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# A Comparison Of The Scholastic Difficulties Of Immigrant And Native American Children In The Schools Of Mott, Hettinger County, North Dakota

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# A COMPARISON OF THE SCHOLASTIC DIFFICULTIES OF IMMIGRANT AND NATIVE AMERICAN CHILDREN IN THE SCHOOLS OF MOTT, HETTINGER COUNTY, NORTH DAKOTA

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

There has been a tendency in recent years to question the native ability of the foreign born, and there have been many implications to the effect that immigrant children begin school with an intellectual handicap. Much plausibility has been given to this point of view by studies in which marked differences in the scores of children of native and foreign stock were shown in the results of psychological tests. The records of many schools attended by children of mixed nationalities also reveal a decided inferiority in school marks of the children of foreign stock. In fact, practically every study made on the school status of children of foreign born parents shows them to be retarded as compared with the children of native-American parents.

Thus the question arises: Is this tendency of the children of the foreign born to be deficient in school progress due to an inherent lack of mental capacity? Is it because of maladjustments caused by the transplanting of the foreigner and may the deficiency be expected to disappear when he has become fully assimilated? Or is it because of the more unfavorable home environments under which the children of the foreign born are apt to be forced to live?

The problem of handling the children of the foreign born in the public schools becomes one of vital importance particularly in view of the fact that the success of many

school systems in communities of mixed nationalities depends upon proper orientation of immigrant children; proper orientation in turn depends upon the capacity of the foreign child to learn. The problem of assimilation in such communities is an important one, as are attempts to improve immigrant children by education and cultural contact.

In most schools too little attention is given individual differences of pupils, even in a normal classroom of homogeneous students. Daniel Starch[1] has shown that in a normal school group, in various types of intellectual performance, the best pupil is from two to twenty-five times as able as the poorest pupil in the class. That such radical differences exist in most classrooms is well known to principals and supervisors; yet the heterogeneous grouping of children of mixed mental abilities continues to be the standard practice even in schools where the scientific treatment of individual differences is financially possible.

Dr. Frederick Burk[2] of the State Teachers College, San Francisco, makes a colorful comment on the tendency of schools to ignore individual differences of pupils:

> "We chain the bright child to the dull child, the fast to the slow, the quick to the dead. And so the procession moves on. The speed is too rapid for the slow children and not rapid enough for the bright. And what are the results? The slow children become hopelessly discouraged. They are not promoted; they clog up the schools and cost the taxpayers many millions of dollars."

[1] Daniel Starch, Educational Psychology, (The MacMillan Company, 1920).

[2] J. H. Butler, "Breaking the Shackles," The Educational Review, Vol. 71 (December, 1924), pp.26-28.

It is clear to all schoolmen that the gloomy picture depicted by Dr. Burk describes a condition existing in practically every small town elementary school even where the children are homogeneous in nationality and home environment. How much more emphasis, then, ought to be placed on the need for correcting the greater complexity of abuses which must necessarily exist when children of mixed nationalities must be handled in the same school, or worse still, in the same classroom. Here there are the added influences of past and present environment, emotional differences, linguistic perplexities, and race consciousness to harass the child of foreign born parents in the school. The problem of individual differences is greatly magnified, and the problem of the superintendent in properly orienting the children in his charge into school groups and procedures best conducive to their mental expansion and development becomes outstanding in importance.

Much has been said and written concerning America's obligation in the problem of assimilating and nationalizing the tremendous influx of foreign population into the United States during the past few decades. Despite the Utopian utterances of American Idealists of the necessity for all social agencies to combine and cooperate in the great Americanization program, the real burden of nationalizing and assimilating our foreign population has been placed upon the shoulders of the public school. This is perhaps for-

tunate in one sense, since the public school is clearly the most logical agency for such a purpose. But the responsibility of such a tremendous task has no doubt rested too lightly on the shoulders of many administrators of public schools. Too many superintendents labor under the delusion that the traditional elementary curriculum is admirably adapted to every child, of whatever origin or capacity, and a thoroughgoing analysis of teaching procedures, curriculum problems, and the proper grouping of children of foreign parents to suit their particular needs has been sadly neglected.

In commenting upon the need for scientific study of the problem of the children of the foreign born in our schools Kirkpatrick[3] has said:

> "There is but little data concerning comparative achievement of nationalities in the schools in spite of the great importance of a knowledge of such facts for school policy."

Jane Addams,[4] in an address before the National Education Association of the United States, spoke of the lack of understanding between the schools and the foreign born, and referred to "the superficial standard of Americanism" which widens the gulf. According to Miss Addams, it is the duty of American schoolmen to give more attention to the problems of foreign children in our schools.

[3]Clifford Kirkpatrick, Intelligence and Immigration (Baltimore, The Williams and Wilkins Company, 1926),p. 38.

[4]Jane Addams, The Public School and the Immigrant Child (Addresses and Proceedings of the National Education Association, 1908), Vol. 47, pp.99-102.

Riverda Harding Jordan,[5] professor of education at Dartmouth College, makes the following statement concerning the many problems which have manifested themselves in connection with the children of the foreign born in our schools:

> "----it has seemed essential to make a beginning towards a better understanding of the varied constituency of our population by means of an impartial endeavor to determine whether essential differences can readily be detected, and if so, whether they are sufficiently marked to require modification in any respect of ordinary educational procedure."

The foregoing quotations are but a few of the many instances where recognition has been given the need for scientific study of the problem of the children of foreign born parents in the public schools. In view of the fact that nearly half of the population of the United States consists of persons who are not native born, or who are native born of foreign born parents, it behooves every superintendent to study the composition of his own constituency. Without such study it is the more difficult to expect the public schools to function properly in their great task of nationalization and assimilation.

## The Purpose of This Study

It is in view of the above factors that this study seeks to investigate the comparative abilities and school problems of the children of the foreign born in the ele-

[5]Riverda Harding Jordan, Nationality and School Progress, (Bloomington, Ill., Public School Publishing Company, 1921), p. 3.

mentary schools of Mott, North Dakota, as they contrast with the status of the native American children. The study will be conducted according to the following major lines of investigation:

1. A comparison of the median intelligence quotients of the two groups, taking each separately.

It has been the observation of the author that teachers have been inclined to look upon the children of immigrant families as being mentally inferior to the native American children. Numerous investigators have made studies of immigrant intelligence by means of various types of testing devices and they have found that the representatives of the foreign stock have ranked below the native American stock in the test results. But many of these research workers have attributed the deficiency of the foreign groups to the language factor which must necessarily be involved to some extent in all testing devices. In this study an attempt will be made to ascertain the extent to which language difficulty influences test results by isolating the showings made on verbal and non-verbal sections of the test batteries used, and comparing the results. Thus one of the objectives of the study will be to determine as accurately as possible whether or not the children of the foreign born rank up to the native Americans in intelligence tests.

2. A comparison of the median achievement scores of the two groups, taking each grade separately.

An examination of the school records in the Mott ele-

mentary schools shows a marked superiority of the native American children over the children of foreign stock. This deficiency of the foreign children may be due to an unconscious discrimination against them on the part of the teachers, or to language difficulty which may be conditioning all the scholastic activities of the foreign children. It is the second objective of this study to compare the results of achievement tests with the record of school marks to see to what extent they correlate. Here again a comparison will be made between verbal and non-verbal sections of the test batteries in an attempt to arrive at conclusions concerning the influence of the language factor.

3. A study of the typical environment under which the children of the foreign stock live.

Environment is a powerful factor in shaping the life of an individual. When students coming from homes in which little or no English is spoken are thrown into scholastic competition with those who have never heard any other language but that used in the school, an injustice is apt to be perpetrated. Because of the large enrollment in the Mott schools it is necessary to group children into large classes where out of necessity mass instruction is the basic procedure. Thus it becomes necessary for the child of non-English-speaking parents to do the best he can in a classroom where the instructional method is designed primarily for the majority of children. The majority is usually made up of children who, considering their chronological age, have a thorough

working knowledge of English. The individual child of foreign parents may be of average or even superior mentality and yet be branded as inferior by his teachers and associates because he does not respond to a procedure which is outside his sphere of linguistic understanding. Likewise, the child of foreign parents is subject to an environment where the cultural influences of good reading, music, helpful intellectual counsel, wholesome family relationships and emotional stability are lacking. Thus, in addition to his linguistic handicap, the child of foreign parents is subject to other environmental handicaps to his mental and cultural growth in the home. It will be the third objective of this study to investigate the home conditions of the foreign children with the view of arriving at a better understanding of their school problems.

4. An experiment in class segregation according to nationality.

A fourth objective will be to conduct an experiment in which the children entering the first grade from homes where English is not spoken will be placed in a separate classroom under a teacher especially qualified to handle a problem group. The results of intelligence tests given at the beginning of the year to this group will be compared with those of the same tests given the native American first grade. At the close of the year other tests will be given for the purpose of measuring and comparing the progress of the two groups. The class

grades and promotion ratio of these groups will also be compared. By this experiment some light should be thrown upon the possibilities of eliminating the handicaps of the foreign children by separate treatment and special methods.

## The Situation

In the elementary schools of Mott, North Dakota, approximately forty per cent of the children are from homes where English is not spoken, or at least only partially. Most of these people are farmers, having migrated to America within the last thirty-five years, with the culture and standards of living of north-central European peasants. Some of these immigrants have become thoroughly Americanized, but in the majority of cases they have banded together into colonies where they have preserved their language and customs of the old country to the present day.

An investigation of the old world background of families classified in this study as German showed that forty-eight per cent of the parents immigrated from Germany proper, thirty-six per cent came from German-speaking sections of Russia, and sixteen per cent from Hungary. All three groups at present speak a common dialect of imperfect German, with a possible small admixture of Russian and English. Their standards of living, home conditions, and culture are typically those of the old world farmer, and they preserve a definite social isolation. They maintain their own churches, presided over by pastors of their own race and nationality,

with services conducted in their own language. Many farm homes are built of adobe with quarters for farm animals as an integral part of the house. Some of the parents are illiterate.

Eleven bus routes, operated by the school district, bring children into the Mott schools from all parts of four townships. These bus lines penetrate into remote rural areas and account for the large number of children of immigrant farmers attending the Mott schools. The children from these homes are often unable to speak English at the time of their entering school, and those who do speak English do so with a very limited vocabulary. Whether it is the lack of innate capacity or unfavorable environmental influences, or both, which cause these children to be beset with a greater number of difficulties in their school life than is common to their native American companions remains to be seen. In any event, the entrance of children of foreign parents into the public schools of Mott creates a complex problem of adjustment, proper orientation, and of how to handle both native American and foreign groups in the same classroom.

## A Brief Survey of Similar Studies

Although a large number of studies of a similar nature have been made in the public schools of the larger cities, it appears that very little has been done in the investigation of the school problems of the children of foreign parents in rural communities.

Miss Katherine Murdock[6] made a study of the intelligence of national groups in the city of New York whose social and economic status were the same and where there was no language handicap in the opinion of the teachers. Only children nine to sixteen years of age were tested. The Jews and American children tested highest and the Italians and negroes decidedly inferior.

C. S. Berry[7] made a study in Detroit which provides a closer parallel to this study. He tested children of nine nationalities, four of which were American, German, Hungarian and Russian. The German, Hungarian and Russian children, taken as a group, ranked decidedly below the American children. Regarding the alleged language factor, Berry says of his results: "If it be argued that language difficulties were the cause (of the differences in intelligence medians) it still remains to be explained why the Germans and Russians did so much better than the Italians."

Kenneth Young[8] has made an investigation of the mental differences of certain immigrant groups with emphasis on the matter of the alleged language handicap. He tested

[6]Katherine Murdock, "Race Differences in New York City," School and Society, Vol. 11 (January 31, 1920), pp. 147-150.

[7]C. S. Berry, "The Classification by Tests of Intelligence of 10,000 First Grade Pupils," Journal of Educational Research, Vol. 6 (October, 1922), pp. 185-205.

[8]Kenneth Young, Mental Differences in Certain Immigrant Groups (University of Oregon Publication, 1922), p. 11.

twelve year old children representing South Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish-Mexicans as compared with children of North European ancestry. According to the results of his testing he worked out grade placements which placed the North European children in the low seventh, the South Italians in the high fifth, the Spanish-Mexicans in the high fourth, and the Portuguese in the fifth. Because there was such a high correlation of the results of the tests with the teacher's estimates of school grade and school achievement, Young laid great stress on his claim for the validity of the tests. Pintner[9] criticizes him rather severely for this claim of validity by saying: "But we should not forget that a teacher's estimate of a child's ability to use the English language, and, of course, all the child's schoolwork is conditioned by his ability to understand and make use of English." Such criticisms of the neglect of the language factor in comparing test results has influenced the author of this study to make an attempt to learn something of the language difficulties of children of immigrant farmers in the Mott school district, and to determine, if possible, the extent to which language handicaps contribute to their scholastic difficulties.

[9]Rudolf Pintner, "A Comparison of American and Foreign Children on Intelligence Tests," Journal of Educational Psychology, Vol. 14 (May, 1923), pp. 292-295

# CHAPTER 2

## A COMPARISON OF THE I. Q.'S OF CHILDREN FROM GERMAN AND AMERICAN SPEAKING HOMES

For the purpose of comparing intelligence quotients of children from German speaking homes with those of native American children, 200 children were selected as typical of the American stock, and 138 children, whose home environments were investigated and found to be typically German-Russian-Hungarian in language and culture, were selected to represent the German stock. Mixed cases--children from homes where one parent was of German stock and the other native American, or where other nationalities were represented by one of the parents, were excluded. Likewise, children not typically European in language and culture, either because of having been subject to a more thoroughgoing Americanization or because of long standing contact and association with native Americans, were not considered as proper subjects in the study. Unfortunately, the comparatively small number of German children in the seventh and eighth grades make comparisons there of no significant value, but in the other grades the comparative numbers of German and American children are nearly enough balanced to make worthwhile comparisons.

In testing groups where the language factor is prominent, it is necessary to eliminate in the tests, as far as possible, those factors which are based upon special ability

in the English language and to seek to determine general intelligence on a more comparable basis. It follows, therefore, that a good test for this purpose should be based upon the ability to find likenesses and differences between familiar things, knowledge of familiar things, judgment, reasoning, detecting absurdities, resourcefulness, ingenuity, apperception, association of ideas, and the capacity to generalize from particulars. At the same time, in fairness to the bright pupils, a good test of intelligence must allow for the expression of the higher though processes, for, as Kilpatrick[10] points out, "It may be that ditch diggers would approach the achievement of college professors on a test of mechanical ability."

In line with the above criteria the Pintner-Cunningham Primary Mental Test was selected for testing grades one and two. Language skill can have little or no effect on the results obtained in this test since it is entirely of the picture-symbol type. It is possible, however, that in the case of some of the German speaking children the inability to understand the teachers' directions may have contributed to the lowness of certain scores.

For grades three to eight inclusive, the Otis Group Intelligence Scale was selected as being best suited for the purpose. This test involves, of course, some reading skill, but of such a fundamental nature that the poorest readers

[10]Clifford Kilpatrick, op. cit., p. 33.

could have little difficulty in the interpretation of the exercises. The possible language handicap is further offset by the fact that, in the opinion of the teachers in the Mott schools, the children of non-English speaking families have little noticeable difficulty with ordinary conversational English after their first two years in school; neither do they have extraordinary trouble with basic reading, it being in the exploration of the outer fringes of vocabulary that the most difficulty is experienced. Thus it may be safely concluded that the children of German speaking homes were not seriously handicapped by inability to read the materials contained in the tests.

The results of the intelligence tests administered to the 338 children in the two groups showed the children of native American homes to have intelligence quotients averaging 103; the children from German speaking homes had I. Q's averaging 96 (Table 1).

To enable the reader to interpret these results more accurately, it should be explained that intelligence quotients may be roughly interpreted according to the following basis of classification:

140 or above . . . . . exceptional ability
110 to 140 . . . . . superior ability
90 to 110 . . . . . average ability
70 to 90 . . . . . inferior ability
Below 70 indicates a mentality ranging from feeblemindedness to idiocy.

This classification scale must be interpreted liberally,

since there are no sharply defined divisions between the categories. For instance, it would not be logical to say that a child having an I. Q. of 108 was strictly average and one with an I. Q. of 112 superior. The difference between the two is so slight that it is insignificant, particularly in view of the fact that enough inaccuracies creep into the testing procedures to make each individual I. Q. subject to a probable variation of several points from the true mental status of the individual concerned.

Table 1

Comparative Median Intelligence Quotients of Children from German and English Speaking Homes

Mott, North Dakota, 1935

| Grade | Numbers and I. Q's of Children from Following Types of Homes: American | | German | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number | I. Q. | Number | I. Q. |
| 1 | 27 | 106 | 30 | 95 |
| 2 | 30 | 102 | 17 | 95 |
| 3 | 26 | 102 | 17 | 96 |
| 4 | 25 | 105 | 18 | 100 |
| 5 | 21 | 100 | 19 | 96 |
| 6 | 24 | 99 | 19 | 91 |
| 7 | 27 | 104 | 9 | 96 |
| 8 | 20 | 106 | 9 | 101 |
| Total | 200 | 103 | 138 | 96 |

The seven point deficiency of the average I. Q's of

the children of German speaking homes as compared with the American children is not statistically significant, particularly in view of the fact that an average I. Q. of 96 falls well within the category of what is considered average. But there still remains the necessity of explaining why the German children should average seven points below the average of the children from native American homes.

A plausible explanation would lie in the hypothesis that the difference between the two groups may be due to the lower quality of home nurture among the German speaking families. There can be little doubt that the average child from a satisfactory home receives a great deal of encouragement and assistance in his school work, either directly, by help at home, or indirectly by the intellectual and cultural associations in the home. The child from the average German speaking home in the vicinity of Mott lives the bare existence of the European peasant, with few books or other reading materials, and very little music, art, recreational facilities or enlightening home conversation. Such an existence would naturally retard the child in the acquisition of a satisfactory sum of skills and factual information.

Before going further into this hypothesis, it is necessary to bring out the relationship between intelligence test results and child nurture and training. This may best be done by quoting Dr. A. V. Overn[11] in his explanation of

[11]A. V. Overn, A Survey of Instruction and Supervision, East Grand Forks, Minnesota, Departmental Bulletin, University of North Dakota, 1931, No. 5, p. 20.

the "I. Q.":

> "If a pupil acquires an average amount of ability with each advancement of one year in his age, he is said to be a normal pupil mentally with an intelligence quotient of 100. If, on the other hand, his ability as shown by the tasks that he can do increases more than the increase in the ability of the average pupil for each year older that he grows, his intelligence quotient or relative intelligence is said to be greater than 100; and if the growth that he makes in ability is less than the average growth for each year's increase in age, he is said to have an intelligence quotient less than 100. The mental age may be regarded as the total number of average yearly increments in ability which the person has acquired from birth up to his present chronological age. Therefore, the ratio of this total number of yearly increments of ability to his chronological age may be thought of as his relative intelligence or his intelligence quotient."

A careful reading of the above statement will bring to light that a child's intelligence quotient is determined by measuring his ability to do things in comparison with what the average child of the same chronological age is able to do. It is impossible to test a child for intelligence without calling into play the sum of his past experiences and skills. The tests must necessarily be based on abilities of one sort or another.

An examination of Table 2 will show that with only a single exception the high scores in the intelligence tests were made by the American children in each grade. Particularly noticeable is the marked superiority of the American speaking children in the attainment of high scores in the first grade where eleven American children had scores above the topmost score made by any of the children of German

speaking parents. In this grade the highest I. Q. made by an American child was 134, while the highest among the German speaking children was 108. Since the Pintner Cunningham test used in the first grade required no specific language skill, it is clear that the home nurture of the German children must have been at least partially responsible for their deficiency.

In the second grade nine American children ranked above the high score for the German speaking children. In the third grade there were four Americans above the highest German score, in the fourth grade one, in the sixth grade three, five in the seventh grade, and nine in the eighth. Only in the fifth grade did a child from a German speaking home make the high score (124) and this honor to the German group is largely offset by the fact that the next high score among the German children in that grade was 112 while two American children had scores of 116 and 119.

Conversely, it is noteworthy that while the children of German speaking homes predominated among the lowest scores in the fifth grade, and to a lesser extent in the third and seventh grades, there was no pronounced general tendency for them to monopolize the low scores in the other grades (Table 2).

## Summary of Chapter 2

A study of the data presented in this chapter leads to the conclusion that the uniform failure of the German

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Table 2

Comparative Distribution of Intelligence Quotients of Children from American and German Speaking Homes

| I. Q's | Number of Pupils in Each of the Following Grades and Nationality Groups which have the Designated Intelligence Quotients | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Grade 1 | | Grade 2 | | Grade 3 | | Grade 4 | | Grade 5 | | Grade 6 | | Grade 7 | | Grade 8 | |
| | American | German | American | German | American | German | American | German | American | German | American | German | American | German | American | German |
| 135-139 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 130-134 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 125-129 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 120-124 | 2 | | | | 1 | | 1 | | | 1 | | | 1 | | 2 | |
| 115-119 | 3 | | 6 | | 3 | | 1 | 1 | 2 | | 3 | | 4 | | 2 | |
| 110-114 | 4 | | 3 | | 6 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 5 | |
| 105-109 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 8 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 7 | 1 | 2 | 4 |
| 100-104 | 6 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 1 |
| 95 - 99 | | 7 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| 90 - 94 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 4 | | 2 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| 85 - 89 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | | 2 | 2 | 1 | | 1 | |
| 80 - 84 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 3 | | | 1 | |
| 75 - 79 | | | 1 | | | | | | | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | | | |
| 70 - 74 | | | 1 | | 1 | | | | | 2 | 1 | 1 | | | | |
| 65 - 69 | | | | | | | | | | 2 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | | |
| 60 - 64 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 55 - 59 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 50 - 54 | | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 45 - 49 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

speaking group to place any of its members among the high ranking students in any of the grades except the fifth, and the lack of a predominance of German children among the very low scores, is indicative that there is no great tendency for them to be below average in intelligence but that there is evidence of the failure of the German speaking home to aid the child in the acquisition of the higher forms of skills, factual information, and thought processes. As will be pointed out in a later chapter, a large share of German immigrant homes in the Mott area have no facilities for helping children acquire either mental or mechanical skill, and it is probable that in spite of the fact that the primary mental tests were primarily non-language the German children were found lacking in general information and skills.

The striking superiority shown by the American children in the first grade--and to only a slightly lesser extent in grade two--shows how handicapped the German speaking children must have been because of the newness of the school environment and their obvious lack of pre-school training. It is also apparent that as the German speaking children progress into the higher grades, their inferiority becomes less pronounced (Table 2).

# CHAPTER 3

## A COMPARISON OF ACHIEVEMENT OF CHILDREN FROM GERMAN AND AMERICAN SPEAKING HOMES

There has been a tendency among the teachers in the Mott schools to take for granted that the children from German speaking homes do poorer work in school, as compared with native American children. This tendency has been particularly noticeable among the teachers of the lower elementary grades. It has been assumed by them that the unfavorable cultural background of these children, coupled with the handicap of hearing a foreign language in the conversation of the home, would necessarily preclude the possibility of satisfactory attainment in school. No doubt this assumption is true. There must necessarily be difficulties confronting those children whose environment is unfavorable. But it is possible that the belief in the general inability of the German children to attain up-to-average achievement scores has led teachers to discriminate unmeaningly against individual pupils in the fallacious belief that all German pupils are below standard. The formulation of school marks is highly subjective, and subconscious discrimination is both easy and common. It will be the purpose of this chapter to discover whether or not achievement tests corroborate the comparison of school marks of German and English speaking children over a period of three school years.

According to the standards employed by the teachers

in formulating class grades the children from German speaking homes were deficient to a rather marked extent. The marking system used in the school involves the use of letter grades, the numerical equivalents being as follows:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| A+ | 99 | C | 85 |
| A | 97 | C- | 83 |
| A- | 95 | D+ | 81 |
| B+ | 93 | D | 79 |
| B | 91 | D- | 77 |
| B- | 89 | F | 74 |
| C+ | 87 | | |

The records of the school show that over the three year period--1932-1933, 1933-1934, 1934-1935--the numerical scholastic average of the native American children was slightly over 87. For the children from German speaking homes it was a small fraction over 83. It does not appear that this four point deficiency, as compared with the American children, is a serious retardation, in view of the fact that the school average of the American children would be generally looked upon as being slightly above the average which might be expected of a strictly normal group. Likewise, the average median of the German children is not far below the generally accepted standard of normal attainment. But the striking thing about the distribution of the three year averages is that there are, among the German speaking children, a smaller number of average students, that is, those students whose scholastic standing falls within the middle sixty per cent, or "C" group (Table 3).

This distribution of school marks shows a tendency

for the children of German speaking homes to be either superior or inferior to the average in attainment. But school marks must necessarily be partly subjective, since it is not possible, in the ordinary classroom, to formulate marks solely on the basis of objective testing. It has, for many years, been characteristic of the teachers in the Mott elementary schools to comment on the frequency with which the German speaking children fall into classifications of very good or very poor students. Such an arbitrary assumption has probably been an influence in the growth of the tendency on the part of the teachers to look upon the German children as somewhat abnormal. It may also be responsible for a possible tendency of the teachers to formulate grades which are influenced by this assumption. If such is the case, it is possible that the subjective element in the school marks is responsible, at least to some extent, for the difference in the distribution of averages (Table 3).

Table 3

Comparative Distribution of School Marks of Children from German and English Speaking Homes. School Years of 1932-1933, 1933-1934, 1934-1935. Elementary Schools of Mott, North Dakota

| Type of Home | A Group Per Cent | B Group Per Cent | C Group Per Cent | D Group Per Cent | F Group Per Cent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Native American | 8.2% | 26.% | 51.8% | 11.4% | 2.6% |
| German speaking | 9. % | 27.% | 40.1% | 16.5% | 7.4% |

The records also show that of the total of 114 students who failed of promotion during this same three year period, sixty-four per cent were from German speaking homes. This comparison is made more significant by the fact that though the children of German speaking homes were in the minority by a ratio of about two to three, they were preponderantly in the majority among those who failed of promotion. In this situation it is interesting to note, however, that except in the year 1934-1935, when the German speaking children of the first grade were segregated and given special instruction as described in Chapter 5, the very high percentage of failures among the German children of the first grade was responsible to a large extent for the preponderance of German children on the total elementary school failure list. In the other grades the German children, while still in the majority among the failures, did not predominate to such a marked extent.

In an attempt to determine the validity of teacher markings as compared to objective data on the attainment of the same group of 238 children that were tested for intelligence and described in Chapter 2, the Metropolitan Achievement Tests were given this group in May, 1935. The Stanford Achievement Tests were given grades five, six, seven, and eight at the end of the first semester of the year 1933-1934, but the results obtained were so nearly in exact accord with those of the Metropolitan tests given the following year

that for the purpose of this study it is necessary to refer only to the latter.

For the sake of simplicity the results of the achievement tests were tabulated in terms of grade equivalents. By way of explanation, a grade equivalent of 5.5 indicates that from the standpoint of accumulated knowledge of subject matter the student receiving that figure on his test had a grade age which should enable him to do the work being done in the fifth grade during the fifth month of school.

A comparison of the grade ages obtained from the achievement tests shows the children from German speaking homes to average two months behind the native American children (Table 4).

Table 4

Comparative Average Grade Equivalents in General Achievement of Children from German and English Speaking Homes, Mott, North Dakota, 1935

| Numbers and Grade Equivalents of Children from Following Types of Homes | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | American | | German | |
| Grade | Number | Grade Equivalent | Number | Grade Equivalent |
| 1 | 27 | 2.6 | 30 | 2.3 |
| 2 | 30 | 3.1 | 17 | 2.9 |
| 3 | 26 | 3.7 | 17 | 3.4 |
| 4 | 25 | 5.2 | 18 | 4.9 |
| 5 | 21 | 6.2 | 19 | 5.9 |
| 6 | 24 | 6.7 | 19 | 6.7 |

Table 4 (continued)

Numbers and Grade Equivalents of Children from Following Types of Homes

| Grade | American Number | American Grade Equivalent | German Number | German Grade Equivalent |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | 27 | 8.3 | 9 | 7.9 |
| 8 | 20 | 8.9 | 9 | 8.7 |

It is necessary, before weighing the data in Table 4, to point out again that the results in grades one and two were undoubtedly influenced by the fact that special instruction was given the German speaking children of grade one during the year 1934-1935. It must also be mentioned that seventeen first grade children, twelve of whom were from German speaking homes, who failed to be promoted at the end of the year 1933-1934 were given special instruction under a separate teacher during the following year when they were "repeaters." The gratifying results of the first grade experiment in class segregation according to nationality are pointed out in Chapter 5, but because no achievement tests had been given first grade pupils at the end of the year 1933-1934 it was impossible to measure objectively the success of the segregation of first grade repeaters the following year. However, that these repeaters made more than satisfactory progress in achievement is proven by the fact that they all attained better than average mastery of the first grade subject matter and have since made satisfactory progress in the second grade. The record

of this room does not have a direct bearing on this study of racial comparisons since the repeater room had five native American children in its membership. But the fact that twelve of the slowest German speaking first grade children were given special help by this means would, without doubt, result in the attainment of a higher average score for the German speaking children than would normally be the case (Table 4).

A comparison of Table 1 in the preceeding chapter, and Table 4 of this chapter, will show a striking parallel between the average intelligence quotient and the corresponding average grade equivalent in each grade. Whereas the inferiority in intelligence of the German children is comparatively uniform throughout the eight grades, their achievement grade-ages are likewise quite uniformly inferior. It will also be noticed that the intelligence differences in each grade are, with the exception of the sixth grade, accompanied by a rather closely corresponding difference in achievement.

The essential point to be brought out in the analysis of the achievement test grade equivalents is that they do not bear out the assumption that the German children are definitely or radically inferior in attainment. A retardation of two months is not considered serious by most authorities on educational measurements. In fact, it is considered statistically insignificant in view of probable error

and the many influences militating against the accuracy of any objective testing device. That the children from German speaking homes are, on the average, slightly behind the native American children is quite plain, but there is no evidence in the test results to support the hypothesis accepted by many teachers that the German children are irreparably lacking in the ability to keep up with native American children in school attainment.

The achievement test grade equivalents do not reveal a noticeable majority of German speaking children to be so seriously retarded in achievement as to cause them to predominate among those who fail to pass their grades at promotion time. Since the achievement tests were given in May, just before the close of the school year, the strictly average child in the fourth grade, for instance, should have received a grade equivalent of 4.9. For the sake of comparison, it may be assumed that grade equivalents indicating a retardation of one-half of a school year, or five months, constitutes a definitely serious deficiency and indicative of the danger of failure to be promoted. If the grade equivalents in each grade are isolated and compared by this arbitrary standard there is found no significant tendency of the German children to be deficient (Table 5).

Table 5

Comparative Number of Children from German and English Speaking Homes Having Achievement Grade Equivalents Showing a Retardation of Five Months or More. Elementary Schools of Mott, North Dakota, 1935

| Grade | American | German |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 2 | 2 | 1 |
| 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 4 | 0 | 3 |
| 5 | 2 | 5 |
| 6 | 9 | 3 |
| 7 | 1 | 1 |
| 8 | 6 | 1 |
| Totals | 22 | 16 |

In the interpretation of the above table, it must be remembered that of the 238 children tested for data to be used in this study, 200 were native American and only 138 were from German speaking homes. Thus the German children outnumbered by a ratio of approximately three to two. The above table shows that of the thirty-eight children five months or more retarded, twenty-two were native American and sixteen were children from German speaking homes. The ratio between twenty-two and sixteen is approximately three to two, which means that the percentage of students seriously retarded is almost the same in the two groups.

## Summary of Chapter 3

(1) The records of the Mott schools show that for the years 1932-1933, 1933-1934, and 1934-1935 the numerical scholastic average of the children of German speaking homes was 83 as compared with an average of 87 for the children of native American homes.

(2) Of the aggregate number of students who failed of promotion during the three year period mentioned above, sixty-four per cent were children of German speaking homes despite the fact that they were in the minority by a ratio of three to two. The German speaking pupils of the primary grades predominated in the failure list to a much greater extent than those of the higher grades, suggesting a greater language handicap in the lower grades.

(3) A tabulation of school marks under classifications of "A," "B," "C," "D," and "F" shows the German speaking children ranking slightly ahead of the native Americans in the "A" group, about even in the "B" group, and seriously behind in the number placed in the "C," "D," and "F" groups. The suggestion is made that the subjective element involved in formulating school marks, coupled with the tendency on the part of the teachers to assume arbitrarily that the children of German speaking homes are mentally inferior may be responsible, to some extent, for the predominance of German speaking students in the lower scholastic groups.

(4) The above implication is given substance by the fact that objective achievement tests given at the close of

the school year 1934-1935 showed the children of German speaking homes to average only two months behind the native American children in grade ages. Such a difference is not statistically significant. Further support is given the implication in paragraph 3 above by the data in Table 5 of this chapter which shows that no greater percentage of German speaking children were five months or more retarded than was to be found among the native Americans.

(5) Two experimental rooms, the one in which the children of German parents were given special instruction, and the other in which first grade repeaters of the previous year were given special attention, probably helped to some extent in preventing a greater number of very low scores among the first grade German children. The average achievement score of the German speaking children in the first grade was no doubt raised by this special instruction, and the entire group of 138 children of German speaking homes was placed in a more favorable light than would have been the case under ordinary circumstances.

# CHAPTER 4

## THE INFLUENCE OF THE LANGUAGE FACTOR

The language handicap as a factor influencing the results of intelligence and achievement tests has been a point upon which there has not been a complete agreement among authorities on educational measurements. Terman,[12] for instance, says:

> "Limited acquaintance with the language employed in the examination does not put the subject at great disadvantage . . ."

Terman goes on to prove his argument by citing examples of many cases where children with a very limited knowledge of the English language made above average scores in the Stanford Binet Intelligence Scale.

Yerkes,[13] on the other hand, in his extensive testing program for the purpose of establishing validity, reliability, and national norms for his Point Scale for Measuring Mental Ability, found that the children of non-English speaking families fell short by from five to ten per cent of the scores obtained by their English speaking companions. He points out that "It is obviously unfair to judge individuals from different nationality groups by the same standard."

The Metropolitan Achievement Test Battery used in

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[12] L. M. Terman, The Intelligence of School Children (Houghton Mifflin Company, 1919), p. 66.

[13] R. M. Yerkes, J. W. Bridges, and Rose S. Hardwick, A Point Scale for Measuring Mental Ability (Baltimore, Warwick and York, 1915), p. 66.

this study contains sections each of which constitute a specific test. These may be used separately for purposes of testing for proficiency in each of the major branches of subject matter common to the grade concerned. The language and arithmetic sections of the Metropolitan tests given the 300 children from native American and German speaking homes at Mott were isolated, and the results compared for the purpose of determining the relative difficulty experienced by the German children in verbal and non-verbal tests. The results showed little significant difference in language and arithmetic scores in either of the groups. The children of English speaking homes, taking an average of the eight grades, were practically equal in language and arithmetic ability. Likewise, the average of all the children of German speaking homes shows but an insignificant difference between language and arithmetic ability (Table 6).

The results in grade one indicate that the children of German speaking homes have more difficulty with language than with arithmetic. Although five months behind the American children in language, they are but three months retarded in arithmetic. That such should be the case is not surprising since by "language" in the first grade is meant, of course, reading, spelling, and phonics. The noticeable difficulty the children from German homes have with vocabulary upon entering school has been referred to repeatedly.

In the second grade the children of German speaking

homes average one month ahead of the American children in arithmetic and two months behind in language. Likewise, the German speaking children in the third and fourth grades rank considerably lower than the Americans in language than they do in arithmetic. But in the fifth grade the retardation of the German speaking children is no greater in language than in arithmetic. In the sixth grade the German children average three months ahead of the Americans in language and the German children in the seventh and eighth grades show no greater comparative retardation in language than in arithmetic.

Table 6

A Comparison of Median Grade Equivalents in Language and Arithmetic of Children from American and German Speaking Homes. Mott, North Dakota, 1935.

| Grade Equivalents of Children from Following Types of Homes: | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grade | American | | German | |
| | Language | Arithmetic | Language | Arithmetic |
| 1 | 2.5 | 2.7 | 2. | 2.4 |
| 2 | 2.8 | 2.8 | 2.6 | 2.9 |
| 3 | 3.6 | 4. | 3.3 | 3.8 |
| 4 | 6.1 | 5. | 5.6 | 4.9 |
| 5 | 6.5 | 6.2 | 6.4 | 6.1 |
| 6 | 6.9 | 7.2 | 7.2 | 7.9 |
| 7 | 8.5 | 8.4 | 8.2 | 7.9 |
| 8 | 8.9 | 9. | 8.9 | 9.1 |

These figures indicate a greater language difficulty for the German children in the lower elementary grades, while in the upper four grades the retardation appears no greater in language than in arithmetic. The natural conclusion would be that while the language difficulty is nowhere indicated as a problem of serious proportions, the children of German speaking homes enter school with some degree of linguistic handicap. However, the handicap seems to be gradually overcome during the first four years of school.

This conclusion is not in accord with the findings of Jordan, [14] who tested 501 seventh and eighth grade children in the Minneapolis Public Schools. Of this group 129 were American, 78 were of Norwegian speaking parents, 159 of Swedish speaking parents, 54 of Rumanian speaking parents, and 81 were from homes where Russian or Jewish was the prevailing language. He gave a series of objective tests, half of which were constructed in such a way as to lay great emphasis on language ability, while the other half of the series were based on such skills as memory span, number completion, geometrical forms and other drills specifically designed to make the tests "non-language." The results of his testing showed a very decided superiority of the American children in the language tests while in the non-language tests the Americans did little better than to hold their own.

[14] R. H. Jordan, Nationality and School Progress (Public School Publishing Company, Bloomington, Ill., 1921, pp. 59-75.

Jordan goes so far as to deny that there is any difference at all between the innate abilities of the nationalities used in his study. He says:

> "When all of these nationalities are fused into an American stock, and really assimilated, the disappearance of language difficulties will carry with it the disappearance of other marked differences among the descendents of these children."

Whipple,[15] in a summary of his results in the testing of students at the University of Michigan, says of the lower six per cent:

> "---several were students of foreign extraction whose low scores must have been in a considerable measure produced by a lack of ready command of English."

Richard D. Allen,[16] made an investigation of fifty children of American parentage and fifty from Italian speaking homes in Providence, Rhode Island. The two groups had almost identical school records; their chronological and educational ages were practically the same; and in every way it was evident that one group was equal to the other in intelligence. As measured by the Stanford-Binet Scale, a comparatively non-verbal test, the median I. Q. was only slightly in favor of the American group. But when tested by the National Intelligence Tests, a more verbal type of test, the average I. Q. of the American children was 103,

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[15] Guy M. Whipple, "Intelligence Tests in Colleges and Universities, "Twenty-First Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education (1922), p. 266.

[16] R. D. Allen, and S. S. Colvin, "Mental Tests and Linguistic Ability, "The Journal of Educational Psychology, Vol. 14, (January, 1923), p. 5

while that of the Italian group was only 90. The explanation is simple. The Italian children were put to an unfair handicap in the National tests because of the stress placed upon language skill.

It has already been shown in Table 6 that in the Metropolitan Achievement Tests the children of German speaking homes in the Mott schools did not fare much better in the arithmetic sections than in the language test. In fact, the German children did not show a perceptible retardation in either language or arithmetic as compared to the American children.

It might be argued that a comparison of Language and arithmetic scores offers no valid means of ascertaining to what extent language skill enters in as a factor, since the arithmetic tests themselves may require considerable knowledge of vocabulary for the interpretation of the problems. In an attempt to throw further light on the language factor as a determining influence upon the results of the Mott tests, a comparison of the scores made by the children from German speaking homes in the verbal and non-verbal sections of the arithmetic achievement test was made. With the exception of the first grade tests, the arithmetic sections of the Metropolitan battery are divided into two parts: "Arithmetic Fundamentals" and Arithmetic Problems." The Fundamentals section requires no reading skill at all except a knowledge of such words as "add," "subtract," "divide," "multiply," and other key words used in everyday arithmetic

routine and which every child could hardly escape learning. These key words appear singly or in short phrases over the exercises to be worked out by the student. Language skill here is reduced practically to zero. In the "Arithmetic Problems" section the objective is to test for skill in arithmetical reasoning; hence the problems are bound up in wordy paragraphs in which language and vocabulary skill are certainly important assets to successful solutions.

As would be expected, the German children of the lower grades obtained lower scores in the verbal tests than in the non-verbal (Table 7). But in consideration of the very pronounced, and very obvious, linguistic difficulties the children of German speaking homes always have in the primary grades, it is surprising that there was not an even greater difference.

Table 7

Comparative Median Grade Equivalents of Children from German Speaking Homes in Verbal and Non-Verbal Arithmetic Tests. Mott, North Dakota, 1935

| Median Grade Equivalents in Grades 1 to 8 Inclusive in the Following Types of Arithmetic Tests: | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Grade | Number | Verbal Test | Non-Verbal Test |
| 2 | 17 | 2.7 | 3.2 |
| 3 | 17 | 3.6 | 3.9 |
| 4 | 18 | 4.8 | 5.1 |
| 5 | 19 | 6. | 6.2 |

Table 7 (continued)

| Median Grade Equivalents in Grades 1 to 8 Inclusive in the Following Types of Arithmetic Tests: | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Grade | Number | Verbal Test | Non-Verbal Test |
| 6 | 19 | 8. | 7.8 |
| 7 | 9 | 7.7 | 8.1 |
| 8 | 9 | 9.1 | 9.1 |

The German children in the third and fourth grades also experienced a greater difficulty with the verbal section than with the non-verbal part of the arithmetic test. German children in grades five to eight inclusive, on the average, were less handicapped by language difficulties. In grade six they apparently had less trouble with the problems than with the fundamentals. The better showing made on the non-verbal test in the seventh grade is made relatively unimportant by the small number of German speaking students in that grade.

## Summary of Chapter 4

A comparison of the scores made by American and German speaking pupils in tests for language and arithmetic ability shows no significant difference in the abilities of the two groups. Children from German speaking homes in the first, second, and third grades, as would be expected, had much better scores in arithmetic than in language. But in grades four to eight inclusive the German children, on the average, had no greater difficulty with the language tests than with the arithmetic tests (Table 6).

With the exception of the sixth grade, the American children ranked consistently ahead of the German speaking children in the language tests, but the margin of superiority was not great enough to be of great significance (Table 6).

In comparing the scores of children from German speaking homes on verbal (problem type) and non-verbal (fundamentals type) arithmetic tests it was found that the children in the lower elementary grades experienced the most difficulty with the problems type. This suggests a language handicap. In the upper elementary grades, the German pupils seemed not to be bothered particularly by the language requirements of the problems tests, indicating that the language factor ceases to be a major problem after the first few years of school.

# CHAPTER 5

## AN EXPERIMENT IN CLASS SEGREGATION ACCORDING TO NATIONALITY

The seriousness of the problem of handling children of German speaking families in the first grade in the Mott schools has been referred to in preceding chapters. These children enter school with a serious language handicap which precludes the possibility of their doing school work on a par with their American speaking companions, at least until such time has elapsed as to make it possible for them to overcome their language difficulties. In Chapter 2, it has been suggested that in addition to a language handicap these children suffer a lower quality of home nurture. This places them at a disadvantage in the acquisition of a satisfactory sum of skills and factual information. In Chapter 1, the injustices of heterogeneous grouping were brought out and attention drawn to the amazing differences in the abilities of children to do specific tasks, even in homogeneous groups. How much worse then is a classroom where not only the individual differences of a normal group exist, but in addition the differences which result from the admixture of nationalities and the consequent variations of linguistic abilities and cultural background.

For many years the first grade groups in the Mott schools have been made unwieldy by the necessity of adjusting the classroom procedure to fit the slower students. The

slower pupils were, in the majority of cases, the children from German speaking homes. Bright children were prevented from making the progress their abilities warranted. First grade groups were seriously retarded as a result of the awkward situation.

The records of the Mott schools show that at the end of the school year 1931-1932 twenty-two first grade children out of a total first grade enrollment of fifty-six had failed of promotion. Of the twenty-two failures, sixteen were children from homes definitely German in all characteristics. The total number of German children in the grade was twenty-six as compared with thirty American children in the same grade.

At the end of the school year 1932-1933, it was found that out of a total of fifty-one children in the first grade sixteen had failed. Out of the sixteen failures, eleven were from German speaking homes. This preponderance of German children among the failures was made more serious by the fact that out of a total grade enrollment of fifty-one there were but twenty-one children who were from homes definitely German in language and customs. Thus while the children of German speaking homes numbered only about forty per cent of the total group, they were in the majority among the failures by a ratio of about two to one.

During the school year 1933-1934 seventeen children out of a total first grade enrollment of fifty-two failed to

be promoted. Of these seventeen failures, twelve were from German speaking homes. Here again the German children were outnumbered thirty to twenty-two. Yet they dominated the failure list by a ratio greater than two to one.

The abnormally large percentage of total failures, and the radical predominance of the German children on the failure list, was indicative of some very serious difficulty causing the retardation of these pupils. The unfortunate circumstances which necessitated the instruction of children of both American and German speaking families in the same large groups was felt to be the basic cause of the retardation. There was clearly a need for the separate handling of these two groups.

In order to meet this need, provisions were made for a separate first grade room for children from German speaking homes. At the beginning of the school year 1934-1935 a teacher was selected on the basis of special qualifications to handle an abnormal group of this kind. Especial care was taken to provide an attractive room where many pictures interesting to children, window decorations, brightly colored wall illustrations, and other things of interest to children abounded. The brightly lighted room had new desks, new kindergarten chairs and tables. It was believed that by providing an attractive environment for these children their school life would be made more pleasant, and their interest in school work stimulated.

Forty children entered the first grade in the fall of 1934. Of these, eighteen were found to be from homes where German was spoken regularly in daily conversation and whose background was definitely of the German type. These were segregated and placed in the special room. The remaining twenty-two children went into the regular first grade. The seventeen children who failed to be promoted from the first grade of the preceding year were placed in a room where "repeaters" of the first and second grades were given separate instruction.

The teacher of the experimental room began her attack on the problem by attempting a diagnosis of the pre-school training and achievement of the children. She found an amazing deficiency in the knowledge of what would normally be called familiar things. Few of the children knew anything about objects not common to homes where only the barest necessities existed. It was surprising to find that only a few of the eighteen children recognized pictures of such animals as the bear, fox, elephant, lion, and others which most children learn about in their picture books before entering school. In mechanical abilities they were also retarded, being very much below average in the ability to draw simple diagrams or to do such simple activities of the primary room as using scissors, placing letter cards in a row, coloring simple diagrams and illustrations with crayons, or doing other tasks requiring an elementary degree of

deftness with the hands. Everything pointed to an absolute absence of any pre-school training or activity in mental or mechanical pursuits.

The first step in the training of these children was to provide for them the necessary illustrative materials to allow for a broadening of their knowledge of familiar objects. From the many magazines collected the children cut and mounted common objects, animals, flowers and birds. Brightly colored blocks, colored sticks, window silhouettes, picture posters, parquetry blocks, and other devices of interest to children were provided.

During the first six weeks of the term much time was taken for handiwork and drawing. The walls of the room soon became covered with exhibits of drawings, posters and cut-outs, while progress charts encouraged a diligent effort on the part of each pupil to accomplish as much as possible.

Formal discipline was at first relinquished in favor of a free, cooperative atmosphere in which the children were permitted to intermingle, work together, and compare results. The teacher tried to act in the capacity of friend and counselor rather than as a hard taskmaster. By this means, it was possible to counteract the backward, inferior attitude characteristic of so many of the small children from the German speaking homes. The opportunity thus afforded for self expression and freedom of activity created

a feeling of self reliance and confidence. Toward the close of the first semester, however, it was found necessary to remove some of the laxity in discipline in favor of a more orderly and intensive activity in reading, writing and number work.

One of the most interesting phases of the work in this experimental class was the effort made during the first and second six-weeks periods to acquaint the children with the simple English used in ordinary childhood conversation and along the lines of the English used in beginning reading. It was for this reason, as well as to instill ease and confidence in the children, that they were at first allowed much freedom for conversation and intermingling. The teacher, of course, directed this conversation as much as possible. An expansion of vocabulary was encouraged and a constant effort made to broaden speech ability.

Reading shared with speech practice and creative activities during this early period to take up practically the whole school day. Writing was given some time, but number work was postponed until late in the first semester. In reading, the major objective was thoroughness. All objects in the room were labelled with small cards printed with a stamp printing set. This enabled the children to associate the words with the objects as they were taken up in the reading books. Proceeding slowly, the children at first memorized the simple words of the preprimer by means of

flash card drills. Much time was spent in discussing the stories after they had been read. Thus, by a rate of progress not too rapid for their abilities, the children affected a complete mastery not only of their reading vocabulary but of the thought content and power of self expression concerning it.

On November twentieth the Pintner-Cunningham Primary Mental Test was given this group of children as well as to the regular first grade room. The results showed the German children in the experimental room to have an average I. Q. of 87 while the children in the regular first grade had an average of 106. The difference was not surprising in view of the known retardation of the German children in the knowledge of familiar things and their obvious deficiency in mechanical deftness. No doubt the language handicap also affected the results, not in reading and writing, since neither were required in the test, but in understanding the speech of the teacher in her dictation of directions. It was felt at this time (November twentieth) that the children were quite able to speak and understand simple conversational English, but there were a number of words in the Manual of Directions, out of which the teacher dictated the test proceedings, which probably were new to some of the children, and which no doubt contributed to the lowness of some of the scores. The seriousness of the differences between the average I. Q.'s was made less signifi-

cant by the fact that two German children received I. Q. ratings of 44 and 50. They were able to comprehend but a small part of the testing procedure. These two very low scores brought down the average of the class so perceptibly that it does not express the true intelligence level of the group (Table 8).

Table 8

Comparative Distribution of Intelligence Quotients in Experimental First Grade and Regular First Grade, Mott, North Dakota, November 20, 1935

| Distribution of I. Q.'s in Each of the Following Grades: | | |
|---|---|---|
| I. Q. | Experimental First Grade | Regular First Grade |
| 44 - 49 | 1 | |
| 50 - 54 | 1 | |
| 55 - 59 | | |
| 60 - 64 | | |
| 65 - 69 | | |
| 70 - 74 | | |
| 75 - 79 | | |
| 80 - 84 | 1 | 2 |
| 85 - 89 | 2 | |
| 90 - 94 | 4 | 2 |
| 95 - 99 | 2 | |
| 100-104 | 6 | 4 |
| 105-109 | | 6 |
| 110-114 | | 2 |
| 115-119 | | 3 |
| 120-124 | | 2 |
| 125-129 | | 1 |
| 130-134 | 1 | |

After the Christmas holidays intensive work was begun on number work to overcome the neglect of this portion of the work during the first twelve weeks. At this stage the children developed rapidly in their work in arithmetic. At the close of the first semester they had done nothing but

learn to count to ten. By the end of the twenty-fourth week they could count to 100 and add simple digits, the sum of which did not exceed ten. At the close of the year their arithmetical ability, while slightly below the average of the regular first grade, was considerably above normal for first grade children (Table 11).

After the vacation period intensive reading was stressed and more attention given to speed. It was interesting to note that the German children in the experimental room were five weeks behind the regular first grade room in finishing their preprimers, a month behind in completing their primers, only three weeks behind in finishing book one of the basic series, and at the close of the year had completed one and one-half supplementary readers in comparison with the two and one-half covered by the regular first grade. To the casual observer the German children read as well as the children in the regular first grade. But they were unable to read as much material because of lack of time caused by the slow reading procedure of the first half of the year.

The Metropolitan Achievement tests were given all grades on May twentieth. The results in the two first grade rooms discussed here showed an average general achievement grade equivalent of 2.4 for the German children in the experimental room and 2.6 for the children of English speaking homes in the regular first grade. In consideration of the

fact that both averages are very satisfactory, the comparative retardation of the German speaking children was not significant (Table 9).

Table 9

Comparative Distribution of General Achievement Grade Equivalents in Experimental First Grade and Regular First Grade, Mott, North Dakota, May 20, 1935

| Distribution of Grade Equivalents in the Following Grades: | | |
|---|---|---|
| Grade Equivalent | Experimental First Grade | Regular First Grade |
| 1.2 - 1.3 | 1 | |
| 1.4 - 1.5 | | |
| 1.6 - 1.7 | 2 | 1 |
| 1.8 - 1.9 | 2 | 1 |
| 2.0 - 2.1 | 1 | 2 |
| 2.2 - 2.3 | | |
| 2.4 - 2.5 | 5 | 2 |
| 2.6 - 2.7 | 3 | 4 |
| 2.8 - 2.9 | 2 | 7 |
| 3.0 - 3.1 | 2 | 4 |
| 3.2 - 3.3 | | 1 |

In reading, the children in the experimental room had an average grade equivalent of 2.2. The regular first grade had 2.5. Here the suggestion of language difficulty is manifested in a slight degree, but the small gap between the averages is indicative of gratifying progress in view of the extreme language handicap evident at the beginning of the school year (Table 10).

Table 10

Comparative Distribution of Reading Achievement Grade Equivalents in Experimental First Grade and Regular First Grade, Mott, North Dakota, May 20, 1935

Table 10 (continued)

| Distribution of Grade Equivalents in the Following Grades: | | |
|---|---|---|
| Grade Equivalent | Experimental First Grade | Regular First Grade |
| .8 - 0.9 | 1 | |
| 1.0 - 1.1 | | |
| 1.2 - 1.3 | 1 | 1 |
| 1.4 - 1.5 | 1 | |
| 1.6 - 1.7 | 3 | 1 |
| 1.8 - 1.9 | 1 | |
| 2.0 - 2.1 | 1 | 2 |
| 2.2 - 2.3 | 2 | 4 |
| 2.4 - 2.5 | 2 | 1 |
| 2.6 - 2.7 | 1 | 5 |
| 2.8 - 2.9 | 4 | 1 |
| 3.0 - 3.1 | 1 | 5 |
| 3.2 - 3.3 | | 2 |

In arithmetic the average grade equivalent in the experimental room fell short of the regular first grade average by only one month, the former being 2.6, the latter, 2.7. That the children of German speaking homes in the experimental room were not seriously behind the American speaking children is apparent at a glance (Table 11).

Table 11

Comparative Distribution of Arithmetic Avhievement Grade Equivalents in Experimental First Grade and Regular First Grade, Mott, North Dakota, May 20, 1935

| Distribution of Grade Equivalents in the Following Grades: | | |
|---|---|---|
| Grade Equivalent | Experimental First Grade | Regular First Grade |
| 1.6 - 1.7 | 1 | |
| 1.8 - 1.9 | 3 | 1 |
| 2.0 - 2.1 | 2 | 2 |
| 2.2 - 2.3 | 1 | 1 |
| 2.4 - 2.5 | 1 | 1 |
| 2.6 - 2.7 | 1 | 2 |

Table 11 (continued)

| Distribution of Grade Equivalents in the Following Grades: | | |
|---|---|---|
| Grade Equivalent | Experimental First Grade | Regular First Grade |
| 2.8 - 2.9 | 3 | 9 |
| 3.0 - 3.1 | 4 | 3 |
| 3.2 - 3.3 | 2 | 2 |
| 3.4 - 3.5 | | 1 |

The most gratifying feature of this experiment in segregation according to the presence or absence of language difficulty lies in the promotion figures. As explained at the beginning of this chapter, there were twenty-two failures in the first grade in 1931-1932, of which sixteen were children from German speaking homes. Sixteen first grade children failed in 1932-1933, of which eleven were of German extraction. Seventeen first graders failed in 1933-1934, of which twelve were from German homes. During the school year discussed in this chapter, and during which the experimental room for children with a language handicap was conducted, there was a total of four failures in the combined first grades. Of the four, one was a child of English speaking parents and attended the regular first grade. The other three were children of German speaking parents and were members of the experimental first grade. An examination of the distribution of achievement scores in Table 9 will show that the judgment of the teachers in the determination of promotions and failures is borne out by the tests. The three failures in the experimental room were the children whose

scores were the three lowest on the achievement tests, and the single failure in the regular first grade had the lowest test score in his room.

## Summary of Chapter 5

During the school year 1934-1935 the first grade in the Mott, North Dakota, schools was divided according to the nationality of the pupils. Twenty-two native American children were placed in the regular first grade and the eighteen children of German speaking parents were placed in an experimental room in charge of a special teacher. A procedure especially designed to overcome quickly the language handicap of the children in this experimental room was followed.

On November twentieth, after the lapse of enough time to allow the foreign children to learn rudimentary English, the Pintner-Cunningham Primary Mental Test was given both sections of the first grade. The results showed the German children in the experimental room to have an average I. Q. of 87 while the children in the regular first grade had an average of 106. Since the test was given early in the year, it is likely that the known deficiency of the German children in preschool training, their lack of mechanical deftness, and their language handicap, contributed to the lowness of their average score.

The Metropolitan Achievement Tests were given both sections of the first grade on May twentieth. The average grade equivalent for the children from German speaking

homes was 2.4. The native American children in the regular first grade had an average of 2.6. The superiority of the American children was hardly pronounced enough to be significant. In view of the serious achievement difficulties encountered by the first grade children of German speaking parents in previous years the success of the experimental room was proved by the achievement tests.

To determine the comparative abilities of the two groups in language and arithmetic, the scores of the two rooms in these sections of the test were tabulated and compared. In reading, the foreign children were behind the Americans by three months. In arithmetic, they were one month behind. The logical conclusion of this comparison would be that the German speaking children had, to an appreciable extent, overcome their language difficulties.

During the year this experiment was conducted, there were but four first grade children who failed to be promoted. One of these was a child of native American parents; the other three of German speaking parents. Compared with twenty-two first grade failures in 1931-1932, of which sixteen were children of German speaking homes, sixteen first grade failures in 1932-1933, of which eleven were German, and seventeen failures in 1933-1934, of which twelve were of German extraction, the success of the segregation of foreign children for special instruction was given further proof.

# CHAPTER 6

## THE HOME LIFE OF THE TYPICAL GERMAN-RUSSIAN IMMIGRANT FARMER

As a part of this study the author visited thirty homes of the children classified as German. No conscious attempt was made to select the homes of the lowest order among these people, but it is true that the places visited were selected as being typical of the immigrant farmer whose characteristics and mode of living remain very much the same as those of the Old World peasant. The following description of the personal traits and living conditions of these farmers is probably not typical of the entire 138 German pupils discussed in this study because the more completely Americanized German families were omitted from the list. But the descriptions do show the circumstances surrounding the truly German immigrant type of people living in Hettinger County.

In our visits to the homes of these people the dwellings were found to be predominately small, sometimes with hard packed dirt floors, and usually with no facilities for either comfort or privacy for individual members of the family. Some houses were constructed of adobe, a sun-dried clay which is usually whitewashed, but the surface of which becomes disintegrated and weather beaten after a few years. Three of the homes visited had house and barn built into one building with a doorway leading direct-

ly from the family living quarters to the stable. Apparently no care was taken in such homes to keep the swine and barnyard fowl from using both house and barn. In one case visitors were asked to remain outside while a small pig and several chickens were ejected from the living room.

On the other hand, a few more prosperous individuals had large houses, some of which were kept scrupulously clean. It was noticeable, however, that these large, clean houses were almost always conspicuously lacking in furnishings. In no case, even at the farms where tractors, automobiles, expensive barns and outbuildings bespoke prosperity, were the homes comfortably furnished. Floors were bare and well scrubbed; walls were also unadorned except for an occasional religious picture or the likeness of an ancestor. It was extremely rare to find upholstered furniture, comfortable easy chairs, davenports or lounges. Straight backed, hardwood chairs, an occasional wooden rocker, and, in many cases, benches for each side of the dining table were found.

German immigrant farmers believe in the advantages of large families. The questionaire given to eighty-eight pupils in the upper grades of the Mott schools, described later in this chapter, shows an average of eight children to the family among this class of people. Family groups numbering eight to twelve were found living in a one-room house. Other families of the same size were found living

in two rooms, while only a minority had sufficient room to allow for segregation of the children into bedrooms according to sex and age. Frequently four children were reported to be sleeping in one bed. In all but a few cases, it was apparent that the children of these families had no opportunity for doing school work at home unless in company with the entire family around the living room table. As a matter of fact, if a room had been available for privacy, it would still be impossible for the children to use it, because in practically every case no central heating plant was present. In winter only the living room, heated by a stove, and the kitchen, heated by a coal range, were usable for other purposes than as sleeping quarters in even the most progressive families in this group.

The housekeeping in about half of these homes was indescribably careless and filthy. Floors in many cases were covered with an accumulation of kitchen refuse, droppings from the dining table, cigarette butts, tobacco, mud, and even the manure of the barnyard fowl. Apparently these people give no thought to ventilation. The stale air and household odors have a nauseating effect on persons not accustomed to the lack of fresh air.

The older members of the family assume an attitude of coarse cordiality toward visitors. They are naturally sociable. Within their own colonies they congregate in large numbers each Sunday at the community church (they are

practically all Catholics) after which friends and neighbors assemble at one of the homes for an afternoon's social gathering. To the accompaniment of boisterous conversation and much drinking of homemade liquor, they indulge in about the only type of amusement they know.

Many of the older members of the families are entirely illiterate. Some cannot write enough to sign their names. A large number of the women wear the traditional black shawl which is used to cover the head as well as the body.

The attitude of husband toward wife is in keeping with the attitude toward the children. These farm women are burdened not only with the chores of the household but with the problems of canning large supplies of foods, cutting up and processing of animals butchered on the farm, the making of butter, cheese and soap, and the responsibilities of caring for swine, chickens, turkeys and gardens. On shopping expeditions to town, the men habitually spend the afternoon at a beer parlor playing cards while the women make the purchases, load the car or wagon, and then wait patiently until late evening for the husband to emerge from the saloon.

It was difficult to converse with a large number of the parents in these German-Russian immigrant homes because of their inability to speak English. While all were able to understand some English, their replies needed transla-

ting by the children of the family. Always cordial to visitors, the older members of the family are receptive to suggestions concerning school progress and remedial work for their children, but their cooperative attitude is only a pretense stimulated by a desire to be amiable. At heart, they have only a passive and superficial sympathy for education beyond the rudimentary stage. They are outspoken in their assertion that children should be raised to furnish labor for the farm, and eventually to take over the family farming interests. It seems to the observer from the outside that their attitude toward their children is entirely mercenary and without devotion. This statement, is, of course, a general one and not meant to apply to all. The writer has seen numberless cases where children needing medical attention were ignored by the parents even after having the matter called to their attention. The discovery of weak eyes, adenoids, diseased tonsils, malnutrition, decayed teeth, or other serious matters of health needing correction is often received with a shrug of the shoulders and no attempt made to have the matter corrected. Small children who have great distances to walk to school are often sent forth on days so cold that it is obviously unsafe to attempt the trip. During the coldest days of winter the safety of these small children walking to school is one of the major problems of the administrators of the school. In many cases, the financial inability to provide for the

health and safety of the children is probably the explanation of this rather amazing indifference, but in many cases it must be admitted that ignorance, prejudice, and adherence to traditional superstitions and fallacies are causes.

Education beyond the first five grades of the elementary school is looked upon as a waste of time by many of these immigrant people, and the children who do attend beyond that stage usually do so because of the child's own insistence, the compulsory school laws, or the lack of work on the farm. Occasionally a youth from such a family manages to attend an institution of higher learning. Usually he makes an excellent record. It is noticeable that the children of this class of people who have intelligence and the will to progress are usually far more diligent and persistent than the average. Several from Hettinger County have distinguished themselves in higher education and have gone on to financial success. But the rank and file of the youth of this sect seem resigned to the belief that the opportunities of the outer world are for the benefit of the more fortunate classes. The greater part of them eventually settle down on the farm of their parents, or on one nearby. The girls usually marry neighboring farmers.

The personal uncleanliness of both parents and children included in this German-Russian peasant group is almost unbelievable to those not familiar with them. It is a facetious contention among teachers in the Mott schools

that some of the children from these homes are "sewed into a suit of woolen underwear in the fall and not liberated until late spring." If this is not literally true, it might well be, since many of the children in the schoolrooms show no evidence of ever having a bath during the winter months. Their hands, arms and necks actually have the appearance of having a dirty incrustation over the skin. The body odors of such children are, of course, very offensive, and an attempt has been made at the schools to provide shower bathing facilities for them. But it has been found that the clothing worn by the children is to permeated with perspiration, dirt, and offensive odors that the bathing effects little, if any, improvement.

That this tendency toward physical uncleanliness has a direct effect on the health of these children is clearly reflected in comparative attendence figures. The group of 138 children of German speaking homes (Chapter 2) had a percentage of attendance for the school year 1934-1935 of 91.1 per cent. That of the American children was 94.8 per cent. This comparison is made more significant by pointing out that the children of German immigrant parents, and others having an unsatisfactory standard of living are, in practically every case, rarely absent from school except for the very necessary causes. It is a well known fact among the teachers in the Mott schools that the parents in homes of low estate are the most anxious to shift the care of

their children to the school whenever possible. Crowded homes and the burden of many children create a situation where the harassed parents permit children to attend school in spite of bad colds, skin eruptions, fevers, and even infectious diseases which do not entirely incapacitate them.

Unnecessary absences are far more prevalent among the children from satisfactory homes than among those from less satisfactory homes. Excuse slips, used at the schools, are sent home with each child after every absence. The slips require that the cause of the absence be inserted by the parent signing it. The files of excuse slips, kept by each teacher, show conclusively that the children of the less fortunate families are absent for causes other than sickness to a much smaller extent than those of the more fortunate families. In the high school, however, the case is reversed. During the season of the year when extra labor is required on the farm the boys of this group are kept out of school, or required to quit school for the balance of the term. Thus we have the strange paradox of a people over-anxious to send children to school when they are of no material use at home, yet entirely without conscience in taking them out of school for selfish reasons. But among the children in the elementary school only a very serious illness keeps them at home, and the attendance figures given above would tend to show that serious illnesses attack the children of these families oftener than the others.

Undernourishment probably has its effect on the health of these children. It was found difficult to determine the exact foods used in the average diet among these immigrant people because foods used at specific times vary with their availability and cost. In general, there seemed to be little regard for the principles of correct diet. White bread, potatoes, and pork constitute the daily food regimen in many of the homes during the winter months, with only an occasional variation. In questioning about two dozen children of German immigrant families in the first and second grades the fact was brought out that most of them have only plain white bread and coffee for breakfast. In observing the contents of the lunch pails brought to school by these children during the year, it was found that each pail invariably contained but a single bread and butter sandwich. Rarely was there fruit, cheese, meat, or salad, never a thermos bottle containing a soup or hot chocolate. In a few instances, it was found that parents made a practice of giving each child five cents with which to buy a candy bar for lunch.

All children in the Mott schools were given a dental examination during the month of December, 1934, by a competent local dentist. Disregarding the minor dental deficiencies of average children and speaking only of the serious cases of tooth decay and malformation, the results of the examination showed that of the 370 children examined,

thirty-nine were in serious need of dental attention. Twenty-three of the thirty-nine were children of German immigrant farmers. Remembering that the children of German families are in the minority in the Mott schools, a ratio of two to three, the fact that over half the children with bad teeth were members of those families would indicate that the German immigrant farmer does not pay enough attention to dental care for his children. It would also indicate that diet may contribute to the decay and malformation of the teeth of these children.

In January, 1935, the Woman's Club of the city of Mott announced its readiness to pay the cost of providing glasses for the eight school children whose vision was most faulty and whose families were the least able to finance the purchase of glasses. Through the cooperation of the county nurse and a local optician not only the eyes of the school children were examined but they were also given a complete physical examination. Only three of the eight children provided with glasses as the result of this project were from the German immigrant families, but it is especially significant that of the nineteen children showing definite attributes of malnutrition two-thirds were members of the group of 138 children of German immigrant families discussed throughout this study.

A questionaire was submitted to 88 junior and senior high school students from German speaking homes in an ef-

fort to secure a sampling of data concerning the educational facilities in the homes of these people. Upper grade students were selected to be questioned because it was felt that the answers would be more accurately and intelligently given than they would by the younger children. The questions asked were as follows:

1. Name_____
2. Age_____
   years months
3. Where were you born?_____
4. Where was your father born?_____
5. Where was your mother born?_____
6. Does your family speak any other language than English in home conversation?_____
7. If so, what language, and to what extent is it used in your home?_____
8. Did you learn to speak German before entering school?_____
9. If your family speaks a language other than English in the home, say whether or not it has hindered you in your high school studies_____
10. Did it hinder you in the primary grades?_____
11. Do you have a radio at home?_____
12. Do you take a daily newspaper?_____
    Weekly?_____
13. In what language is it printed?_____
14. Do you have a dictionary at home?_____
15. Do you have a set of encyclopedias at home?___
16. Estimate how many books you have in your home_____

17. Have your parents helped you with your school work since you first started to school?_____

18. If so, to what extent?_____

19. When you study at home do you do so in private or do you work in the living room?_____

20. How many brothers and sisters have you?_____

21. What magazines do your family subscribe to at present?_____

The questionaire was given to all junior and senior high school students (233 pupils) and from that number there were eighty-eight who answered question number six in the affirmative. It is with these eighty-eight students whose home conversation was either wholly or in part in the German language that this study is concerned.

The eighty-eight answered questionaires showed that thirty-eight per cent of the students had parents both of whom were born in Germany. The parents of twenty-four per cent were both born in Russia. Eight per cent had one parent born in Germany and the other in the United States; twelve per cent were of parents born in Hungary; eight per cent were half Russian and half American; and ten per cent had native American parents whose language continued to be German.

About twenty per cent of the students confessed that their parents spoke German exclusively in home conversation. Approximately fifty per cent said that German was used "a little". Sixty-seven per cent stated that they had learned

the rudiments of the German language before starting to school; the other thirty-three per cent answered "no" to question eight. Only twelve students believed that having learned to speak German before entering school had handicapped them in the primary grades; ten thought that the dominance of German speech in the home had a detrimental influence on their scholastic progress in high school. Fifty-six reported the presence of a radio in their homes, while thirty-two were from homes without radios. Only thirty two had the advantage of a daily newspaper, but most of the remaining fifty-six students had a weekly newspaper at home. All the daily newspapers were printed in English, but seventy per cent of the weekly papers were in German. All except four had a dictionary of some sort in the home, but only five had encyclopedias.

According to the pupil's estimate, there was an average of forty-nine books per home, although, when compared with observations made by the author in thirty typical German immigrant homes, this estimate is probably an exaggeration. Fifty-four stated that their parents helped them "some" with school work, twenty-four received no help at all, and eight reported that their parents helped them a great deal. Sixty-three said that they studied in the family living room, and it is quite unlikely that many of the remainder actually have a satisfactory private place for real study. According to the answers to the last question, the

great majority of magazines subscribed to in these homes are farm journals. News magazines, and others of greater educational advantage, were listed by only seven of the students.

# CHAPTER 7

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The problem of handling children of the foreign born in the schools of Mott, North Dakota, has been clarified to a gratifying extent by the data contained in this study. In the past, children of foreign stock have been known to be deficient to some extent in school attainment, but the true extent of their deficiency has never been known. Teachers have assumed that these children are inferior in intelligence, and it has been alleged that such an assumption has resulted in subconscious discrimination against them. Foreign children in the primary grades have always been a problem in the Mott schools, because, when placed in the same grade with native American children, their language handicap and lack of preschool training makes it impossible for them to keep up to the pace set by the English speaking pupils. Conversely, it is unfair to the American children if the rate of progress is set within the ability of the foreign group.

This study has sought to answer the following questions which have persisted in the minds of the teachers in the Mott schools:

1. Are the children of the German-Russian-Hungarian immigrants in the Mott vicinity as intelligent as those of native American parents?

2. Do the children of foreign parents rank behind the

American children in achievement as measured by achievement tests?

3. How do achievement test scores compare with teacher estimates of progress as shown by the records of school marks?

4. To what extent does the language factor affect the comprehension of the German pupils?

5. Would the isolation of the German children of the first grade into a separate classroom, under special instructional procedures, result in a marked improvement in achievement?

6. What is there about the home environment of the German children that may contribute to their scholastic difficulties?

In an attempt to answer the first question above, the Pintner-Cunningham Primary Mental Test was given the children of grades one and two, and the Otis Group Intelligence Scale to grades three to eight inclusive, at the beginning of the school year 1934-1935. Only the scores of 138 children from homes definitely German in language and customs, and 200 children of native American parents were considered. The tests showed that the average I. Q. of the 138 German children was 96; that of the 200 American children, 103. It has been suggested in Chapter 2 that in view of the fact that an average I. Q. of 95 does not indicate a serious mental deficiency, and that an average I. Q. of 103 is above

the national norm, the seven point comparative retardation of the German children is not statistically significant.

The language handicap could not have seriously affected the test results since the primary tests were entirely of the picture-symbol type and in the other grades the language requirements were so elementary that it would be absurd to assume that even the poorest student would fail to understand the printed direction. The suggestion has been made that the lower quality of home nurture affected the success of the German children in the tests. The lack of cultural and intellectual activity in the home is undoubtedly reflected in the child's failure to acquire the skills and mechanical deftness necessary to write a good test of any kind. The fact that the first grade German children averaged eleven points behind the American children in the same grade supports the suggestion that the lack of preschool training in mechanical skills and factual information had something to do with the lowness of the average of the German children. A plausible conclusion would be that while the average I. Q. of the German children was seven points below the native American average, their deficiency was not serious enough to be taken as positive proof of their mental inferiority.

Comparative Achievement of the German and English Speaking Pupils

At the close of the year this study was made, the

Metropolitan Achievement test battery was given all elementary grade children. The children from German speaking homes averaged only two months behind the American pupils in grade ages, taking the average over the eight grades. The tests also brought out that there were no more German speaking pupils five months or more retarded than there were American children.

When thrown into competition with native American children in a mixed grouping the scholastic difficulties of foreign children in the first grade are bound to be increased. Instructional procedure designed for average pupils in such a heterogeneous group makes it impossible for the less favored foreign children to keep up. Thus the two experimental rooms, the one in which the children of German parents were given special instruction, the other in which first grade repeaters of the previous year were given special attention, no doubt helped the first grade German children in their achievement average. The consequent raising of the achievement average of the German children in the first grade would be reflected in a higher average for the entire group of German pupils

A Comparison of Achievement Test Scores

With the Record of School Marks

The records of the Mott schools show that for the three years previous to the one in which this study was made the numerical scholastic average of the children from

German speaking homes was 83 as compared with an average of 87 for the children of native American homes. A further examination of the records showed that of the aggregate number of students who failed of promotion during the same three year period sixty-four per cent were children from German speaking homes. This predominance of failures among the German speaking pupils is increased in consideration of the fact that they were in the minority by a ratio of approximately three to two. The failures among the German children of the first grades during this period were so numerous that there is an indication of a severe language handicap.

As stated before, the achievement tests revealed no more German children five months or more retarded than there were American children. Thus the tests do not corroborate the validity of the many failures among the German children as shown by the promotion figures of the previous three years. The implication is made here that the German speaking children are, in many cases, the victims of an unmeaning discrimination on the part of teachers in the determination of promotions.

## The Language Factor

In tests for language and arithmetic ability, the German children in the first grade ranked five months behind the American children in the former, and three months retarded in the latter. In the grades above the first, the

German children, while slightly retarded in both language and arithmetic, had practically no more difficulty with the language tests than with the arithmetic.

A comparison of the scores of children from German speaking homes on verbal and non-verbal arithmetic tests showed that the children in the primary grades had more difficulty with the verbal tests (problem type). This suggests a language handicap. In the upper grades no significant difference in ability was noted in the two types of tests. Further support is thus given the belief that the language handicap of the German children largely disappears after the first year or two in school.

Class Segregation According to Nationality

During the school year 1934-1935, the first grade in the Mott schools was divided according to the nationality of the pupils. At the end of the first two months of school, intelligence tests revealed an average I. Q. of 87 for the eighteen German children who had been placed under special instruction. The American children in the other first grade room had an average I. Q. of 106. The striking inferiority of the German children is, perhaps, explained by their known lack of pre-school training in factual information, mechanical skills, and language habits.

Achievement tests given near the close of the year brought out the surprising fact that the German children, after having been subject to a year's special training, were

only two months retarded in average grade age when compared with the average of the native American first grade pupils The tests also showed that the foreign children, compared with the American children, were retarded three months in language, and one month in arithmetic. At the close of the year, it was found necessary to fail only three of the German children in the special first grade room, and only one in the first grade room. Compared with the promotion figures of the previous three years, it is evident that the separate treatment of the children of different nationalities was a great benefit to both groups.

Home Environment of German Immigrants

An investigation of the home life of the typical German-Russian-Hungarian immigrant farmer in the vicinity of Mott led to the following general conclusions:

(a) Living conditions were comparatively primitive, with poorly ventilated, poorly heated, uncomfortably furnished houses predominating. In many instances, the homes were notoriously filthy and carelessly attended.

(b) The average family had eight children. In most cases there was not enough room for either comfort or privacy for any of the members of the family.

(c) The personal characteristics of the average German immigrant farmer included coarse mannerisms, much illiteracy among the older generation, the persistence of Old World customs, lack of consideration for the welfare of

women and children, and a lack of sympathy for advanced education.

(d) Both parents and children had a pronounced tendency to be physically unclean. That this tendency has a direct effect on health, and consequently on school attendance, is shown by comparative attendance figures. During the school year 1934-1935, the 138 German children treated in this study had a percentage of attendance of 91.1 per cent compared with a percentage of 94.8 for the American children. The fact that the parents of the younger foreign children are particularly anxious to shift the burden of their care to the schools would give weight to the assumption that the poorer health of the German children was largely responsible for their less satisfactory attendance record.

(e) All evidence available showed that the German immigrant families paid little attention to the principles of a balanced diet. The lack of nourishing food for the children probably had its effect on both their health and scholarship.

(f) As a result of a dental examination of both German and American children, it was recommended that thirty-nine children were in serious need of dental care. Of these, thirty-three were from German immigrant homes -- further evidence of either neglect on the part of the immigrant parents, or of an unsatisfactory diet, contributing to the decay and malformation of the children's teeth.

(g) A questionaire answered by 88 junior and senior high school students from German homes furnished the following data:

1. Twenty per cent stated that German was used exclusively as the language for home conversation. Fifty per cent said German was used part of the time.

2. Fifty-six students reported the presence of a radio in their homes.

3. Only thirty-two were from homes where a daily newspaper was available. Practically all were subscribers to a weekly newspaper.

4. All daily newspapers were printed in English, but seventy per cent of the weekly papers were printed in German.

5. All except four had a dictionary in the homes, but only five had encyclopedias.

6. According to the pupil's estimates, there was an average of forty-nine books per home, but compared to the author's investigations this is probably an exaggeration.

7. Fifty-four received help from their parents in their school work. The majority had no other place than the family living room in which to study. Magazines, other than farm journals, were not present in any but a small minority of the homes.

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