and the Normal School Board. It could be given certain discretionary powers with reference to the granting of the state aid etc. It is centralization of

power that has built up the city systems and made them efficient. Perhaps the plan could be used to advantage by the State in the administration of all the schools below the University and normal schools.

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