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## A History of Bemidji State College: 1913 - 1937

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A HISTORY OF BEMIDJI STATE COLLEGE: 1913-1937

by

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B. A. in Social Studies, Luther College 1953

M. S. in History, University of Wisconsin 1958

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Faculty

of the

University of North Dakota

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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1968





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This Dissertation submitted by Arthur O. Lee in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the University of North Dakota is hereby approved by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done.

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## PREFACE

If state college alumni everywhere were to be asked the question of whether their alma mater had a most unique origin in its founding and early growth, the quick reply would very likely be in the affirmative. It is my contention that Bemidji State College alumni should offer at least a qualified "no" to the question. Although in some circles this position might smack of disloyalty if not heresy, it is my belief that Bemidji State College simply fits into a pattern of education and institutional growth that was and is nationwide. Indeed, it might be argued with validity that the origins and rise of Bemidji College is essentially the history of every state college, from the initial fight over which community would get the school to the present trend seen in the recent decision to allow Minnesota state colleges to grant Master of Arts degrees.

All this is not to suggest that there were no unique qualities about the history of Bemidji College, for there were. Most assuredly, for example, there was only one Manfred W. Deputy, the first president, who stamped his unique and long-lasting mark on the institution. The reader would, however, widen his view of American educational history if, as he read the history of Bemidji College, he would see it in the larger framework of a pattern of institutional growth going on throughout the country.

This study traces the history of Bemidji College but, except for a final summary chapter, deals exclusively with the origins of the school

and that portion of time that the older denizens in Bemidji like to call "the Deputy period" (1919-1937).

Several factors prompted the decision to write the history of Bemidji College. Dr. Harold T. Hagg, current chairman of the social studies division at Bemidji, planted the idea about 1960 and nurtured its growth by indicating that considerable documentation on the subject was readily available. While studying as a graduate student at the University of North Dakota in the 1962-1963 school year, my dissertation committee agreed that the topic was of sufficient importance and approved it. Though the topic was approved, such interesting things as passing comprehensive examinations came first. And though sporadic efforts to gather and sift materials occurred after this, not too much was accomplished until the administration at Bemidji College gave me a quarter of sabbatical leave at full pay during the spring quarter of 1967. Because my family has this bad habit of eating regularly, without these necessary funds and this free time, work on the dissertation would have been long delayed.

Once work got underway in earnest, and chapters began to grow in both size and numbers, it was my committee chairman, Dr. Elwyn B. Robinson, who took my first feeble if not lugubrious efforts and red-penciled the many chapter revisions into an organized, readable paper. Always encouraging, always fair--and always demanding of better quality, it is Dr. Robinson to whom I am most indebted for completing this history of the college.

There are others too whose aid should be acknowledged: Les Russell of the Bemidji College English department who made corrections



on the final draft; Les Mattison and his cooperative staff at the College library; and Dr. Hagg, a veritable walking encyclopedia on Bemidji's history. And I should also like to thank the many genuinely interested colleagues of mine at Bemidji who said, or refrained from saying, "How's it going?" Lastly, at this point, having read hundreds of prefaces, I at last realize why authors pay tribute to the Jobian patience of an understanding and encouraging wife.

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## ABSTRACT

The History of Bemidji State College deals largely with the events of the years between 1907 and 1937. It is an attempt to utilize the available primary source material and from it to present a reasonably comprehensive history of the college from the time the school was first publicly discussed in 1907 through the years of the school's first president which ended in 1937. Although Bemidji College had its own unique problems and peculiar qualities, it is the conclusion of the writer that the history of the college is essentially the history of most state colleges: it was a part of the general pattern of educational growth going on throughout the United States.

Minnesota became a state in 1858, and among the earliest acts of the legislature was one establishing teacher-training institutions, called normal schools, which offered two years of training beyond high school. With the coming of permanent settlers interested in lumbering and agriculture into northern Minnesota in the 1890's, there soon developed a need of trained teachers for the public elementary schools in that area, and interested citizens sought to secure another normal school. A spirited campaign was made to interest the legislature in the establishment of an additional normal school in the northern part of the state; a contest was waged among the communities most interested, particularly Bemidji, Cass Lake and Thief River Falls, to determine the location of the school. The fight began as early as 1907 and continued

through six years before favorable legislation passed in 1913, awarding the location to Bemidji. This struggle was followed by six more years of efforts to secure sufficient appropriations to make the school a reality. The Bemidji Normal School began on June 23, 1919, under the guidance of its first president, Manfred W. Deputy. Deputy remained as president until his retirement on December 31, 1937, and in his long tenure he stamped his views and personality on the institution. While he was president, Deputy had a physical plant of three buildings on a twenty-acre campus: the main building, where offices were located and classes held and which had one wing that housed a campus elementary school for grades kindergarten through nine, inclusive; a dormitory, Sanford Hall, housing approximately 50 women and providing eating facilities for 150 students; and a heating plant.

In the first decade of operation, the school attendance averaged about 200 students during the regular school year and nearly 400 students in its annual five-week summer session. In the 1930's, enrollments averaged about the same as the 1920's for the regular school year although summer school enrollments were not as large.



## INTRODUCTION

All persons are affected by a variety of influences and forces that sweep in and come together to help shape each individual. The sources of these influences are as many and varied as the complex personalities they affect, but always near the top of the list stands education. Education, realistically conceived, covers the whole life process, for education is inseparable from the total tide of national culture, and the mental set of each person is a product of experiences in which education of some type has figured. Education touches the lives of adults, but in a real sense it is the life of the young as they move toward maturity. And it is the impact of formal education that is beginning to concern more and more historians today who view it as an always pervasive element in American history. A Ford Foundation report put it this way: "The very awakening of Americans to the dependence of prosperity upon education is a great theme, which has recently been opened up but is far from being exhausted."<sup>1</sup>

It should be added, understandably, that to be educational an agency need not be a school. It may be a library, a museum, or a youth movement, for example, since any embodiment of the intent to teach or otherwise influence attitudes is in a sense an educational agency. Yet for the historian, dependent as he is upon documentation, those agencies

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<sup>1</sup>Education and American History, Report of the Fund for the Advancement of Education (New York: The Ford Foundation, 1965), p. 20.

which have some permanence and produce records are objects of central importance. Colleges and universities are obvious examples of those agencies that leave source materials for historians to read, sift, and synthesize. This, then, is a study of such an agency--Bemidji State College.

For almost seventy-five years before the middle of this century, the study of the history of American education had a promising future and a disappointing present as a subject of investigation and thought by American historians. But this ambivalence began to change, for there began a strong tendency, evident since about 1950, for historians to write both the histories of educational institutions and of American educational thought. All of this is a part of the rather recent historical trend emphasizing intellectual history.

The development of educational institutions as a part of the local history out of which national histories grow has long been thought of as a topic worthy of historical scholarship. The venerable historian Herbert Baxter Adams, director of the then young seminars in history and political science at John Hopkins University about 1880, believed this to be true. He, like many other professors of his own and succeeding generations, was himself committed to education as a movement that could be thought of in conjunction with such topics as municipal reforms, labor laws, churches, and other largely unexplored subjects which he thought desirable to study. Yet most historians of Adams' period, 1880's and the 1890's, and even Adams himself, despite their sincere motives, devoted most of their time and intelligence to American political, economic, and constitutional history, regardless of their historical



curiosity about, and devotion to, education. It was broad themes, like the roots of democracy and the "germ cell" theory of New England towns, for example, that won their time and interest.<sup>2</sup>

Hence the story of education was neglected by history departments, so that virtually by default the historical study of American education was carried forward by professors of education and their students. In common usage, the "history of education" meant the history of schooling only, which often took the form of textbooks designed to prepare teachers and school administrators. These works tended to explain schooling more than to clarify history itself, and exemplified the trend of emphasizing schooling as a cause rather than education as a cause. Fitting education into the broad framework of American cultural history tended to be omitted.<sup>3</sup>

In contrast, the more recent works in the history of education involve both professional historians and professors of education, with both seeing education as part of the broad spectrum of the American cultural and intellectual heritage. To cite just one recognized historian

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<sup>2</sup>Edward N. Saveth, ed., Understanding the American Past: American History and Its Interpretation (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1954), pp. 10-11.

<sup>3</sup>For examples of two of the better known works and authors that reflect this interpretation, see Edwin Grant Dexter, A History of Education in the United States (New York: Macmillan Company, 1904), and Charles F. Thwing, A History of Higher Education in the United States (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1906). These examples are cited not to denigrate the works nor the men, as both were capable scholars and their books reflect this scholarship; rather the works are cited as somewhat typical examples of the time. Despite the juxtaposition of historical curiosity and of devotion to education in the minds of many professional historians and educators, few marriages of the two interests took place.



as a good example, Columbia University's Richard Hofstadter has published several volumes since 1950 on American education.<sup>4</sup> Likewise Columbia University's education professor R. Freeman Butts has done the same.<sup>5</sup>

These men serve as a sample of the recent scholarship on American education in general. There are also a growing number of histories of particular institutions. Examples in this category, to narrow it down to just the Midwest, include such universities as North Dakota, Minnesota, and Wisconsin.<sup>6</sup> Some recent college histories in the region have been written on Winona, St. Cloud, Gustavus Adolphus, Luther, and Augustana.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Richard Hofstadter and C. Dewitt Hardy, The Development and Scope of Higher Education in the United States (New York: Columbia University Press, 1952); Hofstadter and Wilson Smith, American Higher Education: A Documentary History (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961). Other works that touch in varying degree on the subject include Hofstadter and Walter P. Metzger, The Development of Academic Freedom in the United States (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955); Hofstadter, Anti-Intellectualism in American Life (New York: Knopf, 1963).

<sup>5</sup>R. Freeman Butts, A Cultural History of Western Civilization (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1955); Butts, A History of Education in American Culture (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1953). Another very capable writer on educational history is Lawrence Cremin.

<sup>6</sup>Louis G. Geiger, University of the Northern Plains: A History of the University of North Dakota, 1883-1958 (Grand Forks: The University of North Dakota Press, 1958); James Gray, Open Wide the Door: The History of the University of Minnesota (New York: Putnam, 1958); Merle Curti and Vernon Carstensen, The University of Wisconsin (2 vols.; Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1949). Professor Cedric Cummins of the University of South Dakota history department is currently writing a history of that institution.

<sup>7</sup>Jean Talbot, First State Normal School: Winona State College, Quarterly Bulletin of Winona State college, Series 55, No. 4, August 1959; Dudley S. Brainard, History of St. Cloud State Teachers College, Bulletin of St. Cloud State Teachers College, July, 1953; Dqniver Lund, History of Gustavus Adolphus College (St. Peter: Gustavus Adolphus Press, 1962); David T. Nelson, History of Luther College (Decorah: Luther College Press, 1961); Emil Erpestad, "History of Augustana College" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Department of History, Harvard University, 1958).

Isolating one educational institution for study, however, raises some questions of relevancy to the whole theme. Thus it behooves the historian to try to fit his topic first of all into the broader picture and to see the whole pattern of educational experience before narrowing down to a discussion of a particular school. One college may, if taken by itself, seem to have little interest or meaning to the whole; but set into the context of the entire movement, its experience becomes a factor in an unmistakably important institutional pattern. Thus writing the history of a particular institution is not necessarily a desirable historical end in itself, nostalgic and sentimental alumni notwithstanding; the initial task is first to make the study relevant to American history as a whole. Then the two can go together to complement each other, for it is axiomatic today in most historical circles to believe that people cannot get good national histories until they first get good local histories. Or as Professor Robert P. Wilkins of Marshall University stated, quoting the late Orin G. Libby of the University of North Dakota, there is always a real need for the "little histories as well as the big histories."<sup>8</sup> The history of Bemidji State College, emphasizing its beginning and formative years, is one of those little histories.

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<sup>8</sup>Comment made by Professor Wilkins, now returning as a faculty member of the University of North Dakota, in prefacing his remarks before reading his paper "Porter J. McCumber, Tory Isolationist," at the Northern Great Plains History Conference, University of North Dakota, November 11, 1966.



## CHAPTER I

### FOUNDATIONS AND PATTERNS FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION IN MINNESOTA

#### The Problem of Free Public Schools

The first major issues regarding American public schools involved first of all their desirability, and, secondly, who should pay for them. Essentially the initial problem became that of first awakening, in a new land, a consciousness of need for general education, and then that of developing a willingness to pay for what finally came to be deemed desirable to provide.

The problem which confronted those interested in establishing state-controlled schools was not exactly the same in any two states, though the battles in most states possessed common elements, and hence had similar characteristics. Paralleling these issues arose the problem of where to obtain competent teachers. The academies and colleges in America in the early nineteenth century had not been receptive to incorporating into their curricula a teacher-training program. Even if they had been willing, the colonial colleges and academies did not produce enough graduates to staff the public school faculties. Because no agency existed which seemed both able and willing to undertake the function of educating teachers for the elementary schools, the situation required new agencies. New York and Massachusetts led in the establishment of new

types of institutions, of which the normal school was the survivor. The normal school emerged as the agency that best supplied the teachers for the United States public schools.<sup>1</sup>

Throughout their history normal schools were essentially secondary schools, not colleges. The great majority of the normal school students came directly from the ungraded schools of rural districts for one, two, or three years of training at what would be today the high school level. The normal schools provided the basic education that is now the responsibility of the high school, as well as the technical training for teaching. The pedagogical methods course and a review of the elementary subject matter to be taught, along with an emphasis on apprenticeship teaching, became the main characteristics of the normal school curriculum until the first quarter of the twentieth century.<sup>2</sup> The story of the founding and development of the school now called Bemidji State College is essentially, in miniature, the story of state institutions for the training of teachers throughout the United States.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Charles W. Hunt, "Teachers Colleges," Dictionary of American History, ed. James Truslow Adams (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1940), V, 234. New York in 1834 began state grants for the academies for training teachers. The first normal school opened in Lexington, Massachusetts, in 1839. The name normal school was borrowed from France where the Ecole Normale had a respectable academic heritage; Cassell's French-English Dictionary translates "ecole normale" as simply teachers' training school.

<sup>2</sup>Otto Welton Snarr, The State Teachers Colleges in Minnesota's Program of Higher Education, Bulletin of the Moorhead State Teachers College, Moorhead, Minnesota, Series 46, No. 2, August, 1950, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid. Snarr at this writing was the president of Moorhead Teachers, and he supported this thesis about his school. The same assertion was also made by Archie C. Clark, "The Status, Policies, and Objectives of Minnesota State Teachers' Colleges" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Southern California, 1941), p. 22.



Minnesota's Response to Free Public Schools

As indicated, running parallel with normal schools was the founding and development of the idea and ideal of free, public education for all that has been one of the great contributions of America to the world. The goal of free public education arose from the vision of the early settlers and from their hopes for the future of the region in which they chose to make their homes. In spite of the hardships and limitations imposed by frontier conditions, an interest in and a concern about the education of the children of the settlers commanded their early and continuing attention.

Thus, when Minnesota was organized as a territory in 1849, one of the early decisions of the territorial legislature included an act to establish and maintain free common schools. It became one of the most important of all the early laws as it authorized a tax to raise funds to pay teachers and gave each school district permission to collect money for a school building.<sup>4</sup> No free public high schools existed in the territorial period. If a student wished to go beyond the grades, to "ninth grade," he had to pay tuition at some private preparatory school, academy, or church seminary. Nearly all of Minnesota's private colleges had preparatory departments or grew from them. Colleges begun during

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<sup>4</sup>Nine years after this common school law went into effect, the state had seventy-two organized public school districts. A Presbyterian minister, Dr. Edward D. Nell, often called the "father of education" in Minnesota, became the first superintendent of the state public schools in 1851, and he served as an important promoter of education. He was later the first chancellor of the University of Minnesota and helped found Macalester College which he also served as president. Theodore C. Blegen, Building Minnesota (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1938), p. 307.

the territorial period included Macalester, 1853; Hamline, 1854; and St. Johns, 1856.<sup>5</sup>

During the territorial period, Minnesota, like all territories, had the perennial problem of acquiring trained teachers for its common schools. In 1858, Minnesota became a state. Because, like all mid-western states, it could not depend upon enough teachers from existing institutions or from other states, Minnesota decided to train its own teachers. One of the provisions of the constitution directed the state legislature to "establish a general and uniform system of public schools." The first state legislature passed the Act Establishing the Normal School System of the State of Minnesota in July, 1858, signed into law by Governor Henry Hastings Sibley. The act provided not just one normal school, but three--the first to be established within five years of the passage of the act, the second within ten years, and the third within fifteen years. The original act included details of appointment of a governing board and its organization, location of the schools, finance and appropriations, and supervision and conduct of the new institutions. Thus, as the very beginning of statehood the legislature provided the basic legal instrument for opening teacher training schools as needed.<sup>6</sup>

The first state normal school went to Winona and began operating in 1860; it was the first normal school opened west of the Mississippi

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid.; Theodore C. Blegen, Minnesota: A History of the State (University of Minnesota Press, 1963), p. 187. The University of Minnesota was established on paper in 1851 and was conducted as a preparatory school throughout the decade.

<sup>6</sup>Minnesota, Session Laws (1858), c. 79. At that time there were eleven state institutions of this type, four in Massachusetts, and one each in New York, Connecticut, Michigan, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Illinois, and Pennsylvania. The movement itself was only nineteen years old.



River. Eight years later, in 1868, the second school opened at Mankato to serve the needs of what was at that time the western part of the settled area, and the following year the school at St. Cloud began to serve what was then the northern settled area.

The legal control of the normal schools rested on the provision found in Article VIII of the state constitution; this article gave the legislature complete authority over the system of education for the state. To control the normal schools, the legislature in 1858 created the Normal School Board consisting of six members, appointed by the governor and confirmed by the senate, who served for a four-year term, one member to be chosen from each county where a normal school was located and not more than one member from a single county.<sup>7</sup> The Board received the power of management, supervision, and control of the normal schools, and of all the property pertaining to them. It appointed the presidents and other employees and determined their salaries; it prescribed courses of study and conditions of admission, prepared and conferred diplomas, reported the number of graduates, and adopted suitable rules and regulations for the schools. A month before each new legislature began, the Board reported to the governor on the conditions, needs, and prospects of each school, with recommendations for its improvement. Except for the supervision over construction of new buildings which was delegated to the

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<sup>7</sup>The Board held its first meeting at the capitol at St. Paul on August 16, 1859. After taking the oath of office before the clerk of the Supreme Court, the four members present chose Lieutenant Governor William Holcomb of Stillwater, president, and Dr. John D. Ford of Winona, secretary pro tem. Subsequent legislation increased the Board to eight members and in 1905 the State Superintendent of Public Instruction became an ex officio member and secretary of the Board.

State Board of Control, the Normal School Board under this broad grant of authority had entire control over the schools.<sup>8</sup>

The passage of the act creating Minnesota's state normal school system was also significant in that it indicated the general acceptance on the part of the state's leaders of the need for the professional education of teachers and of normal schools as the most satisfactory institutions to provide that preparation--an idea generally accepted in the older states of the Ohio and Mississippi valleys. There was, however, some active opposition to such schools and even more general indifference on the part of many newcomers in the area, occupied as they were with the problems of immediate needs of daily life. For these hostile and indifferent groups, advanced schooling was an unnecessary luxury, and they were content to continue with the primitive school systems then available, including the often inadequately trained instructional staffs. Because of the milieu, most of the people teaching in the elementary schools in the nineteenth century had little formal schooling themselves, teaching often at best with an eighth grade diploma.<sup>9</sup>

#### Preparation for Teaching Elementary School

Despite a lack of formal schooling, an element of missionary zeal prevailed among many nineteenth century teachers when they chose to

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<sup>8</sup>Later legislative acts restricted the Board's powers somewhat by centralizing financial control in a State Department of Administration. Under a 1925 act, the Department of Administration and Finance was given supervision and control over all accounts and expenditures. In 1939 a law placed the clerical and maintenance staffs under classified civil service.

<sup>9</sup>Charles A. Harper, A Century of Public Teacher Education (Washington: Hugh Birch-Horace Mann Fund, 1939), p. 16.



forsake worldly gain for the privilege and responsibility of molding young minds. Salaries were pitifully low and working conditions sometimes tortuous, but nonetheless numerous dedicated persons sacrificed personal pleasure to "serve in the vineyard without complaint." It is true that many were attracted to teaching during off-seasons in farming, mining, and other more remunerative endeavors along with better working conditions.<sup>10</sup> While some were well educated themselves, they often lacked the drive to establish continuity in their respective schools and to take more than a passing interest in their students. Others were simply incompetent, but they filled existing vacuums in frontier communities. Some protested that if teaching were a profession, a living wage ought to be paid. More often than not, teachers like other workers were subject to the intrinsic values placed on their services by a more materially conscious public. Whether one was imbued with the spirit of Christian service or whether one was seeking a port in the storm, it became evident to leading educators that some formal training and certification programs were necessary for the benefit of the teachers, the teaching profession, and the welfare of the public schools.

Permission to teach elementary school in Minnesota in the nineteenth century--and well into the twentieth--was realistically based on the need for teachers. If the need were great, almost anyone willing to

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<sup>10</sup>In Wisconsin, the average elementary teacher's salary in 1863 was \$21.00 a month for men and \$13.00 for women. Richard D. Gamble, From Academy to University: A History of Wisconsin State University, Platteville (Platteville: Wisconsin State University, 1966), p. 95. Elegen, in Building Minnesota, p. 308, cited comparable wages for his state. He noted also that in 1861, 235 of the 466 school houses were built of logs; "some were scarcely fit for barns or stables." As late as 1876 there were more than 800 school districts in Minnesota which had school terms of only three months each year.

was permitted to teach. Separating the qualified from the unqualified, speaking relatively, was based largely on supply and demand. Teachers were often qualified for employment by the simplest forms of pedagogical training. This situation occurred nationally too, of course, when teachers could be certified by examination which could be taken at almost any point in the time sequence of preparation, depending on state and local conditions.<sup>11</sup>

In Minnesota, those who received training for teaching in the elementary schools did so nearly always in one of three ways: attending one of the state normal schools, enrolling in the teacher-training departments of high schools, or attending summer schools designed for teacher training.

The state made appropriations for the establishment of summer training schools for teachers in the counties under the direction of the county superintendent of schools. Students could attend these summer schools with a view toward teaching after they had completed the eighth grade. While the main purpose of the summer schools was to remedy rural school conditions, they were open to all public school teachers who wished to renew or upgrade their teaching certificates. The first summer schools began before the turn of the century, and each county was to have either a school or have one accessible to it every alternate year. The sessions generally lasted six weeks, and the work undertaken had two phases: the academic or instructional and the methodic or professional. The

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<sup>11</sup>Lindley J. Stiles, et al., Teacher Education in the United States (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1960), pp. 125-126. In Minnesota until the 1920's, the minimum requirement for certification was an eighth grade education, after which one could teach upon successfully completing some examinations.



instructors at these summer schools were often from the local area. The schools themselves came in for great praise from the area newspapers, the students attending, and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. He wrote in his 1910 report: "No item of public school expenditure brings greater results than the amount spent yearly for these schools."<sup>12</sup>

In 1895 the state legislature first authorized high school training departments. It offered a subsidy of \$750 to each local board of education providing such a department in its high school, but only 32 of the 200 high schools in the state had such a department by 1910. These training departments, usually with just one teacher, enrolled high school students; after completing the one-year program, the student became eligible to teach in any rural elementary school.<sup>13</sup>

The third method of training teachers, normal schools, offered a maximum of two years of work beyond high school. All of the state normal schools had the same plan of organization. They were organized

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<sup>12</sup>Minnesota, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Sixteenth Biennial Report, by C. G. Schultz (St. Paul, 1910), p. 17. Bemidji started the first of its summer schools in 1904 and continued them regularly until the normal school opened in 1919. With sessions held in the local high school, the attendance at Bemidji averaged about fifty students the first five years. A full two-page description of the 1908 session, discussing course offerings, books to be read, faculty, and the like, is given in the Bemidji Daily Pioneer, June 17, 1908.

<sup>13</sup>Because both the normal schools and the high schools with training departments trained teachers for the rural schools, and because the graduates of both competed with each other for jobs, there was not always the best feelings between them. By 1939 there were still thirty-four such training departments in Minnesota, each with one teacher and a total enrollment of 486. Clark, "The Status, Policies, and Objectives of Minnesota State Teachers' Colleges," p. 27. In 1910, there were 4,332 students enrolled in high school teacher training departments. Minnesota, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Sixteenth Biennial Report, p. 245.



into two departments: first, the normal department or place of academic and professional instruction; second, the training department or place of application and practice. The latter was comprised of a campus or model school--an elementary school run in connection with the normal school--in which normal school students observed and did their student teaching. The normal department embraced the following courses of study: an elementary course of three years, designed to fit teachers for work in rural or ungraded schools (students could come in from the eighth grade, take this three-year course and then be eligible to teach in rural or ungraded schools); an advanced course of five years, which gave the preparation for teaching in both the higher and lower grades (students could come from eighth grade, take the five-year course and then be eligible to teach in any elementary school in the state); a professional course of one or two years, for students who were graduates of approved high schools (those who went one year could teach in rural schools; those who went two years could teach in any elementary school).<sup>14</sup>

The original statement of the purpose of the normal schools, as formulated in the Minnesota law of 1858--"to educate and prepare teachers

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<sup>14</sup>Minnesota, Legislative Manual (1893), pp. 230-231. Two-year graduates received a diploma; those who went one year received a certificate but both were counted as "graduates" of a school. What may seem striking about the early normal schools was the admittance of students completing the eighth grade and the establishment of sub-collegiate curricula. Because there were for many years so few high schools (in 1910, for example, there were 24,000 students enrolled in 200 high schools with 11 per cent of them graduating), normal schools had to adapt to the times if future teachers were to receive any training. The three-year course continued until 1911, and the five-year course was still in existence in the 1920's. Not until 1921 did the Normal Board approve a full four-year degree course; in 1927 the first bachelor's degrees were granted. In 1929 the normal schools, by then renamed teachers colleges, received permission to train teachers for secondary as well as elementary positions.

for teaching in the common schools"--was repeated in the revised statutes of 1866, 1873, and 1905. In 1905 the legislature changed the phrasing to read the "training of teachers for the public schools"; at the same time in the same law the legislature made it clear that "the terms 'common school' and 'public school' are inter-changeable and synonymous . . . including graded and ungraded elementary schools, grammar schools, and high schools."<sup>15</sup> Nearly all subsequent acts of the legislature dealing with the teacher-training institutions reaffirmed the mandate to train teachers for the public schools, and the schools digressed but little from this.<sup>16</sup>

Until the second decade of the twentieth century, however, the normal schools received little pressure to train secondary teachers. The state university and the private colleges performed this function. From 1858 until 1921 the Minnesota normal schools dealt with the problems of training teachers for the elementary schools only.<sup>17</sup>

Some twenty years elapsed from the establishment of the first normal school to the opening of the fourth state normal school at Moorhead in 1888. The first three normal schools had been located in the

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<sup>15</sup>Minnesota, Session Laws (1905), c. 56. The semantic argument over what constitutes the divisions of public school training still continues today. Though the term common school is now out of date, the issue of whether an "elementary school," for example, constitutes grades kindergarten through grade six, one through eight, kindergarten through nine, and other possibilities, still goes unresolved.

<sup>16</sup>This legislative mandate of 1858 still carries over to the present. For example, even after the Board allowed the schools to offer a B. A. program beginning in 1946, a 1967 memorandum from the Bemidji State College registrar's office indicated that 85 per cent of the 4,000 students enrolled were planning on teaching in public schools as a career.

<sup>17</sup>The state high schools did not mushroom in growth until after World War I, and until that time the state university and the private colleges provided an adequate number of high school teachers for the market.



southern portion of the state (at Winona, Mankato, and St. Cloud), and in the intervening years the population had spread to the western boundary and moved north into the fertile lands of the Red River Valley. In the year ending July 31, 1892, the four normal schools enrolled 1,834 students. The State Superintendent of Public Instruction estimated that there were 483,536 persons of school age in the state, and of these 300,333 were in school more or less during the year ending July 31, 1892. Of those attending, 4,290 were enrolled in the high schools; 100,094 in the special and independent districts (maintaining both elementary and high schools), and the balance, 199,239 in the common districts (maintaining only elementary schools). There were 5,705 common schools, 117 independent, 36 special, and 69 high schools. The average monthly wages in 1892 for male teachers was \$40.79, and for female teachers, \$31.40.<sup>18</sup> Even by the turn of the century, education was beginning to be a big business.

With the opening of the iron range, a concentration of population in the northeastern section of the state, and the increasing importance of Duluth as an inland port, the legislature in 1895 authorized the establishment of a fifth normal school at Duluth to serve the area. Because of several delays, however, the school did not open its doors until 1902. In that year the five state normal schools enrolled 2,142 students. In the breakdown of enrollments, Winona had 649 (the total number of

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<sup>18</sup>Minnesota, Legislative Manual (1893), pp. 230-231. The state population grew rapidly in this period. In 1880, the population was 780,773, an increase of 77 per cent in the decade; in 1890, there were 1,310,283 and a 67 per cent increase. U. S., Bureau of the Census, Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940. Population, IV, pp. 13, 27.

graduates since it had opened in 1860 was 1,402; St. Cloud, 357 (it had graduated 1,230 since 1869); Mankato, 649 (it had graduated 1,402 since 1868); Moorhead, 404; and Duluth, 126. These numbers, however, could not fill the demands for teachers throughout the state.<sup>19</sup>

As settlers and their families moved into the north-central area of Minnesota in greater numbers and began clearing the timber and farming the land, a demand for yet a sixth normal school to serve this section of the state faced the legislatures. The precedent of an area state school to serve a given section of the state had been firmly set; historical imperatives seemed to make the issue irrepressible. In the area lived a number of interested people who desired a normal school. Some were altruistic, others were self-centered and shortsighted, and as careless of historical imperatives as their counterparts in other sections of the state who had received a normal school. The stage was set by 1910 for a normal school fight in north-central Minnesota.

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<sup>19</sup>Minnesota, Legislative Manual (1903), pp. 289-292.



## CHAPTER II

### THE NORMAL SCHOOL FIGHT: 1907-1913

#### Minnesota after the Turn of the Century

Minnesota celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of its admission to statehood in 1908, and it was about this time that interested citizens in northern Minnesota began to agitate for another normal school to be located in their area. At this time the state ranked tenth in the union in terms of area, containing 84,287 square miles or about 54,000,000 acres of which 3,500,000 were covered by water. Approximately half of the state consisted of prairie lands interspersed with groves of timber and covered with dark fertile soil. The rest, embracing the elevated district west and north of Lake Superior, consisted mainly of pine-covered forests along with areas of rich mineral deposits.

The national census of 1910 showed a Minnesota population of 2,075,708, an increase of 324,414 or 18.5 per cent in the past ten years. At that time the eight largest cities in the state had the following populations: Minneapolis, 301,408; St. Paul, 214,744; Duluth, 78,466; Winona, 18,583; St. Cloud, 10,600; Virginia, 10,473; Mankato, 10,365; and Stillwater, 10,198. Of the total increase in population during the decade, about one-fourth was in rural territory while more



than one-half was in places over 25,000.<sup>1</sup>

In 1858, Minnesota's population had been 125,000, and the value of its farm products was estimated at \$8,000,000; fifty years later farm products were valued at \$275,444,000. In 1858 manufactured products were estimated to be worth \$2,500,000, and in 1908, \$350,000,000. Receipts in the state treasury in 1858 were \$286,903; in 1908 they were \$12,446,280.<sup>2</sup>

The total foreign-born population in Minnesota in 1905 was 537,041, about 25 per cent of the total population. Scandinavians made up by far the largest ethnic group of these foreign-born: Sweden, 126,283; Norway, 111,611; and Denmark, 16,266. However, there were 119,868 persons who were born in Germany. The next largest group were the Irish with 19,531. There were also 10,225 Indians in the state at the time, most of them located in the northern areas.<sup>3</sup>

Politically the members of the Republican party dominated state politics in the two decades following the turn of the century. This dominance occurred from the federal offices down through the state and local positions. Occasionally a Democrat slipped into office, but this was the exception to the general rule. Democratic governors, however,

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<sup>1</sup>Minnesota, Legislative Manual (1915), p. 211. With the exceptions of Stillwater and Virginia, all of the eight largest cities had a college or normal school located in them (Virginia opened its junior college in 1916). These included all of the cities where normal schools were located with one exception, Moorhead.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid. The publication went on to editorialize: "It seems probable that Minnesota will hold her place as the greatest wheat-producing state, and will also earn the reputation as the best all-around farming state in the union."

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

played an important part in the selection and later the establishment of the normal school in the northern part of the state at Bemidji.

The reports of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction indicate clearly that an elementary school education through the eighth grade prevailed as the educational achievement for most Minnesota citizens throughout the first decades of the twentieth century. Graduation exercises from the local elementary school, or common school as it was often called, turned out to be the big spring event in most communities. For example, in 1908, only 3,314 graduated from high school and only 24,530 were enrolled. At the same time, better than 300,000 students were enrolled in the elementary schools, although the report does not offer any figures on the number of elementary school graduates (see next two pages for copies of the 1910 report indicating significant school statistics for a five-year period, 1906-1910).<sup>4</sup>

#### The Calls for Another Normal School

Aside from the university and the private colleges which provided the teachers for the high schools, the most qualified teachers in northern Minnesota schools should have come from the state's normal schools. It was to these sparsely populated rural areas, however, that normal school graduates at this time did not go.<sup>5</sup> To improve school teaching in rural areas became one reason why some public-minded citizens in the northern part of the state started agitating to get a state normal school

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<sup>4</sup>Minnesota, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Sixteenth Biennial Report, by C. G. Schultz (St. Paul, 1910), pp. 245-246.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 17. As late as 1920 Beltrami County Superintendent of Schools J. C. McGhee reported that there were only three graduates of normal schools teaching in the county rural schools.



TABLE 1

## SUMMARY OF THE MOST IMPORTANT STATISTICS FOR THE LAST FIVE YEARS

## PUPILS

	1906	1907	1908	1909	1910
Total enrollment--	431,690	429,012	430,748	435,109	440,083
Number between 8 and 16 years of age--					
In common school districts	174,691	167,989	*180,586	167,383	167,908
Independent and special districts	122,293	120,941	133,484	161,525	148,753
Total	296,984	288,930	314,070	328,908	316,661

## TEACHERS

	1906	1907	1908	1909	1910
Number in common districts--					
Men	1,255	1,129	1,035	938	867
Women	7,622	7,893	8,134	7,713	7,852
Total	8,877	9,022	9,169	8,651	8,719
Number in independent and special districts--					
Men	434	447	542	675	731
Women	4,286	4,459	4,719	5,433	5,707
Total	4,720	4,906	5,261	6,108	6,438
Total number of teachers in all--	13,597	13,928	14,430	14,759	15,157
Average monthly wages--					
In common districts--					
To Men	\$ 48.63	\$ 50.40	\$ 53.30	\$ 50.78	\$ 51.47
To Women	38.83	39.60	40.82	41.35	42.67
Independent and special districts--					
To Men	104.27	104.03	108.87	107.66	109.98
To Women	50.05	50.98	52.93	53.56	55.54

\*Beginning with year 1908, 8 to 18 years.

TABLE 1--Continued

	1906	1907	1908	1909	1910
<b>STATE HIGH SCHOOLS</b>					
Number received state aid	192	201	206	208	207
Number pupils enrolled	22,106	23,687	24,530	26,583	28,562
Number graduates	2,783	3,109	3,314	3,533	3,907
Amount state aid to each school	\$1,100.00	\$1,450.00	\$1,400.00	\$1,750.00	\$1,750.00
<b>GRADED SCHOOLS</b>					
Number received state aid	142	147	152	163	173
Number pupils enrolled	...	...	...	26,649	27,470
Amount to each	\$525.00	\$525.00	\$520.00	\$600.00	\$600.00
<b>SEMI-GRADED SCHOOLS</b>					
Number received state aid	309	330	340	360	399
Amount to each	\$216.00	\$230.00	\$230.00	\$280.00	\$258.00
Deficit not paid	...	...	...	\$ 20.00	\$ 42.00
<b>FIRST CLASS RURAL SCHOOLS</b>					
Number received state aid	1,094	1,158	1,305	1,622	1,860
Amount to each	\$ 75.00	\$120.00	\$105.00	\$112.00	\$ 92.00
Deficit not paid	...	...	...	\$ 38.00	\$ 58.00
<b>SECOND CLASS RURAL SCHOOLS</b>					
Number received state aid	492	560	632	731	1,127
Amount to each	\$ 30.00	\$ 48.00	\$ 40.00	\$ 75.00	\$ 62.00
Deficit not paid	...	...	...	\$ 25.00	\$ 38.00
<b>TEACHERS' TRAINING SCHOOLS</b>					
Number schools	32	38	30	34	32
Number enrolled	5,635	4,091	4,052	4,369	4,332
Total cost	\$29,732.90	\$27,250.69	\$24,378.00	\$33,332.37	\$31,898.33

## STATE NORMAL SCHOOLS

	1909		1910	
	Enrollment	Graduates	Enrollment	Graduates
Winona	621	144	566	162
Mankato	812	136	887	131
St. Cloud	1,025	205	1,050	199
Moorhead	788	154	777	128
Duluth	305	52	313	40
Total	3,551	691	3,593	660



to locate there. State Superintendent of Public Instruction C. C. Schultz observed in 1910:

The chief obstacle in the way of bettering the conditions of the rural schools has been the scarcity of teachers with thorough academic training combined with professional skill. This has made it necessary to employ for the work a large number without teaching experience and without the opportunity of getting even a moderate amount of training for teaching at an expense within their means.<sup>6</sup>

Schultz went on in his 1910 report on normal schools to support the addition of one more. The normal schools, he wrote, were in a "flourishing condition" and had made "marked progress the past few years." Attendance had increased until the full capacity of most of the schools at the time had been reached and in one instance, St. Cloud, had been exceeded. The total enrollment in the five normal schools for the two years ending July 31, 1910, was 7,144, or about 3,500 for each year; the total number of graduates during that period was 1,352. These crowded conditions might be remedied, he indicated, "in one of two ways, namely by establishing a new school--which is needed--or by the enlargement of the present institutions; and my own judgement is that both remedies will soon have to be applied."<sup>7</sup>

Schultz, however, spoke for himself, and not for the State Normal Board which governed the normal schools and made recommendations for changes to the state legislature. The Board did not recommend the

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 52, 248. Schultz, of course, did not suggest in his report where the proposed new normal school should be located. Eventually, however, he was a member of the committee that selected Bemidji as the site in 1913. Because of his office, Schultz was an ex officio member of the State Normal Board. A seemingly incomplete file of his correspondence while in office is on file in the State Archives and Records Service in St. Paul.

addition of any new normal school in either of the first two decades in the twentieth century. (See next page for picture of the 1910 Normal School Board.)

Nearly all of the county superintendents of schools in the north and northwestern parts of the state requested another teacher training school in the area. W. B. Stewart, Beltrami County (of which Bemidji was the county seat), wrote in his 1910 report: "What is needed is a permanent institution for training teachers which will give practice work, with breadth and thoroughness of training, and scholarship for rural work."<sup>8</sup> Presumably Stewart had Bemidji in mind as the site of the permanent institution. In fairness, however, it should be added that when the time came for the legislature to decide on adding a new normal school, the great majority of the citizens in the entire north and northwestern part of the state wanted first an area school to which their young people could go; exactly where it would be was secondary.

Distance was another of the primary factors in the desire to obtain a new normal school in the northern part of the state. The closest normal schools to the Bemidji area were at Duluth and Moorhead, each approximately 150 miles away. In those days when any traveling was an adventure, distance was highly significant.

A sparse population lived in the section of the state that sought another normal school. The three leading contenders became the

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 100. Somewhat strangely, the Cass County Superintendent of Schools was one of the very few who did not desire to have a normal school located closer to home. He wrote: "Our experience is that when our boys and girls who have teaching ability attend the normal schools, that is the last we see of them. The advantage of higher salaries offered elsewhere in city and billage schools makes it impossible to keep them in the rural schools." p. 106.





THE STATE NORMAL SCHOOL BOARD, 1910

H. E. HOARD  
 J. L. WASHBURN C. G. SCHULTZ, State Suppt. ELL TORRANCE, President J. E. WOOD W. E. COOPER C. A. NICHOLS  
 KARL MATHEIS S. H. ANDERSON

communities of Bemidji, Cass Lake, and Thief River Falls. Although many community leaders expressed interest in their particular town getting a new normal school, when it came to making the final decision, the three towns emerged as the ones likely to be selected.<sup>9</sup> In 1905, Beltrami County, in which Bemidji was the county seat, had 7,017 people living in cities or villages and 12,058 outside of the villages; the city of Bemidji had 3,800 people. Cass County had 2,411 in cities and villages and 7,113 outside the village; Cass Lake's population was 1,062. Marshall County, in which Thief River Falls was located before it became the county seat of Pennington County in 1922, had 3,190 in the cities and villages and 14,547 outside the villages; Thief River Falls had a population of 3,502.

#### A Sketch of the Three Communities

The first settlement had been made in Bemidji in 1894. The town took its name from one of the Chippewa Indian chiefs in the area. In 1896 Bemidji became incorporated as a village and the same day, May 5, became the county seat. In 1900 the population of the town, a thriving lumbering center, was 2,183. In 1905 it became a city and grew to 3,800; in 1910, 5,099, and by 1920, 7,086 (see next page for picture of Bemidji taken in 1908). Four lines of railway provided transportation

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<sup>9</sup>Area newspaper editors soon labled the issue of which town would get the normal school as the "normal school fight." Because it was drawn out over several years, the names "round one" and "round two" were added. "Round one" was between Bemidji and Cass Lake; "round two" was between Bemidji and Thief River Falls. Somewhat strangely, even the editors of newspapers located in communities desiring the normal school viewed "the plum," as some called it, going to either Bemidji, Cass Lake, or Thief River Falls.





Bemidji, 1908



into the city--the Minneapolis, St. Paul and Sault Ste. Marie, the Great Northern, the Minnesota and International, and the Minneapolis, Red Lake and Manitoba, of which the city was the southern terminus. Though there was some farming in the area, the city was largely a lumbering town from its beginnings until World War I. The town had waterworks, gas and electric lights, four banks, sawmills, a woolen mill, box, brick, tile and turpentine factories, wholesale houses, a creamery, an active Civic and Commerce Association, a Carnegie Library, churches of the leading denominations, two newspapers, and good public school buildings. At one time Beltrami county was the largest in the state; after it was reduced in 1922, it still had an area of about 3,000 square miles. Outside of Bemidji, however, not one of the principal villages in the county had a population of over 800 by 1920. Still it had many organized townships and almost all of them had an elementary school that needed one or more teachers. As one publication put it, the first school in the county began in 1897, and "as settlers came in, little schools sprouted up all over. Every township had its log school."<sup>10</sup>

Cass Lake--fifteen miles east of Bemidji--was the largest town in Cass County, but the village of Walker held the county seat. The county was named after General Lewis Cass who had visited the region in 1820. Cass County had an area of 2,104 square miles and was divided into forty-eight townships. The only battle fought between United

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<sup>10</sup>History of Beltrami County (Bemidji: Beltrami County Historical Society, 1957), p. 20. Information on Bemidji, Cass Lake, and Thief River Falls was taken from Joseph A. A. Burnquist, ed., Minnesota and Its People (Chicago: S. J. Clark Publishing Company, 1924), II, 373. Burnquist pointedly failed to include the indelicate information that for its first twenty-five years, most of downtown Bemidji was made up of saloons, and that it was most decidedly a rough lumberjack town.



States soldiers and Chippewa Indians in Minnesota was fought near Walker in 1898. The village of Cass Lake was situated on the shore of the lake, and the Soo Line and Great Northern railroads ran through the community. Like Bemidji, scattered farms existed in the vicinity, but Cass Lake too depended on lumbering as its main industry. The population was 1,062 in 1905, 2,011 in 1910, and 2,109 in 1920. In 1910 the county had three graded schools and eighty-eight rural schools. Cass Lake had two banks, an electric light plant, waterworks, saw and planing mills, a crate factory, five churches, a commercial club, a public library, and one weekly newspaper, the Cass Lake Times.<sup>11</sup>

Thief River Falls, the third contender for the normal school, received its name from the fur trading era. An Indian fortification had been built near the mouth of the stream now known as Thief River, but which the Indians called Secret Earth River. The early French in the area called it Stealing River, and this was later translated into Thief River. The first settlers there were attracted by the falls which afforded good water power. Located at the junction of the Minneapolis, St. Paul and Sault Ste. Marie and the Great Northern railways, the town became the seat of Pennington County. The town owned its electric light plant, a waterworks system, and an auditorium. The community had four banks, a large mill, three grain elevators, a foundry and machine shop, two creameries, a commercial club, churches of seven denominations, a

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 427. Cass Lake too had its full share of saloons. Both Bemidji and Cass Lake in the period before World War I had all the negative earmarks of frontier communities. There was a great deal of violence; brawls were commonplace; there seemed to be an inordinate number of suicides; and even murder and mysterious disappearances of individuals were not uncommon. Concomitant with this were tar-and-feathering parties and several attempts at vigilante justice.

Carnegie library, and two newspapers. The city was the chief trading center for the surrounding farmers living on the flat but fertile land. There were 3,502 people in Thief River Falls in 1905, 3,714 in 1910, and 4,685 in 1920. A small county compared to Beltrami and Cass, Pennington County had an area of only 610 square miles with twenty-two organized townships. Other than Thief River Falls, no villages in the county had a population over 400.<sup>12</sup>

Eventually, when the normal school issue came to the legislature, some northern Minnesota legislators began referring to the area seeking the school as the "sixth normal school district" which by 1915 included thirteen counties, had a school population of 45,000, and embraced an area of 22,000 square miles or practically a fourth of the state. The legislators estimated there were 225,000 people in the district with the territory valued at \$130,000,000 and paying \$600,000 in taxes.<sup>13</sup> (See next page for map.)

#### The Normal School Fight Begins

John A. Johnson served as governor of Minnesota from 1905 until his untimely death in office in 1909. A popular Democrat bucking the Republican tide, he was elected three times. In his 1904 election, every county in the state voted for the Republican presidential candidate. Johnson, of poor Swedish parents, was born and raised in St. Peter;

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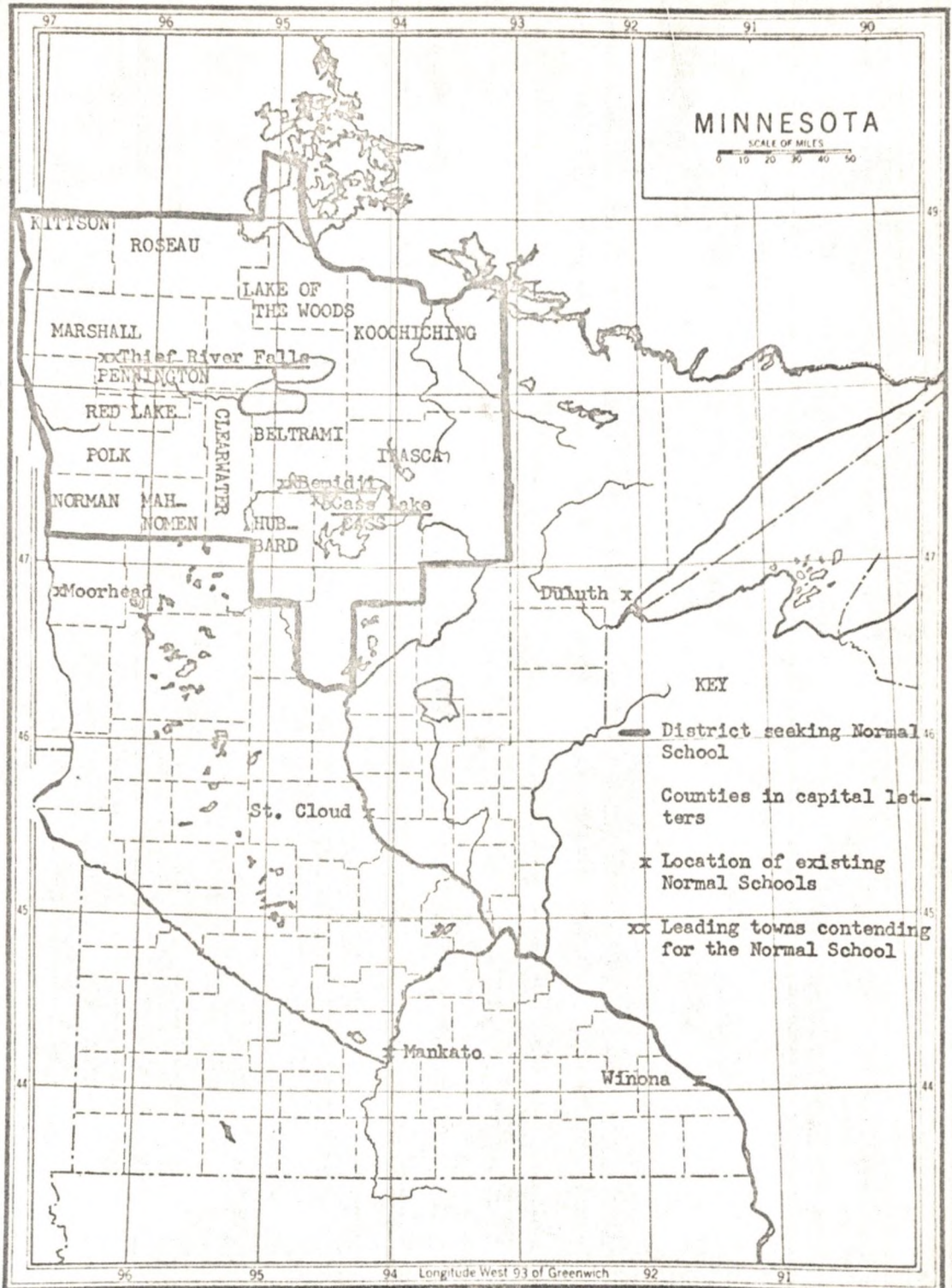
<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 403.

<sup>13</sup>Bemidji Weekly Pioneer, February 25, 1915, p. 9. Excerpts of lengthy speeches by northern legislators praising the "sixth normal school district" are printed in this issue. They maintained that they paid \$600,000 a year in taxes but didn't get that much back in state benefits; hence, a new normal school would alleviate part of that problem.



# MINNESOTA

SCALE OF MILES  
0 10 20 30 40 50



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he made his livelihood there as the publisher of the local newspaper. The first native Minnesotan to be elected governor, he became nationally known for his progressive views. In none of his three addresses to the legislature, however, did he recommend the addition of another state normal school. His attitude on the subject, as will be shown, prevailed while he was governor despite the legislature.<sup>14</sup>

The fight to establish a sixth state normal school began as early as 1907 and continued for six years before successful legislation was passed. Civic-minded citizens in the various communities made a spirited campaign to interest people in the establishment of an additional normal school, and the local newspaper editors took up the task. Editors threw about accolades and perjoratives with reckless abandon in what came down to virtually a no-holds-barred contest among the rival communities for getting the plum of a state institution. To record the long, on-going contest, the newspapers provide the best solid source of information for reference; they both shed the most light and certainly reflect the heat of the battle to obtain Minnesota's sixth state normal school.<sup>15</sup>

The first mention of the topic in the Bemidji newspapers occurred on January 10, 1907, when there appeared an article by Absie P. Ritchie,

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<sup>14</sup>In the elections where Bemidji, Cass Lake and Thief River Falls were located, Johnson carried only Marshall County (Thief River Falls) in 1904, all but Cass County in 1906, and all three in 1908.

<sup>15</sup>It seems somewhat ironic that the cause of public higher education is filled with so much bitterness and selfishness among individuals and groups fighting to get a state school located in a given community. Though half a century separated the events, the college-site issue is not out-of-date for there is a parallel between the location of Bemidji Normal in 1913 and the location of the newest state college at Marshall in 1963, as witnessed by the newspapers of both periods.



superintendent of the Bemidji Schools, under a headline reading "Bemidji Is the Logical Location for State Normal School for the North." Ritchie noted that "the proposition to establish the sixth normal school in this state is being widely discussed," and he went on to argue why the school should be located in Bemidji. He said that the town was the geographical center of the area, that it had excellent railroad facilities, and that it had "a climate for health and vigor that is unsurpassed."<sup>16</sup>

The Cass Lake Times not only picked up the topic but also made an assertion about where the school belonged. The editor, Frank Ives, wrote in the January 12, 1907, issue that "Cass Lake is especially fitted for the location of such an institution. It is the geographical center of this part of the state." The Pioneer editor, A. Kaisar, noted ten days later in a short editorial that State Senator Daniel M. Gunn of Grand Rapids, whose district included Cass Lake, had prepared a bill in the legislature providing for a new normal school at Cass Lake. "The Pioneer moves an amendment, striking out the words Cass Lake and substituting therefore Bemidji, otherwise the bill has our most hearty approval and support." Gunn's reported reason for introducing the normal

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<sup>16</sup>Bemidji Daily Pioneer, p. 1. In this normal school fight there was enough local puffery and flummery to suggest each and every community in northern Minnesota to be a veritable utopia, winters included. In this same article Ritchie knocked the weather on the opposite sides of the state: "We are sheltered from the blizzards of the bleak prairies of Moorhead and the chilly breezes of Duluth by primeval forests." The often hyperbolic claims of the rival communities as to the perfect location, the charges and counter-charges of nefarious favoritism shown by the decision-makers, the hue and cry of "politics," whatever that exactly means, all combine to make a sorry spectacle. Seemingly, however, every college in existence today went through a somewhat similar situation. To the victors it was worth the efforts.



school bill was to remedy the difficulty of school districts in the northern part of the state to find enough good teachers. Said Gunn: "It is true that the Duluth normal is not far away, but St. Louis County [of which Duluth was the county seat] is an empire in itself, and can easily use all the teachers the Duluth school can turn out. Our section is another great empire, and we have trouble finding teachers"<sup>17</sup>

W. B. Stewart, Beltrami County Superintendent of Schools, tried to stir up enthusiasm for a new school by pointing out the financial advantages for Bemidji. Stewart estimated that the school would average 250 students a year and that a sum total of "\$101,250 would circulate among the businessmen of our city yearly . . . all to be had for the asking."<sup>18</sup> Along with this article, the Bemidji editor chided the townspeople for their apparent indifference to the topic. Soon afterwards interested citizens held several meetings and eventually chose a committee to go to St. Paul to lobby for a bill to locate a normal school at Bemidji. Representative J. J. Opsahl submitted the bill.<sup>19</sup> After this, almost every issue of the February, 1907, Bemidji papers referred in some way to the proposed normal school. One article

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<sup>17</sup>Quoted in the Bemidji Daily Pioneer, January 22, 1907. Gunn did indicate that a Cass Lake delegation had requested him to introduce the bill. Gunn had been a member of the lower house when Duluth received its normal school in 1895, and he had helped the Duluth delegation then; it was expected that they would reciprocate for him, and they did.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Opsahl represented the sixty-first district composed then of three counties, Red Lake, Clearwater, and Beltrami. He won his election, according to the Pioneer which strongly supported him, because of his "firm stand on good roads and drainage," both popular issues at the time.



told of the local Commercial Club's active support; other articles quoted from outside newspapers supporting Bemidji; one issue published an open letter to the legislature written by Absie P. Ritchie, the person who seemed to be the catalyst in town for promoting the desirability of a normal school for Bemidji.<sup>20</sup>

Some of the area newspapers, however, showed open dismay at the scrapping between Bemidji and Cass Lake over the normal school (Thief River Falls had not yet entered into the fray). Many editors reasoned that it was more important first to get a normal school approved for the north-central part of the state, and then after this, let the Normal School Board select the exact location. From this came what was called the "general bill," introduced into the legislature in February, 1907, and soon afterwards all of the northern Minnesota newspapers and delegations approved the "general bill" idea with the exception of Cass Lake. The people of Cass Lake opposed the general bill because they believed the Normal School Board was prejudiced in favor of Bemidji.<sup>21</sup> The Bemidji papers, of course, became critical of Cass Lake and accused her, among other things, of being very short-

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<sup>20</sup>Ritchie was instrumental in working for the normal school from the inception of the idea until the doors opened in 1919. Born in North Carolina in 1869, one of fifteen children, he moved to Minnesota at age ten. He attended St. Cloud Normal, Hamline University, and graduated from Western University in Chicago. He taught in several Minnesota schools before becoming Bemidji superintendent of schools in 1904, a position he held until 1910. He then became president of the Farmers Mutual Insurance Company. From 1915 to 1923, he held the post of Bemidji postmaster. He died in 1950, survived by his wife and six children. Information supplied by his wife, now Mabel Ritchie Gore, age eighty-four, in an interview May 10, 1967.

<sup>21</sup>Cass Lake Times, February 26, 1907, p. 1. "Cass Lake has it on excellent authority . . . that . . . some of the members of the Board are closely related to certain prominent citizens of Bemidji."



sighted, but Cass Lake held its ground and replied in kind.

By March, 1907, the proponents were seemingly reaching into the hat for any kind of support. For example, the Pioneer quoted a lengthy letter from President Webster Merrifield of the University of North Dakota who praised Bemidji as an ideal location for a normal school. And along with editorials that can be described only as vicious in attacking Cass Lake, the Pioneer varied the fare with poetry. The first of six verses suffices to give the message:

All of you surrounding towns come join together  
 And help us build the normal this coming summer weather  
 Why not build it here on the Minnesota ridge?  
 For there is no other place as good as 'old Bemidj.'<sup>22</sup>

Despite fulminations and flowery words, the legislature by the end of March, 1907, defeated all the bills regarding another state normal school. Considering the interest and emotions built up by the newspapers in northern Minnesota, the reactions of the editors seemed mild, and the major protagonists dropped the subject almost entirely, although a few salvos were delivered on the way out. And there the matter rested, like a Lazarus entombed, waiting to be lifted up and restored, the hope still remaining that the forces of right would prevail for each community.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Bemidji Daily Pioneer, March 4, 1907, p. 3. Merrifield's long letter appeared in the February 27 issue. President Merrifield had a summer home at Bemidji and apparently liked it: "My family all fell in love with the place last summer and we anticipate the coming summer at Bemidji with far greater pleasure than we did the last. I know of few regions anywhere more desirable whether for a summer residence or for the location of a normal school." The letter was written to a Reverend S. E. P. White of Bemidji, the letter dated February 5, 1907.

<sup>23</sup>A three-man committee from the House visited the area in June, 1907, and looked over the communities. The Pioneer of June 17 noted their presence and said correctly that the normal school issue was by no means dead.



Not until October, 1908, did the Bemidji paper pick up again the topic of normal schools but once started, the topic continued as a regular subject through the early months of 1909 when the Minnesota legislature once more held its biennial session. President W. A. Shoemaker of St. Cloud Normal touched off the issue again when he wrote a letter to the Bemidji editor and asked him to give "a little of your valuable space to spreading the news regarding the congested condition of the school," that is, St. Cloud Normal. In essence he said that no students from the northern part of the state should come to St. Cloud to school because it was so crowded there that it was most unlikely that they could be enrolled (there were 603 enrolled at the time). To this the Bemidji editor sounded the alarm: "The St. Cloud Normal is crowded to the roof and W. E. Shoemaker . . . is sending out warnings that the Normal Board will not care for any more pupils."<sup>24</sup>

There the subject sat until December of that year when a news story told of a recent teachers' meeting (300 attending) in Park Rapids, a town some forty-five miles southwest of Bemidji, at which a series of resolutions were adopted, one reading: "Resolved, That we most earnestly advocate the establishment of a sixth normal school to be located at some convenient place in North Central Minnesota, in order to take

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<sup>24</sup>October 20, 1908, p. 1. It should be noted that the Pioneer changed ownership and editors. In March, 1907, A. G. Rutledge assumed the editorial position. He also wrote a column which he bylined only as "Doc." Rutledge had been active in the normal school issue before becoming editor, and his new position gave him a better advantage to air his views, views that in 1909 became outspoken if not vitriolic. Libel laws in those days had to be much more lax than now. It might also be noted, however, that these early newspapers were much more interesting to read than today's Pioneers; the early editors did not shrink from taking a firm stand on current issues.



care of the rapidly growing educational necessities of this section of the state."<sup>25</sup> This helped to refuel the editorial fires.

About this same time, the president of the State Normal School Board, Ell Torrance of Minneapolis, wrote his biennial report regarding the state normal schools. Although the Pioneer editor headlined the Torrance report, "A Sixth Normal School Would Furnish Relief," and sub-headed its account, "Hon. Ell Torrance, President State Normal Board, Tells of Inadequate Accommodations of Present Schools. State Should Provide Another Normal," at no place in the report was there mentioned the need for another normal school.<sup>26</sup>

As the 1909 legislature neared, proponents of the new normal school began to gather their forces. The Pioneer headline, "Contest for Proposed Normal Is ON," understated the fracas that followed. The Cass Lake editor caught the spirit: "The battle . . . is yet to be fought and when the carnage is ended and all the dead and wounded are counted, we expect to say to our readers that the school has finally been located on Park Road half a mile north of the business portion of our village, in one of the groves of pine selected by the gods for educational purposes."<sup>27</sup> Other communities, too, warmed up to the heady thought that they might get the new normal school, and citizens formed

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<sup>25</sup>Quoted in the Bemidji Daily Pioneer, December 3, 1908, p. 2.

<sup>26</sup>Perhaps both poets and editors are issued poetic licenses. The complete report of Torrance can be found in Minnesota, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Fifteenth Annual Report, by C. G. Schultz (St. Paul, 1907-1908), pp. 61-64. Torrance served on the State Normal Board for eighteen years, the last twelve as president. His picture appears on page 26.

<sup>27</sup>Cass Lake Times, January 23, 1909, p. 4.



committees in various communities--Warren, Grand Rapids, Park Rapids, Bagley, Ada, Clearbrook--to consider proper action. What followed, however, repeated the pattern of the 1907 session: Daniel Gunn introduced a bill for Cass Lake, J. J. Opsahl one for Bemidji, and a "general bill" was offered to establish a school somewhere in the northern part of the state. And again, as in 1907, all the northern communities supported the general bill with the exception of Cass Lake.<sup>28</sup>

In the middle of February, 1909, the legislature sent a joint subcommittee of the House and Senate to visit the northern Minnesota towns for the purpose of looking at proposed normal school sites. The committee's visit to Bemidji resulted in one of the rare banner headlines in the Pioneer at that time: "Normal Committee Given Reception," and subheaded down to the centerfold: "Were Tendered Warm and Elaborate Banquet. Hospitality Dealt Out With A Lavish Hand. Visited All Parts of City. Are Surprised at Bemidji's Progressiveness and Pleased With Unlimited Hospitality Which Was Extended." The newspaper devoted the entire front page to the visitors' one-day stay and gave selected quotations of remarks of the committee members. Thus Representative A. Goodspeed of Richfield: "Bemidji and its people are the best on earth."<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>Bemidji held a mass meeting January 28, 1907, in the Masonic hall and selected a committee, headed by A. P. Ritchie, to go to St. Paul to lobby for the Bemidji bill. They held a second meeting February 21 in the reading room of the Crookston Lumber Company and decided then to support the general bill instead, leaving the selection to the Normal School Board.

<sup>29</sup>February 18, 1909, p. 1. The coming of a committee to view the towns had put the Pioneer in a dichotomous position. On the one hand the editor opposed any "junket," as he called it, believing it was rigged in favor of Cass Lake; but on the other hand, there was the



Rather surprisingly, the Cass Lake paper paid slight attention to the coming of the subcommittee there; yet the editor appeared to be little worried, for he wrote in a short editorial on February 20: "The spoils belong to the finder. So it shall continue to be true, and not even the immense wealth of Bemidji nor her slanderous citizens will be able to remove the custom. Now the fight is practically over. All that remains is to clear away the smoke and the finder will have her spoils."

Even the Bemidji paper and the Bemidji delegation at St. Paul, who regularly filed reports in the newspapers on its progress, acknowledged that Cass Lake had the edge in the normal school fight. Apparently Cass Lake had considerable influence in the legislature in the form of Daniel Gunn in the Senate and P. H. McGarry (townsite owner of the village of Walker) in the House. Both men were well liked and respected. Moreover, G. G. Hartley, a wealthy man from Duluth, owned the Cass Lake village townsite and was influential in the Republican party, being considered both as a gubernatorial and a senatorial candidate.

Whatever the reasons, the Cass Lake bill continued to make headway in the legislature. On March 18 the Senate approved it by a 32-to-25 vote; about the same time the House killed the general bill. On April 2 the Cass Lake bill passed the House by a close 60-to-54 vote. It appeared that Cass Lake was indeed the winner, and for its citizens

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feeling that once the decision-makers came to Bemidji--even in February--and saw the community, they could not help themselves from awarding the school to Bemidji. The editor commented that other members of the legislature came along too, "together with several residents of Cass Lake who cannot resist the temptation to occasionally visit with us and breathe the atmosphere of a really metropolitan community."



it was a time for rejoicing. "Cass Lake Bill Wins 'Against the Field'" ran the banner headline of the April 3 Times and underneath was pictured a large eagle with flags and banners wrapped around its wings and irrelevant Latin quotations coming from its mouth. The triumphant lead article began: "The long fight . . . is ended and Cass Lake by her straight-forward manly course has won by a good safe majority." "The only hope the opposition has," the article continued, "is that Tams Bixby [Bemidji townsite landowner] can induce the governor to veto the act which he will never do."<sup>30</sup>

On April 6, however, Governor John A. Johnson vetoed the Cass Lake bill, and on April 8, 1913, the Pioneer printed the entire veto message:

I have the honor to return herewith, without my approval, file No. 53, an act to establish a state normal school at the village of Cass Lake, in the county of Cass. In my judgement there is no pressing need for the establishment of an additional normal school at this time. The financial condition of the state is not such to warrant the establishment of new public institutions at this time. It is not my purpose to argue against the wisdom of the legislature in fixing this particular site, further than to urge that it never has had the approval of the authorities in charge of normal schools, but on the

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<sup>30</sup>The Pioneer editor did not lose graciously. Though Rutledge sent a very brief congratulatory telegram to Ives, which Ives printed, the pages of the Pioneer avoided any commentary until April 5 when the editor grouched "that the bill to establish the sixth state normal school at Cass Lake was passed as a personal favor to P. H. McGarry and Dan Gunn, and not for any real merit which the village of Cass Lake possesses as the best location . . . is admitted on all sides." Before this the St. Paul Pioneer Press referred to Gunn as an "oleaginous log-roller" after the Senate passed the Cass Lake bill March 18. Other newspapers too referred to the successful log-rolling act performed by Dunn and McGarry. The Pioneer stated that one of its reporters had "personally interviewed all but a few of the sixty men [House members who voted for the Cass Lake Bill] . . . and in every instance the same reply was given: 'McGarry is such a good fellow; we couldn't go back on Pat.'"



contrary has met their disapproval for reasons which it is not necessary to assign. In view of the uncertainties of the future development of the region in its relation to education centers; opposed as I am to the policy of establishing new public institutions until there is a decided need for them, I cannot lend my approval to this act. Very Respectfully, John A. Johnson, Governor

The veto hardly calmed the roiled waters of dispute; on the contrary, it roiled them further, for neither side was yet in a proper state of mind to approach the subject objectively. That tempers were short and invective long between the two towns at this time cannot be denied, and the vitriolic pens of the respective editors did little to give credit to either side.<sup>31</sup>

But the emotionalism slowly quieted down, at least publicly, so that even the Times editor in the April 17 issue could view the debacle philosophically and see the whole matter as "a loss for entire Minnesota." After May, 1909, there appeared no mention of normal schools in either paper until January, 1911. Even when Governor Johnson died unexpectedly on September 23, 1909, the Pioneer in devoting two full pages to the man did not mention his veto. The Bemidji paper bowed out of the 1909 struggle by quoting from a Bovey paper in its April 23 edition which called for all the people who

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<sup>31</sup>Understandably the Times of April 10 reacted in a fit of pique to the veto: "Were it not for the unreasonable, outrageous, and ignominious act of Governor Johnson the brilliant fight would have been gloriously rewarded. The reasons for vetoing . . . are too weak to be considered." About a week after the veto, tempers had reached a point where Bemidji citizens did not venture to go to Cass Lake. At the same time the members of the Cass Lake Merchants' Association boycotted Bemidji wholesale houses and patronized instead only Duluth merchants. Of course the questionable veracity of editorials like the one appearing in the April 13 Pioneer did not help the situation: "While it is a matter of common knowledge that the Cass Lake people really did have their band out on the street; that flags were flying and that a banquet like unto Balshazzer's feast had been prepared, and was not served, it cannot be said truthfully that Bemidji people gloated over . . . the veto. On the contrary, the governor's action simply occasioned quiet smiles and nods of approval."



were involved to come to their senses about a normal school and "leave the unfortunate matter as dormant as possible." It was appropriately entitled: "Let It Quietly Rest."

The Times soon dropped the topic too; its last mention of the fateful subject that year told of a banquet which in some respects was more of a wake:

That Cass Lake does not forget its friends was fully demonstrated last evening when the capacious dining hall of the Endion hotel was crowded to capacity . . . to do honor to its representatives [Gunn and McGarry] in the state legislature in the session recently closed. Cass Lakers were advertising to the world that they were just as grateful to their representatives who had fought the fight for them and won it fairly in the normal school matter as if the fruits of their victory had not been snatched from them by the veto of Governor Johnson.<sup>32</sup>

So ended the hopes and dreams of the 1909 legislature to allow some northern Minnesota town to have a state normal school. One town had come so close to making it, yet lost out by a governor's veto that produced antipathies felt even today.

The issue of a new normal school lay dormant during the two years following 1909. There appeared to be a consensus among the interested groups not to raise the topic that had wrought up such bitter feelings. Area politicians seeking state offices in 1910 did not

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<sup>32</sup>May 13, 1909, p. 1. Though denied by many at the time, there seems little reason today to question Governor Johnson's motives for vetoing the bill. Throughout his public career in the governor's office both political parties praised the man's integrity although all did not accept his politics. Thus there appears to be no other motive and that Johnson acted according to his best judgment for the state. Grant Utley, age seventy, in 1967 the editor of the Cass Lake Times, had purchased the paper from Ives in 1916. He remembered well the normal school fracas and commented: "Wow! That was some fight! There are still a lot of people around here mad about it. I know a fellow who told me he would make a special trip down to St. Paul every year just to spit on the statue of Governor Johnson."



mention the topic; in the legislature in 1911, no legislators introduced any bills for any new normal school. Moreover, the area newspapers remained silent on the subject, and it seemed that the political maxim of "action begets reaction" had gone into effect.<sup>33</sup>

#### Round Two of the Normal School Fight

Not until the summer of 1912 did the newspapers again take up the call for a new normal school. Thief River Falls provided the major competition then for Bemidji, and both publishing the news and reflecting the views of that town was the weekly Thief River Falls News-Press, M. C. Cutter, editor and publisher. The News-Press began drumming up enthusiasm in the summer of 1912 ("Normal School Badly Needed") and continued sporadically to publish similar headlines and supporting stories that fall and early winter. It offered the same arguments of those mentioned in earlier papers of the other communities and need not be repeated. Suffice it to say that the major dissimilarity it offered was that the normal school should be located in Thief River Falls.

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<sup>33</sup>After 1909, reading both the Cass Lake and Bemidji newspapers is comparatively dull. Both dropped their crusading and fiery editorials for a normal school. In the Bemidji paper, part of the reason might be attributed to another change in ownership and editors; by 1911, Ferman A. Wilson had become editor, replacing the outspoken Rutledge. As to Cass Lake, it seemed odd if not unbelievable that it was still the same paper edited by the same man, Frank Ives; he virtually gave up in the normal school fight. Today's Cass Lake editor, Grant Utley, who knew Ives well, stated that Ives was never the leading normal school proponent, that it was the local school superintendent, Peter Larson. "He was the real sparkplug," said Utley, and he sparked Ives. But Larson was relieved of his position (Utley: "The damn fools fired him"), and when he left, Cass Lake's major supporter of a normal school was gone. With Larson gone, Ives was left to write argumentatively about his own favorite topics: saloons, Democrats, and Woodrow Wilson; the topic of normal schools went by the wayside.



After better than a year of silence, the Pioneer mentioned the desire for another normal school in an editorial in its December 12, 1912, edition. The article told of a conference of Bemidji men with state Representative Daniel P. O'Neil who was quoted by the Pioneer: "I will favor a general normal school bill, but do not care to have the old trouble stirred up again."<sup>34</sup>

But what O'Neil did not care to have come anyway and for northern Minnesota the year 1913 became the year of decision for another new normal school. Into the hopper at the state legislature went bills to locate a new normal school at Bemidji, Thief River Falls, and Cass Lake, and another general bill to locate the school somewhere in northern Minnesota. With a crisis impending, the Pioneer editor showed a reluctance to gird for battle, but felt there was no alternative; he wrote: "Bemidji's attitude is not aggressive but defensive."<sup>35</sup> Delegations from the various interested communities again descended on St. Paul, but after all the oratory and lobbying,

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<sup>34</sup>Minnesota, Legislative Manual (1913), p. 678, gives this brief sketch: "Daniel P. O'Neil (Rep.) was born in Ontario, Canada, in 1853, moved with his parents to Stillwater in 1872, engaged in lumbering until 1879. Settled on a homestead in Bigstone County, moved to Thief River Falls in 1902. Member of the Board of Education. Common school education. Occupation, farmer. Married." O'Neil won election in 1910 when J. J. Opsahl did not run; he was re-elected in 1912, his district including Thief River Falls and Bemidji. He became embroiled in the normal school fight and was accused by both towns of favoring the other in 1913.

<sup>35</sup>January 25, 1913, p. 4. O'Neil introduced the Thief River Falls bill, which angered many Bemidji people; A. L. Hanson of Ada introduced the Bemidji bill at the request of O'Neil who said he did not want to appear inconsistent; P. H. McGarry introduced the Cass Lake bill, and the Cass Lake paper made no reference to its even being submitted; Walter Anderson of Badger introduced the general bill. Southwestern Minnesota also contended for the prize as a bill was offered to establish the school at Windom.



the chairman of the House normal school committee, W. W. Brown, announced that his committee had decided to recommend the general bill only, and on February 26, the general bill was read for the first time. (See next two pages for a copy of the general bill and the dates of its progress through the legislature.)<sup>36</sup>

The legislators who had introduced separate normal school bills gave their approval to the general bill in a somewhat rare spirit of compromise. So, too, did the northern Minnesota newspapers. For example, the News-Press agreed that the committee had "acted wisely," concluding that "the natural advantages of Thief River Falls will so outshadow" its opponents that the selection of the site would pose no problem.<sup>37</sup> The Bemidji papers said essentially the same thing except for substituting the word Bemidji for Thief River Falls. The Cass Lake paper said nothing.

But a problem arose long before the issue of site selection occurred. An attempt nearly succeeded to scuttle any new normal school by voting down the recommendation of the normal school committee. The first vote to accept the report of the committee was lost, and it appeared that the whole thing was dead. At this rather dramatic moment, Representative O'Neil rushed to the front of the chamber and demanded

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<sup>36</sup>Unfortunately the Minnesota State Archives do not have any records of the normal committee hearings of either the House or the Senate that go back that far. Neither did the members' papers available in the Minnesota State Historical Society lend much light on the attitudes of the committee members, though one might presume that they believed another normal was needed but that politics should not govern its location. The Archives, however, do have the original copy of the general bill, as appears on the next two pages.

<sup>37</sup>February 27, 1913, p. 1.



A BILL FOR AN ACT to establish an additional Normal School in Northern Minnesota, and to provide for a commission to locate the same.

BE IT ENACTED by the Legislature of the State of Minnesota:

Section 1. The Commission hereinafter provided for is hereby authorized and required, before October 1st, 1913, to select a location in the northern part of the state for an additional Normal School, and when such location shall be decided upon by said Commission as herein provided, such additional Normal School is hereby established at such location. The community in which such Normal School shall be located shall provide and donate to the state a suitable site therefor, conveyance of which shall be made to the state at or before the official announcement of its determination by the Commission.

Section 2. The Commission to determine the location of said Normal School shall consist of five members to be selected within thirty days after the passage of this act by the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor and the Speaker of the House of Representatives acting jointly. Said Normal School shall be located at some point north of the line of the Northern Pacific Railroad running from Duluth to Moorhead, and west of the line constituting the western boundary of St. Louis and Carlton Counties. When the Commission above provided for shall have decided upon the most suitable location for said Normal School, it shall prepare and file with the Secretary of State the designation of such location, describing the site furnished by the community, and thereupon such designation shall be final and shall not be subject to change by said Commission.



Chapter 362  
ORIGINAL (ORIGINAL)  
H. F. No. 776

(249)

A BILL FOR AN ACT to establish  
an additional Normal School  
in northern Minnesota, and  
to provide for a commission  
to locate the same.

Introduced and Read first Time FEB 26 1913 1913  
By Mr. *Committee on Normal Schools*

Ref. to Com. on *Held over*  
Reported Back *One Day*

Read Second Time FEB 27 1913  
Com. of Whole MAR 6 1913 by motion to  
*Calendar*

Read Third Time MAR 7 1913  
Passed MAR 7 1913

Transmitted to Senate MAR 7 1913  
*Oscar Williams*  
Chief Clerk H. of R.

Read First Time *Mar. 8 1913*  
Ref. to Com. *Normal Schools*

Reported Back APR 8 1913 *To Piv.*

Read Second Time APR 8 1913  
Com. of Whole *Rs made special order*

Read Third Time *for Apr 17-1913 in Piv.* APR 17 1913  
Passed APR 17 1913

Returned to House APR 17 1913  
*Geo. W. Pennington*  
Secretary of Senate.



recognition. Then going out in front of all the seats he protested the action as unfair:

I am the author of a bill providing for the establishment of a normal school at Thief River Falls, but in the interest of justice and in fair play, I arise to defend this committee bill and to demand that you act as men; that you do not stab this measure in the back. If you do not want to pass a normal school bill, well and good, but you are not men and you are not representatives of the people when you attempt to throttle the bill in this fashion.<sup>38</sup>

The Bemidji paper described O'Neil's statement "as short and dramatic and eloquent an outburst as has rattled the windows at the present session." Anyway, the House promptly proceeded to reconsider its action and voted to accept the committee's report. Then on March 7 the bill passed the House by a 76-to-33 vote. It encountered no great trouble in the Senate either. This was true even though Senate normal school committee chairman Ole Sageng of Fergus Falls was not, according to the Bemidji Sentinel, "wildly enthusiastic over the idea of establishing a new normal."<sup>39</sup> On April 4, the Senate committee on normal schools recommended that the House bill be approved; on April 17, after some discussion but little real opposition, the Senate approved the final passage of the measure, 44-to-5, and sent

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<sup>38</sup>O'Neil's short outburst was recorded in the February 28, 1913, Bemidji Sentinel, a weekly newspaper under the guidance of former Pioneer editor Ferman A. Wilson who had become both its editor and publisher. Wilson had a reporter at every legislative session and supplied long columns on legislative happenings.

<sup>39</sup>March 14, 1913, p. 1. Sageng believed that students could be sent to high schools with normal training departments and that that would relieve the normal schools. Training departments of high schools, however, were by law limited to twenty students, though out of necessity they often accepted more. In appealing for another school, northern legislators used the big argument of the crowded conditions of the existing normals, along with the distance from them.



it to Governor Adolph Eberhart for his signature. On April 19, 1913, the governor signed the bill into law.<sup>40</sup>

The Bemidji newspapers reacted to the news of a new normal school for the northern part of the state with little emotion. It would appear that such good news should conjure up some thumping editorials, but the Bemidji papers ran none (the lead editorial in the Daily Pioneer the day the bill became law was entitled "Death to Stray Cats"). The Thief River Falls paper printed a most interesting reaction; it ran a headline reading "Normal School for TRF" but hurriedly acknowledged in the first paragraph that "we use the above headline advisedly because of the fact that we are certain no committee can determine otherwise than on Thief River Falls."<sup>41</sup>

So the next step lay with the committee, and all sides waited to see who would be appointed to choose the site. Newspapers quoted the governor's frequent statement that he would insist that no prejudiced person would be appointed to the commission. Northern Minnesota editors, while they waited and speculated about the commission, chose up sides. Understandably those closest to Thief River Falls supported that community whereas Bemidji's area supported that town, with one exception,

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<sup>40</sup>Minnesota, Session Laws (1913), c. 362. The only Senate opposition noted in the newspapers was the unsuccessful attempt to limit the power to select the men to choose the site to the governor. Minneapolis Journal, April 19, 1913, p. 22.

<sup>41</sup>April 24, 1913, p. 1. If there was one trait that the News-Press exhibited consistently in this normal school business, it was confidence. The Minneapolis papers made only oblique reference to the establishment of a new state school. Though it did not mention the normal school bill, the Journal stated that the legislature "has scattered the people's money with a liberal hand. It is the fruit of the 'pork barrel.'" April 26, 1913, p. 4.



the Cass Lake Times editor who at first said nothing. Newspapers began to view the issue as one between the "prairie counties"--the flat, fertile, generally treeless counties surrounding Thief River Falls--and the "wooded counties" around Bemidji.<sup>42</sup> It appears rather strange that most editors saw either Thief River Falls or Bemidji as receiving the normal school when theoretically any of the area communities were eligible if they provided the state a suitable site for the school. But as Editor Wilson wrote in the Sentinel on April 25, 1913: "Either this city will be named as the proper place for the new normal school . . . or it will go to Thief River Falls. That is the way it looks at the present time. Cass Lake and other towns . . . may become active aspirants, but as a matter of calm, cool conclusion, it looks like a fight between Bemidji and Thief River Falls."

On May 8, 1913, appeared the names of the persons chosen for the commission (it was often referred to as the committee) to select the site of Minnesota's sixth normal school: James A. Ferguson, Duluth; S. B. Wilson, Mankato; Representative W. W. Brown, St. James; Senator Ole Sageng, Fergus Falls, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, C. G. Schultz. The Bemidji and Thief River Falls papers gave their full approval to the men selected, the latter labeling the decision of this fine commission to be a "a foregone conclusion." It went on to add that as to Bemidji's claim about offering a better site, "there is nothing in the proposition where the cold hard facts are concerned."<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>The counties around Thief River Falls were Marshall, Polk, Red Lake, Norman, Mahnomen, and Roseau; those around Bemidji were Clearwater, Hubbard, Cass, Koochiching, Lake of the Woods, and Itasca.

<sup>43</sup>Thief River Falls News-Press, May 15, 1913, p. 1.



But one cold hard fact still unclear was an exact location for the school at Thief River Falls, should it be selected. With the commission announcing plans to visit the sites in early June, the Thief River Falls paper put out a call for help: anyone having land to offer, immediately communicate with the local committee. Although the article stated that the committee did have some tentative offers, it "should have a complete list of desirable sites on file so that no time may be lost in viewing the same."<sup>44</sup> An editorial in the same edition urged the townspeople to "clean up the city streets" because the Normal School Commission was coming. Apparently the call for new sites got results; two weeks later the paper announced the town had "not less than six twenty-acre sites" to offer, all within easy walking distance of town, all donated, while Bemidji had only one site to offer, owned by the Townsite Company, which "will cost not a small sum to acquire. It is at least two miles from a railway in a dense jackpine thicket with a constant menace of fire about it."<sup>45</sup>

The one site offered by Bemidji lay about one mile north of town in a densely wooded area that bordered Lake Bemidji (see next page for a later aerial view of the area, the x's indicating where the original site lay). The Bemidji Townsite and Improvement Company, then headed by A. A. White of St. Paul, owned the land. A committee of three, J. J. Opsahl, F. S. Arnold, and A. P. Ritchie, went to St. Paul and

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<sup>44</sup>Ibid., May 29, 1913, p. 1.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., June 12, 1913, p. 1. Much of this description was true. There were only two small houses on the twenty-acre tract at the time; it was mostly covered with trees and underbrush. The site, however, went to the city at a cost of \$1.00.







completed arrangements with White to secure the property should Bemidji be chosen for the normal school.

As the communities awaited the coming of the commission, and the newspapers continued to banter back and forth, Bemidji received an unexpected boost and considerable state publicity resulting from a meeting of the Northern Minnesota Editorial Association held in Bemidji in early June. The Association voted to endorse Bemidji as the site for the normal school. This unusual if not remarkable resolution found the Bemidji editors as confounded as anyone, but they hastily recovered and exploited it for propaganda reasons.<sup>46</sup> They also quoted, selectively, from the papers of the editors who were at Bemidji for the Association meeting and who wrote about the town when they got back home. This included one from St. Cloud whose columns praising Bemidji were so long that the Pioneer ran it in installments.

Just before the commission began its tour of the towns, a statement made by the editor of the Menahga Journal touched off an editorial row. He said essentially that the location of the normal school was already set for Thief River Falls in order to pay off the political debts of the lieutenant governor and the speaker of the House, who along with the governor had appointed the five-man commission to select the site. The Thief River Falls paper used up four full columns

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<sup>46</sup>A copy of the resolution is printed in the Bemidji Daily Pioneer of June 16, 1913, p. 1; a sample of the editorial results can be seen in the Bemidji Sentinel, June 20, 1913, p. 4: "This Association, made up of nearly 200 members representing more than thirty counties, wields a mighty influence. Some of these men came with their minds clouded by the 'lumberjack village' libel . . . and yet when the resolution . . . was read, a spontaneous applause burst forth and the resolution was adopted without one dissenting vote."



to denounce the charge of any "fix," calling the accusation, among many things, "the last gasp of the cut-over jack pine territory" to smear Thief River Falls. Even the Cass Lake Times came to life over the allegation; in its first editorial comment on normal schools that year, Editor Ives called the whole thing "a vision" that "none of the rest of the newspaper boys can fathom." He added: "That Thief River Falls is not a logical point for the location of a great educational institution is well known. Its water facilities are not good and what is worse, never will be."<sup>47</sup> The Bemidji papers dismissed the whole idea, but the Minneapolis Journal hinted that there might be something to the charge; it concluded, however, by quoting Lieutenant Governor J. A. A. Burnquist saying in exasperation: "I never inquired and do not know now what town is favored by any member of the commission."<sup>48</sup>

Into northern Minnesota and into this unenviable situation came the commission early in July to view the sites and make the decision that would ecstatically please the few and disappoint if not embitter the many. All the towns that the commission visited played the role of the gracious host, each trying to outdo the others in impressing the visitors. The commissioner made its first stop at Thief River Falls,

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<sup>47</sup>July 3, 1913, p. 4. After 1909, the local news that Editor Ives wrote most heatedly about was keeping the Cass Lake saloons from being closed by federal agents ("those scum," he called them) led by a colorful though hated figure referred to in his papers only as one "Pussyfoot" Johnson, the appellation in reference to his alleged sneakiness in achieving his goals. The issue was over an old law forbidding liquor to be sold in Indian territory. Interpretation of this law was never clear nor consistent, and the saloons in both Cass Lake and Bemidji were opened and closed with regularity. In this fight, Ives eventually won. It seems unnecessary to add that the liquor issue received much more space in the local papers than the topic of normal schools.

<sup>48</sup>July 2, 1913, p. 19.



and after the departure the next day, the News-Press for the first time qualified its confidence in getting the school; yet the paper went on to suggest how favorably impressed the commission members were with the community and the sites available.

The commission arrived at Bemidji on July 8, the next stop after Thief River Falls. A delegation of Bemidji business and professional men met the commission at the train depot and escorted them to the Markham Hotel. From that place the members were escorted to the city dock, where the big city boat took them for a ride around the lake. In the afternoon, five automobiles took the party for a drive around Lake Bemidji. That evening they held a banquet for the commission at the Markham Hotel. After the meal, County Superintendent of schools W. B. Stewart, City Superintendent of Schools W. P. Dyer and attorney E. E. McDonald presented plans, arguments, and statistics. The speakers used charts to illustrate the points made, and according to the Bemidji Sentinel, "each chart contained a vast amount of information scarcely less astonishing to the many businessmen present than to the visiting commissioners."<sup>49</sup> Dyer and Stewart brought out points about the amount of money spent to maintain the area school systems, the rapid gain in volume of railroad freight and in number of passengers, the postal receipts, the size of the lumber industry and general indications of the future prosperity of the city. Attorney McDonald spoke of the city as one of homes and "stabbed the oft-repeated libel that this city is a wide-open lumberjack town." McDonald declared: "There is not a more

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<sup>49</sup>July 11, 1913, p. 1.



moral or law-abiding city of its size in the state."<sup>50</sup>

Apparently this assertion of righteousness was not fully accepted by one commissioner; State Superintendent of Schools C. G. Schultz broke in on McDonald to ask: "How many saloons?" Replied McDonald: "We have twenty-nine and the number is being decreased," although he did not say either how or by how many. Schultz then asked: "It has been reported," he said with a stern voice, "that you have sporting houses here. Is that true?" McDonald: "That is not true. There is not a place of that kind within the city limits of Bemidji." McDonald then added the dichotomous statement: "Bemidji has nine churches and the city is well policed both day and night."<sup>51</sup>

When the commission left the next day, July 9, for Cass Lake, commission member W. W. Brown summed up well its difficult if not impossible position:

Thief River Falls proved to us beyond any question of doubt that the school should be located there. Bemidji has shown us that to locate the school at any other point would be little less than criminal, and we expect that Cass Lake and Park Rapids will each offer proof positive that each of those towns should have the institution.<sup>52</sup>

After the sojourn in Cass Lake, the Cass Lake Times reported their big day with the commission. "After luncheon the visitors were taken for a trip around Pike Bay [a large bay that is part of Cass

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<sup>50</sup>Ibid.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid. An interview with Herbert Warfield, seventy, and a life-long resident of Bemidji, found Warfield highly amused by McDonald's statements: "McDonald couldn't count very well." Warfield added that he remembered "very well" that when World War I broke out, "there were fifty-four saloons and seven licensed sporting houses, mostly double deckers."

<sup>52</sup>Bemidji Daily Pioneer, July 9, 1967. p. 1.



Lake] and through the forest preserve. In the afternoon . . . a trip to Star Island . . . and six o'clock dinner at Star Island Inn. At eight o'clock . . . the arguments were delivered. . . . It was nearly midnight when the session ended." And the editor added, seemingly with a sigh of relief: "The report of the location will be filed on or before October 1, and the infamous normal school fight will be ended."<sup>53</sup>

At this point all that the towns could do was to sit back and wait expectantly for the decision which Schultz, chairman of the commission, said would be announced July 15.<sup>54</sup> And then came the day. The Pioneer on July 15, 1913, shouted the news with an "EXTRA!" that read: "Bemidji Wins the Sixth Normal School by Unanimous Vote." That late-evening edition of the Pioneer captured well the atmosphere of the celebration and general hoopla that followed the announcement:

A. P. Ritchie was present when the message was received and immediately went out on the streets shouting out the good news to the people. . . . As the news reached Bemidji . . . the town almost went wild. The fire whistle was blown and both whistles of the lumber company mills were set off and continued to blow for almost an hour. Automobiles paraded the streets tooting their horns, and shouts of joy from boys and men were heard everywhere. The fire bell was clanging and together with the firecrackers and other explosives Bemidji celebrated one of the greatest events of its history. A procession of automobiles loaded with enthusiasts was quickly formed and crowded the streets of the city, taking entire possession of every available thoroughfare. The Reynolds and Winter's car loaded with Professor Dyer, Ritchie, F. S. Arnold,

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<sup>53</sup>July 10, 1913, p. 1. In the issue the week before, Editor Ives had grumped that "the location here will end a disagreeable fight that has been brewing between other applicants since our rights were so unceremoniously taken from us."

<sup>54</sup>In the interim between the visit of the commission and the announcement of the location, the Bemidji papers heaped praises on the Bemidji Townsite Company for donating the land which was valued at \$30,000.



and others who were active in securing the school, led the big parade. To say that all acted like a lot of 'crazy hoodlums' is putting it mildly. Boys formed in line with tin pans and sticks and all in all the town presented one of the wildest scenes ever known in its history.

The weekly Bemidji Sentinel, July 18, with three days perspective, described the scene this way:

Within fifteen minutes after a bulletin had been received Tuesday afternoon--a week to a day after the commission's visit here--flashing the news that Bemidji had won, the city had gone crazy with joy. As soon as it was known . . . the city's great fire siren was turned loose and almost simultaneously the fire bell began clanging out a joyous message to the startled populace. An impromptu automobile parade formed quickly and a mile of machines heavily loaded with men, women, and children began circling the business streets, the occupants of each crashing tin pans, blowing horns, pounding drums, dangling cow bells, tooting whistles, firing revolvers, and making any other noise possible, and from out of the pandemonium continuously came the shout, 'We win.' Bells in all parts of the city joined in and locomotives in the Minnesota and International shops shrieked back a reply. When the Soo train bound for Thief River Falls arrived at 4:35 p.m., the pavement leading to the station was packed with automobiles, and the platform was filled with a thousand delirious citizens dancing about like maniacs. A circle was formed on the platform and in an Indian pow-wow led by W. P. Dyer . . . one hundred shouting men joined in. For two hours the noise would make a boiler factory appear as silent as a tomb. It was 11 p.m. before the band stopped playing and the last tune was 'Cheer, Cheer, the Gang's All Here,' and it was too. . . . Farmers and others in the country who heard the weirdly shrieking fire whistles and din of other noises bellowing out from the one city were struck with terror, believing the city to be at the mercy of an Indian uprising . . . or that an earthquake had broken loose, or more logically that the place was in flames.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>55</sup>Interviews with several people who lived in Bemidji and remembered that particular day resulted in their general confirmation of the newspaper accounts, along with some added color that the papers missed. For example, Herbert Warfield said he still had a vivid memory of the Soo train pulling into town and bound for Thief River Falls. "Some of the boys painted big letters in red paint all along the train reading: 'Hello Thief River Falls--Congratulations On Your New Normal.'" As a result of this act, "the Soo company sent a bill for \$400 to the city for cleaning expenses, but of course they never paid it."



According to next day's Pioneer, the celebration lasted "until nine o'clock this morning." It also added that the noise the day before had broken up a district prayer meeting: When the "whistles sounded the glad tidings the district prayer meeting . . . was suddenly brought to a close. Those attending found it more advantageous to give vent to their feelings and rejoice in the open air than within the walls of Mrs. Muncy's home." The paper added that "the band was seated under an electric light which was lowered to within six feet from the ground and played as never before"; the music "was snappy and popular and received with great applause."

If there was one here to be singled out by the crowd, it was Absie P. Ritchie. The Pioneer described one spur-of-the-moment tribute:

Calls for speeches were heard from the masses, and a group of six hisky young fellows, led by Wilbur Lycan, immediately took hold of A. P. Ritchie, carrying him on their shoulders to the Kreatz automobile which stood in the center of the crowd. He was so hoarse as a result of his over-indulgence in the celebration that he could be heard but a short distance.<sup>56</sup>

At the same time that the front-page stories told of the jubilant celebrating, the inside pages had editorials acknowledging the wisdom of the commissioners, praising the local men who had helped the

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<sup>56</sup>July 16, 1913, p. 1. In an interview, Mrs. Ritchie, eighty-four, spoke proudly and at length about her husband's active role and continued interest in the school. She added that he had "made over forty trips to St. Paul" to help get the school. Wilbur Lycan, one of those "husky youths" who carried Ritchie on their shoulders, is now seventy-two years old and the current owner of the Markham Hotel. He called the day of the site selection as one of the most exciting in the town's history. Lycan served one four-year term as resident director of the college from 1939 to 1943.



most, and soothing the despair of those towns which had lost.<sup>57</sup>

Surprisingly, the Thief River Falls paper printed mild reactions to the normal school location and at first showed little resentment. After the announcement, the News-Press ran a long one-column news story giving all the particulars, but it was devoid of opinion. It did add, however, that the vote of the commissioners had been "four to one, Ole Sageng of Fergus Falls voting for Thief River Falls." On the editorial page, the editor asserted once more that Thief River Falls had the best site and deserved the school. "However," he concluded, "we believe we should be good losers and therefore extend congratulations to our friends and neighbors of the pine country--Bemidji, but at the same time can't help but recall that our old friend Bobby Burns . . . [wrote] 'The best laid schemes o' mice and men gang oft a-glax; an lea'e us naught but grief and pain, for promised joy.'"<sup>58</sup> The Cass Lake Times also ran a straight news story on the normal school decision in its July 17 paper but made no editorial comment.

A week after the announcement, however, the bad feeling over the normal school decision heated up again but was shortlived, at least in the newspapers. In the Thief River Falls News-Press, the editor wrote that there were rumors going around the town which called the normal school decision "the most damnable outrage ever perpetrated on the people of this city." The rumor included the allegation that

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<sup>57</sup>The names of those singled out by the papers were Ritchie, H. C. Baer, J. J. Opsahl, A. P. White, F. S. Arnold, F. S. Lycan, E. E. McDonald, W. P. Dyer, W. B. Stewart, A. A. Warfield, R. E. and N. E. Given, C. E. Battles, G. T. Baker, David Gill and Miss E. L. Calihan.

<sup>58</sup>July 17, 1913, p. 2.



Representative O'Neil, who lived in Thief River Falls, had "sold out" to Bemidji. All the rumors, concluded the editor, were "totally unwarranted by the facts," and the editorial finished with a stout defense of the integrity of O'Neil. But on July 31, an editorial entitled "Was It A Political Job?" asserted that nefarious "politics" had been behind the decision favoring Bemidji. Suspicious, the editor wrote: "From appearances it is evident that outside influences dominated the action of some of the members of this commission . . . and we believe . . . that the people . . . are entitled to a complete and detailed report."

Exactly what were these "outside influences" was not made clear either in the newspapers or in interviewing people who were around at the time, or in the available papers of the men closely involved. This is unfortunate, for a bit of a pall hung over the normal school decision for several years, and even the allegations never became clear, let alone the validity of them. Whatever the situation, the area newspapers leaped in again with charges and counter-charges that collectively helped to muddle more the troubled waters and to predict an uncertain future for the school.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>59</sup>The available documentary evidence offers little to answer the question of possible skullduggery; interviews with elderly people in both Bemidji and Thief River Falls proved just as fruitless in getting any answers. Because of this, the writer is tempted to conclude that there really was nothing behind the allegations other than rationalizations to soothe injured pride. After the normal school decision, there grew an intense rivalry among the communities of Bemidji, Cass Lake, and Thief River Falls. Today, however, this parochial rivalry is essentially seen only in the sophomoric intensity of competition between their respective public school athletic teams. Thus it is only the adolescents, of all ages, who continue the 1913 battle, and one might surmise that few if any of the public school students today have any notion of its background.



By the fall of 1913, however, they abandoned the subject of normal schools once more. The Thief River Falls paper went back to quoting, and without malice, from the Bemidji papers about a variety of subjects. It also began worrying about some socialists who were skulking about town, allegedly attempting to take over the city government; the Cass Lake paper went back to flaying the federal Indian agents. The issue, though not completely dormant, became submerged, and did not arise again until the next legislature when it came time to get some funds to get the school started.

In the meantime, rising land values became the first palpable gain from the location of the state institution in the community. Lots in the vicinity of the normal school site jumped from 25 to 40 per cent by the end of July, 1913, and what was described as a "run" was made on the local office of the Townsite Company. This company owned almost all of the land surrounding the proposed normal site, and practically all of the land was still forest. One of the first acts by the company was to temporarily suspend all land sales while it re-appraised the land values: "T. C. Bailey, who represents the Townsite Company, immediately received word by telephone, instructing him to take all lots in that vicinity off the market for the time being."<sup>60</sup> Apparently this action produced some local grumbling which the Pioneer editor tried to assuage in a commentary labeled "Our Townsite Friends." He praised the company for its "magnificent donation" and concluded that Bemidji "was but a child of fifteen and has not yet reached that stage where it has a right to assert its absolute independence. It

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<sup>60</sup>Bemidji Daily Pioneer, July 19, 1913, p. 1.



needs the Townsite people and the Townsite people need Bemidji."<sup>61</sup> Now whether or not Bemidji citizens accepted such pleas, at least the newspapers avoided the topic when the lots went up for sale again at greatly increased prices.

The Normal School Commission--the one that chose the site--paid Bemidji one last visit before disbanding. With it came the State Normal School Board members, and these two boards were joined by the Beltrami County Board of Commissioners who "together . . . visited the site for the normal school and approved" it, seemingly one last time, on August 13, 1913. The Bemidji Pioneer reported the action of the boards and described the site location in a rather vague manner:

The site chosen begins at fourteenth street from Doud Avenue [now Birchmont Drive] to the lake front and follows the lake shore to the Kelsey residence . . . to within two hundred feet of Grank Forks Bay. The tract comprises from twenty to twenty-five acres. The deeds and necessary papers were properly executed and the transfer to the state will be duly effected as soon as the attorney general approves the

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<sup>61</sup>Ibid. Dr. Harold T. Hagg, chairman of the social studies department at Bemidji State College, a member of the faculty since 1936, and author of a book on Minnesota history and several published articles on Bemidji history, called the Townsite Company a "closed book" for historians. He tried unsuccessfully several times to peruse the books of the company that were held by Miss E. L. Calihan; in interviewing her in 1940, he said she "simply refused" to let him see the books, nor would she answer any questions about this important and somewhat shadowy business. The County Register of Deeds informed the writer that only with the recent dissolution of the Townsite Company could a landowner in the college area get a clear title without going through the company. Two major streets close to the college are named after members of the Townsite Company, Calihan and Bixby avenues, the latter after Tams Bixby, the person the Cass Lake editor claimed had persuaded Governor Johnson to veto the Cass Lake bill giving that town the normal school.



title.<sup>62</sup>

Approval of the deed by the state attorney general, however, seriously threatened delay if not the loss of the normal school to Bemidji. When the deeds for the site were presented, the attorney general late in September indicated objection to the title on the grounds that the portion donated by the city could not be transferred without the vote of the people, and moreover that all the deeds had re-verting clauses in case the site should ever cease to be used for normal school purposes. Because of this possibly dangerous situation, A. P. Ritchie and Frank S. Arnold went down to St. Paul again and spent a whole day in the attorney general's office, and they ironed out the difficulties at literally the eleventh hour. The deeds were signed the evening of September 30, which fact was of vital importance because the legislature specified that the site should be chosen and the title approved before October 1, 1913.<sup>63</sup>

Thus did the normal school fight end. After six long years of an intermittent struggle, Bemidji in 1913 won as the site for Minnesota's sixth state normal school. Only the appropriation of the state

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<sup>62</sup>August 13, 1913, p. 1. (See next page for copy of the outside of the deed.) One of the State Normal School Board members, John Wise, owned the Mankato Daily Review. When Wise returned to Mankato, he wrote about his recent trip to Bemidji which the Pioneer quoted in two lengthy installments. Wise concluded: "While we have not viewed the other sites offered . . . it is our opinion as well as all those in Wednesday's party [the combined boards] that the commission acted wisely and conscientiously in making the selection they did."

<sup>63</sup>The Northern Student, Bulletin of the State Teachers College, Bemidji, Minnesota, Vol. XI, No. 2, January, 1938, p. 8. An unconfirmed report has it that some Cass Lake men were in St. Paul at the time for the express purpose of getting the Bemidji delegates inebriated so they would be unable to sign the deeds in time.



45343 ✓

# WARRANTY DEED

BY CORPORATION

White & Street

Townsite Company

-to-

City of Bemidji.

Office of Register of Deeds

County of

BELTRAMI

I hereby certify that the within Instrument was filed in this office for record on the 15 day of Sept A. D. 1913, at 2 o'clock P. M., and was duly recorded in Book 27 of Deeds, on page 305

C. Moon

Register of Deeds

By

E. Murphy

Deputy

Taxes paid and transfer entered this

15th day of Sept 1913

J. L. George

County Auditor

2134000  
I hereby certify that the taxes for year 1912 on within described lands are paid.

Carl Guil  
M.D.



legislature for the first buildings would be needed for the school to open its doors. It would be six more years, however, before the school on paper became the school of brick, and the long metamorphosis would involve not a few problems.

### CHAPTER III

#### OPENING THE SCHOOL DOORS: 1913-1920

One set of politicians gave life to Bemidji Normal School; another set nursed it, got it started, soon named it "teachers college," and sent it on its way, until, somewhat like Topsy, it just grew. Once the site was selected, it was this second group of men who simply got the thing going, though it was not simple. They deserve much credit, because at the start the infant came close to dying in the maelstrom of biennial legislative exigencies. Thankfully for Bemidji, some politician godfathers saved its life.

Because the school was brand new--existing only on paper--the central difficulty was getting the initial appropriations to get it started. In the face of economy-minded legislatures, along with the unsettling times around World War I, getting started provided real difficulties. Those men who struggled for the school in the first formative years set a precedent for determination and stamina that may well be unsurpassed in the history of the college. They emerge as the major protagonists if not the heroes of the early years of Bemidji Normal School. The politicians acted as spokesmen for the civic-minded people of Bemidji and the surrounding community, and they represented their constituency well. For it is politicians, when one really gets to the heart of the matter, whose actions move the legislative machinery



which in turn moves--or stalls or kills--a state-run institution; it is the legislators who must first make the world go 'round for the state colleges. This is a lesson that Minnesota state college faculties are reminded of every two years.

#### Receiving the First Appropriation

In the 1915 legislature, the group of northern Minnesota legislators made up, in general, a new team from the one of 1913, although a few of the old names were back. But in the interim, a couple of them had switched sides. P. H. McGarry, from Walker, who had plumped so long and hard before for Cass Lake, became exceedingly active in supporting Bemidji's new normal school once the site had been selected. Conversely, Daniel P. O'Neil, who had once supported Bemidji but who most recently had worked hard for the location of the school at Thief River Falls, fought vociferously against any legislative appropriation for the new school.

The political makeup of the state legislature in 1915 was difficult to ascertain. Caught up partly in the ways of progressivism that was sweeping the country, the legislature in 1913 had declared itself to be nonpartisan; hence the legislative manual for 1915 gave no political affiliation for the legislators. However, comparing the same names with lists of previous legislatures when there was party designation, one can see that the Republicans had a clear majority in both houses. And with the exception of the governor, all of the major state officers were Republicans.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Winfield S. Hammond, Democrat, was the governor in 1915. A native of Massachusetts and a graduate of Dartmouth College, he had come to Minnesota in 1884 as principal of the high school at Mankato. Admitted to the bar in 1891, he made his home at St. James and



Many northern Minnesota legislators aided Bemidji's normal school in 1915. Most of the more active ones in the House were listed as collectively sponsoring the bill (House File No. 84) appropriating \$150,000 in the next biennium "for the erection of a normal school building at Bemidji, Minnesota." The sponsors were: L. G. Pendergast, Bemidji, Beltrami County; H. J. Miner, International Falls, Koochiching County; Farley A. Dare, Walker, Cass County; E. R. Hinds, Hubbard County; and G. S. Wilkins, Wadena County. Leonard H. Nord of International Falls introduced the same bill in the Senate, and he along with McGarry supported it actively in that wing of the capitol.<sup>2</sup>

Editors expected the year 1915 to be a year of retrenchment in state spending. As the January 29, 1915, Bemidji Sentinel correspondent said of the legislature: "At present everybody is talking and preaching economy, and the general tendency seems to be in that direction." Without belaboring the point, suffice it to say that for several reasons the year 1914 was not a year for legislative

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practiced law. From 1898 to 1906 he was a member of the State Normal Board; in 1906 he began the first of four consecutive terms as United States Representative from the Second District. Aided by a split in the Republican party, he was elected governor in 1914, but in that election only one of the three counties which had sought the new normal school--Beltrami, Cass, and Marshall--gave a majority of their votes to Hammond. Minnesota, Legislative Manual (1915), p. 609.

<sup>2</sup>As indicated in the previous chapter, the State Archives do not contain any records of the normal school committee hearings dating back that far; hence one has to rely largely on area newspaper accounts for news as the Minneapolis-St. Paul papers gave short shrift to regional bills in the legislature.



largesse.<sup>3</sup>

Into this fiscally conservative arena came Absie P. Ritchie, by then Bemidji postmaster, and Beltrami County Superintendent of Schools W. B. Stewart to join Representative Pendergast and State Superintendent of Education C. G. Schultz to testify in behalf of the Bemidji Normal School appropriation before the House appropriations committee. Farley A. Dare, a member of the House who was also the publisher of the Walker Pilot, recorded the interesting action taken by the committee on the Bemidji request:

It is quite probable that Bemidji will secure a small appropriation for a normal school. The original bill calls for \$150,000 but its author [presumably Pendergast] dropped a remark . . . to the effect that he would be glad to get \$25,000 a year for two years, and the appropriations committee favorably passed on that amount before the author had a chance to change his mind.<sup>4</sup>

As for the chances of the bill in the Senate, the Sentinel observed that not only was money hard to get but also there was a member in the Senate out to "get" Bemidji, an old nemesis, Ole Sageng. Sageng had been on the 1913 committee to choose the site and had himself voted for Thief River Falls. "It is understood," remarked the editor, "that ever since the commission that located the normal . . . disregarded his advice . . . the man has been antagonistic . . ." to Bemidji.<sup>5</sup> Money, however, proved the greater problem, and in view of

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<sup>3</sup>Minnesota was very much an agricultural state at the time, and the wholesale price index for farm products had not changed from 1913 to 1915; it was still at 71.5, based on 1926 equals 100. U. S., Department of Commerce, Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1957 (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1960), p. 116.

<sup>4</sup>Quoted in the Sentinel, March 19, 1915, p. 1.

<sup>5</sup>March 19, 1915, p. 1.



the loud cry for economy by legislators, the northern Minnesota contingent felt well satisfied with a \$50,000 appropriation for Bemidji after talking with the House appropriations chairman and the Senate finance committee chairman. So Bemidji partisans sought this reduced amount, but even this figure was not easy to attain.<sup>6</sup>

Meanwhile, one public act occurred to indicate that a normal school existed in some form at Bemidji. On April 8, 1915, Governor Hammond appointed A. P. White, president of the Bemidji Northern National Bank, as a member of the State Normal Board. The local Sentinel interpreted the appointment to be "a recognition by the executive of the fact that the sixth state normal school, yet to be built, has been definitely located at Bemidji." Just that statement suggested that there had been some lingering doubts before.<sup>7</sup> (See Appendix I for picture of White and the resident directors who came after him.)

When the 1915 legislature began its last week of the session, the Bemidji appropriation request had become absorbed in the House

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<sup>6</sup>After the Senate finance committee at first turned down any request for Bemidji normal, editor Ferman A. Wilson of the Sentinel on April 19 wrote an open letter "To the Legislature" and said in effect: you decided to locate the school here, we gave you the land, so the legislature was "in honor bound to fulfill its part of the obligation. Bemidji has kept faith with the state," and the legislature must in turn keep the faith.

<sup>7</sup>Added insight into this appointment appeared in a bulletin printed in 1938. In the brief historical sketch of the college, it was stated that Hammond had spoken at an Educational Association meeting in Bemidji on February 12, 1915, and "on this occasion the governor was requested to appoint a Bemidji member on the College Board which procedure it was assumed might aid the cause of an appropriation. Governor Hammond agreed to do so." The Northern Student, Bulletin of the State Teachers College, Bemidji, Minnesota, Vol. XI, No. 2, January, 1938, p. 9. White met with the Board for the first time on May 11, 1915.



omnibus bill for general state appropriations. But judging by the general tenor of the legislature and the specific description of the House, this money bill was anything but safe: "The only words that express the condition existing in the House are chaos and turmoil. These, however, are really inadequate to give an idea of the real situation," wrote the correspondent of the Bemidji Sentinel.<sup>8</sup> Despite the turmoil, the House approved the omnibus bill by a 78-to-15 vote. Before the vote, however, a motion had been made to have the Bemidji appropriation of \$50,000 stricken from the bill, but this amended motion lost by the same 78-15 vote.<sup>9</sup>

Over in the Senate a similar clash over the Bemidji appropriation occurred between Senators Nord and McGarry on one side and O'Neil on the other. By then the figure had been cut in half to \$25,000, the last minute cutting done by a conference committee of both houses, but O'Neil objected to any amount.<sup>10</sup> However, he could not muster up enough support to kill the appropriation. The measure became law: "For aid to commence erection and construction of a normal school

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<sup>8</sup>April 16, 1915, p. 1. In contrast with today, both Bemidji newspapers had a special correspondent employed during the legislative sessions to report at length on legislative happenings.

<sup>9</sup>L. O. Teigen of Jackson made the motion to amend, and he received strong support from Oscar Stenvick whose district included Thief River Falls even though Stenvick's home was Bagley, a town twenty-five miles west of Bemidji. The debate on the motion was described as "heated."

<sup>10</sup>The cut was not unexpected, "it being generally understood that the \$50,000 bill could not pass the Senate." Pioneer, April 20, 1915, p. 1. Said the Duluth News-Tribune: "Stenvick . . . made an impassioned plea for the amendment and Senator O'Neil . . . also appeared to work for the amendment against Bemidji. This action . . . was owing to his resentment over the failure of his city . . . to obtain the designation for the sixth normal." Quoted in the Pioneer, April 22, 1915.



building at Bemidji as authorized by law, available for the year ending July 31, 1917,--\$25,000."<sup>11</sup>

The reactions of the two Bemidji papers to this first small legislative appropriation presented a curious contrast. The Pioneer deemed it a "brilliant victory" for the city and northern Minnesota. In view of the stringent attitude toward spending by the state in general, "it is a source of great satisfaction that our northern legislators were able to muster sufficient assistance to secure any amount whatever."<sup>12</sup> The Sentinel, however, ran the headline: "Bemidji Fares Poorly at Hands of Legislature," and went on to say that any hope of an adequate appropriation had "faded away" for at least two years more."<sup>13</sup>

Nevertheless, when the area legislators arrived home at the close of the session, the local papers praised them for their efforts. They, in turn, praised each other; they especially commended the work of Senator McGarry of Walker, with Senator Nord maintaining that had McGarry opposed the appropriation or even been neutral about it, the money would never have been approved.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Minnesota, Session Laws (1915), c. 375.

<sup>12</sup>April 22, 1915, p. 1. An editorial in the same paper revealed much foresight, though it probably appeared as wishful thinking at the time: "It means that the day is not far distant when the attractive site . . . will be adorned with appropriate buildings and this section of the state will be blessed with this needed educational institution."

<sup>13</sup>April 23, 1915, p. 1.

<sup>14</sup>Pioneer, April 24, 1915, p. 1. Pendergast said he was well satisfied with the small amount because it would give enough money "to properly erect a basement and foundation." But most important, he said, "From now on the normal school will be in the hands of the State Normal Board and further appropriations will be secured through its recommendations." In effect, he felt the hardest part was over.



The topic of normal schools appeared one more time in the 1915 newspapers before taking a year-long recess. It occurred when a party of about forty members of the legislature, their wives, and state officials visited Bemidji June 17 on one of their stops in their long itinerary. The group included two men who would become the next two governors: J. A. A. Burnquist, then lieutenant governor, and J. A. O. Preus, state auditor. City officials attempted to give them the royal treatment, complete with banquets and tours; the Pioneer seemed almost obsequious in playing up their presence in town. For their part the group of visitors conducted a mock session of the Senate in the local armory building for the public in which, reported the Pioneer, "Lieutenant Governor Burnquist presided in true legislative style."<sup>15</sup> Two days after they left town, June 19, 1915, the Pioneer quoted from the Minneapolis Tribune a story filed by one of its reporters traveling with the party: "The autos . . . transported the visitors to the new normal school grounds and the Bemidji citizens, when they had the legislators on the beautiful grounds . . . took occasion to intimate that at the next session a substantial appropriation for this institution will be desired."<sup>16</sup>

#### Approaching the Time to Build

The state authority that oversaw the normal schools was the State Normal Board. It took charge of Bemidji Normal once that first

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<sup>15</sup>What seemed to impress the visitors the most in their two-day stay was a large grove of virgin timber along Lake Bemidji called the Ruggles Forest, which they hoped would be saved from the woodsman's ax. The only bill passed in the mock session was "unanimously passed" and "appropriated \$250,000 for the purchase of the Ruggles timber." Would that they were so free with money for the local normal school buildings.

<sup>16</sup>Quoted June 19, 1915, p. 1.



appropriation was made in April, 1915. But the Board delayed any action on Bemidji for a year. Not until June 10, 1916, did the Board arrange for the architectural plans and the beginning of work at Bemidji. Resident Director A. P. White, who had attended a recent Board meeting, told the local paper that the Board had decided to send "landscape gardeners" (architects) to Bemidji to look over the site, and that the Board had also agreed to construct a main building, a dormitory, and a central heating plant for the present, and would ask the 1917 legislature for \$250,000 to complete these plans.<sup>17</sup>

State architect C. H. Johnston and landscape engineer A. R. Nichols were the "gardeners" who arrived in Bemidji on June 17, 1916, to inspect the grounds for the normal. That evening they outlined their plans before the city council, reported the Pioneer, and said they would have sketch plans ready for approval by the Board when it met in Bemidji in August. When the Board assembled on August 22, 1916, in Bemidji's Carnegie Library building, Johnston was there with his drawings and plans which he presented to the Board. The Board approved them. Though not mentioned in the official minutes, the August 23 Pioneer stated that Board President Ell Torrance had also appointed three Board members--White of Bemidji, J. L. Washburn, Duluth, and C. G. Schultz, State Superintendent of Public Instruction--"to confer with

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<sup>17</sup>Pioneer, June 10, 1916, p. 1. The official Board minutes, however, do not mention this meeting. The Board had met with the State Board of Control because the building finances of the University and normal schools had been placed under the supervision of the State Board of Control by the 1911 legislature in the attempt to secure administrative efficiency. These unofficial decisions regarding Bemidji Normal were formally included in the minutes of their November 14, 1916, meeting.



the state architects who represent the Board of Control as to the arrangement of the main building." There the matter rested for another year. From the available evidence, it appears that the Board decided not to proceed with any plans for a building at Bemidji until after the 1917 legislature convened and presumably acted favorably on its requests for the next biennium.

The Board's 1917 requests totalled \$1,413,000 for all six normal schools, \$579,344 of which was for new buildings (the total appropriations made to the normal schools in 1915 had been \$787,310). As to Bemidji, the request read: "Central building, including heating plant, auditorium and gymnasium, \$265,000. Girls'dormitory, \$85,000."<sup>18</sup> Again it would depend on what the politicians decided in St. Paul.

The fortieth session of the state legislature extended from January 2 to April 19, 1917. Incumbent Republican Governor J. A. A. Burnquist, who had succeeded to the position upon the death of Winfield Hammond late in 1915, had been elected in 1916. Minnesota went Republican in 1916, the state even going for Charles Evans Hughes for President.

Efficient government was the keynote of Governor Burnquist's opening message, one of the shortest ever given. He recommended holding the budget to the minimum. The Normal Board's budget requests had been

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<sup>18</sup>Minutes of the Normal School Board, November 14, 1916.

Though the Board recommended a lump sum appropriation from the legislature, the legislature itself made allocations to the individual normal schools; hence each normal school waged a battle for money and competed with the other normals to get it. This competition continued despite several resolutions passed by the Board to discourage it. Today, however, the money is allotted to the Board which in turn distributes it to the schools.



lumped together with other requests of the state-expense budget which totaled over \$27,000,000. Burnquist lopped \$7,500,000 off this budget before sending it to the legislature, and one of the items he struck out was the \$350,000 request for buildings at Bemidji. He suggested that the legislature defer until 1919 "the building of large educational structures because of high costs of material and scarcity of labor."<sup>19</sup> Moreover, the governor pointed out that the Normal Board had asked for \$625,000 more than had been allotted to it in the last session, and that the current requests were out of line. After this the Bemidji Sentinel concluded: "The attitude the governor has taken . . . is that of asking the legislature to spend as little as possible." The Pioneer echoed, not without reason: "All there is to show for the proposition now is the site."<sup>20</sup>

For many reasons Bemidji partisans in 1917 lacked optimism for any appropriation. With the conservative attitude of the governor, the elimination of Bemidji's request from the first appropriation bill, and the current worry about the war which overshadowed all other topics, the Bemidji newspapers and the northern Minnesota legislators resignedly expressed little hope of getting any money out of the 1917 legislature. The local newspapers almost dropped the subject until the perennially wild last week of the session. An educational omnibus bill had come out of the House appropriations committee without any money stipulated for Bemidji Normal. When it reached the floor, L. G. Pendergast of Bemidji proposed an amendment to include \$150,000 for Bemidji Normal.

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<sup>19</sup>Quoted in the Bemidji Sentinel, February 2, 1917, p. 1.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.; February 1, 1917, p. 1.



This seventy-five-year-old Civil War veteran, who had gotten up out of his sick bed that day, then made an impassioned plea on the floor of the House. In his talk he reviewed the long fight for the location and then the very small appropriation that had been made in 1915; he concluded by saying:

It has been almost my sole ambition during the past ten years to build up this additional institution in Northern Minnesota, and when the time comes when my good friends will sound 'taps' for me, I want to go knowing that this institution is built so that people may say of me when I have passed beyond, he gave all the energy and influence which God Almighty entrusted to him to build up this institution of learning for future generations. I would consider it a greater honor to me to have this said than all the monuments of granite, or marble or bronze which the United States has ever erected to the memory of her military heroes. This is all the honor I want, it is enough for any man.<sup>21</sup>

The House adopted Pendergast's amendment by an 80-to-11 roll call vote; the entire omnibus bill was then approved without an opposing vote. The bill next went to the Senate, was recommended for passage by the finance committee, and passed without opposition. But trouble came when it went to the governor, and this apparent \$150,000 victory, much ballyhooed in the Bemidji press, was very short-lived. Burnquist exercised his right to alter or veto separate items included in appropriations bills, and he slashed the figure in half.<sup>22</sup> Yet the \$75,000 was a big victory, and Bemidji's civic-minded citizens poured

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<sup>21</sup>Quoted in the Sentinel, April 20, 1917, p. 1. Pendergast died that fall, November 21, 1917, in Nevada where he had gone for the winter, said the newspaper, "to regain the health he had lost in the desperate fight he waged against great odds to secure the normal school appropriation." Reportedly he had lost forty pounds during the session. His body was returned to Bemidji June 19, 1918, and in the news story about it, again the same point was made as to how he lost his health.

<sup>22</sup>Minnesota, Session Laws (1917), c. 437.



out to welcome home their hero-of-the-day, Pendergast, upon his return to Bemidji.

A spontaneous outpouring of Bemidji's citizenship was at the depot to welcome him and his good wife. . . . And while it might seem an amusing human interest feature, the grizzled veteran of the Civil War [had] . . . lost forty pounds of weight. His kind face was wreathed in smiles as he emerged from the car to be greeted by band music and the outstretched hands of a throng of friends. Instantly he was surrounded by the crowd, everyone eager to grasp his hand, and cheers rent the air. He was escorted to the car of A. P. White, the band played, the civilian auxiliary fell into line, scores of autos followed in turn and the procession passed through the business district to the city hall. In response to a query [about giving up hope for any appropriation for the normal school] he replied, 'Well, it did look that way, but I felt just like Paul Jones did--just commenced to fight.'<sup>23</sup>

With the 1917 legislature over, and the final action of the governor, there remained \$100,000 to start building the Bemidji Normal School, \$25,000 from the 1915 session and \$75,000 available after August 1, 1917. The time to build had arrived. In a relatively short time, the bureaucratic machinery moved, for at the August 14, 1917, Board meeting, state architect C. H. Johnston presented the sketches of the proposed building to the Board, and they were approved.<sup>24</sup> The Board approved the final plans on February 18, 1918, and bids were solicited and announced to be opened on March 12, 1918. When that day came, the number of bids totaled forty-five, thirteen for the general construction, twenty for mechanical equipment, and twelve for electrical equipment. However, bids were not let for a few days until State

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<sup>23</sup>Quoted in the Bemidji Weekly Pioneer, April 26, 1917, p. 2.

<sup>24</sup>In retrospect, the most interesting decision of the State Normal Board at that meeting was the unanimous approval of the resolution: "That the teaching of the German language in the normal schools of this state in all departments be discontinued forthwith."



Architect Johnston went over them and gave his approval. Finally on March 19 the Board of Control awarded the contracts for the building of the first structure of Bemidji's normal school: F. M. Klarquist and Sons, Minneapolis, general construction, \$72,075; M. J. O'Neill, St. Paul, heating and plumbing, \$19,376; Minnesota Electric Light and Power Company, Bemidji, electrical work, \$1,758.

### Laying the Cornerstone

On April 3, 1918, work began on clearing the trees on the site and excavating for the foundation, with teams of horses used in the excavation. The first carload of brick arrived by rail the next day for the 145 x 55 foot, three-story building to have 26,100 square feet of floor space. By April 25, the excavation for the basement had been completed and workmen began to pour cement for the foundation. When the building of the foundation began, the city Commercial Club began to plan for the cornerstone-laying ceremony. On May 2 the Pioneer reported that the superintendent of construction of the building had spoken to a noon luncheon of the Commercial Club the day before, and afterwards "it was voted to have a big celebration at the laying of the cornerstone."<sup>25</sup>

The Commercial Club president announced on June 26 that the day for the ceremonies had been set for August 10, 1918, at 2:00 p.m. The club sent out invitations and began to make final preparations. Two

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<sup>25</sup>The Commercial Club named a committee to head the arrangements: H. E. Reynolds, chairman; A. P. Ritchie, A. P. White, W. Z. Robinson, and W. C. Bolcum. The Sentinel on May 3 added that it would be "a celebration to which all of the members of the last legislature and many other prominent men will be invited . . . when the cornerstone of the new building is formerly [sic] laid."



days before the ceremony, however, the Pioneer announced with an air of sophistication that there would be no parade and no demonstrations on the part of the city in general; instead, it continued, the "ceremonies will be simple and impressive, the address of the governor being the feature of the day." And the brief article concluded: "The entire populace of Bemidji is urged to attend the ceremony."<sup>26</sup>

The ceremony took place on an improvised platform erected at the main entrance of the building (see picture of ceremony next page). The newspapers gave no estimate of attendance, but stated only that there "was a large assemblage of Bemidji people and visitors." The visitors were not identified. District Judge C. W. Stanton of Bemidji presided; after some opening band numbers and the invocation, he gave a brief address, incident to which he set the cornerstone in its allotted niche. Stanton then introduced Governor Burnquist, who delivered the major address.<sup>27</sup>

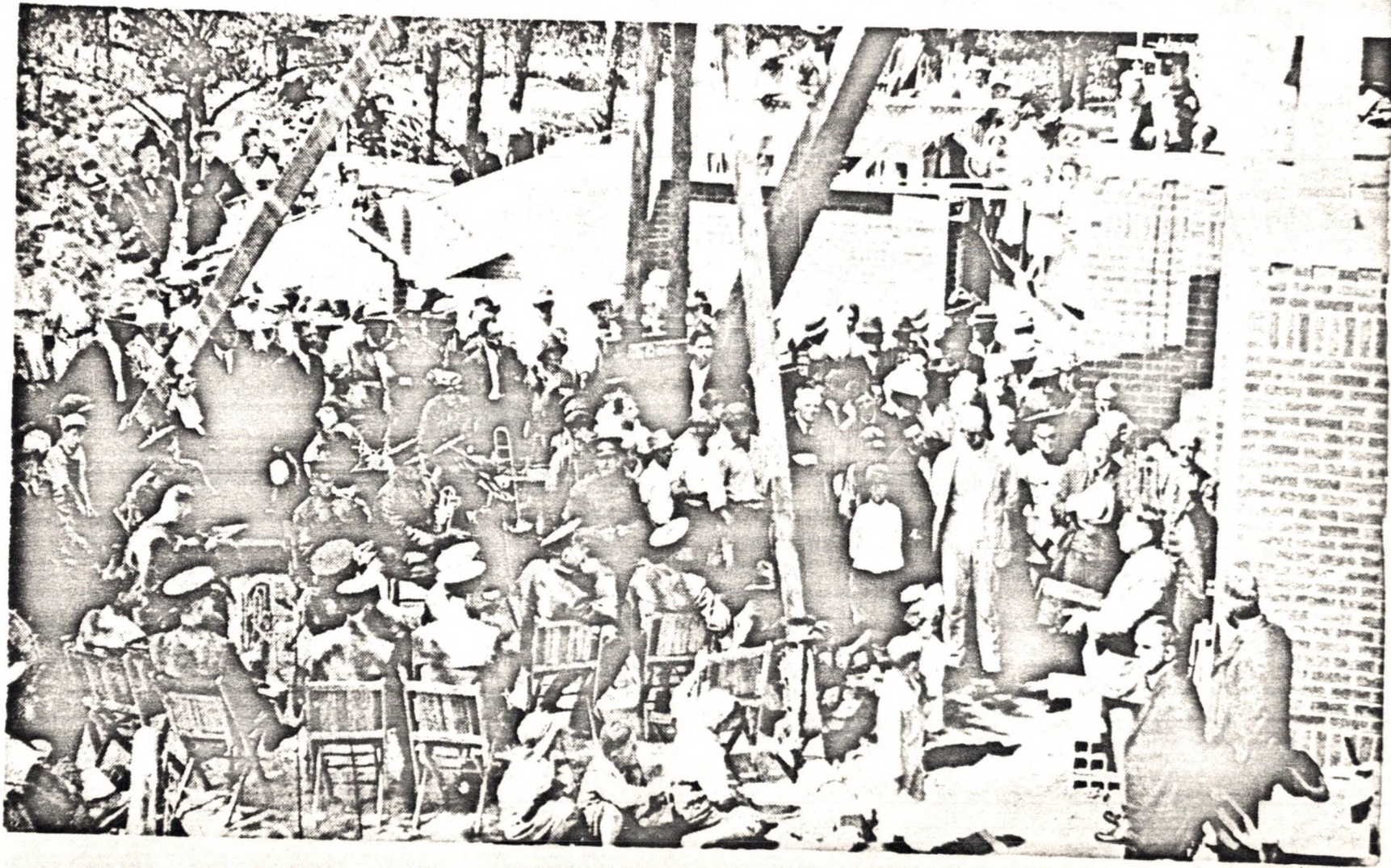
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<sup>26</sup>August 8, 1918, p. 1. Nearly all the news about the building progress of the new normal was sandwiched in comparatively small spaces among war-news stories. And rarely during this first building period were there any editorials about the school; these too dealt nearly always with some phase of the war or war efforts at home. The chauvinism, the shrill headlines, the articles equating nonconformity with treason were epitomised in the 1918 Bemidji newspapers. For just one example, the June state primary election found several candidates who were members of the controversial Nonpartisan League, among them Charles A. Lindbergh, Sr., and the day after the election and subsequent defeat of League candidates, the Pioneer double-deck banner headline read: "Minnesota Responds to Loyalty Call; Slaughters Advocates of Sedition." Civil liberties had adjourned in Bemidji.

<sup>27</sup>War news was put aside for one day in the local newspapers, the day of the cornerstone laying. A full account of the ceremony appears in the Pioneer of August 12, 1918, and the Sentinel of August 16, 1918. Lengthy excerpts, seemingly the entire talk, of Stanton appear in the Pioneer. Neither paper quotes one word of Burnquist's speech, despite the Pioneer's statement that "Governor Burnquist made a most masterly address which was listened to intently and commanded applause at frequent intervals."



Laying The Cornerstone—Main Building, 1918





The prediction by the newspaper of a sedate ceremony was apparently correct; this one-day ceremony was not a celebration in the sense of a big outburst of show or emotion. For whatever reasons--perhaps mainly the overwhelming tenor of the current war then going on--the public show for the actual building of the long-fought-for normal school appeared anti-climactic. The newspapers agreed afterwards that simplicity marked the ceremony, and interviews with persons who were there confirm this general opinion.<sup>28</sup>

#### Choosing the First President

Though the workmen obviously made progress on the construction of the building after the cornerstone-laying ceremonies, the local papers did not report it. The State Normal Board, however, observed the strides being made so that at its November 12, 1918, meeting, President Ell Torrance appointed board members A. P. White, Bemidji; S. H. Somesen, Winona; and H. T. Welter, Moorhead, to constitute a committee "to consider persons for the position of president of the Bemidji school and make a report at the next quarterly meeting." At this November meeting the Board made a decision that for the time being affected Bemidji negatively. A motion carried "that no appropriations

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<sup>28</sup>Fred Troppman, a still-active Bemidji businessman at age 94, recalled that the day of the cornerstone laying "was all very nice, but I don't remember it being anything so extra special." Regarding the cornerstone, it would appear that it took a large container to accommodate all the memorabilia that went into it. As the Sentinel article of August 16, 1918, read: "Records of practically all the proceedings connected with the development . . . were placed within the casket that is now covered by the cornerstone." The items ran from a photograph of Chief Bemidji to copies of eleven different newspapers to another photograph and biographical sketch of the late Representative Pendergast, plus literally dozens of other items.



for any buildings for the normal schools be requested from the next session of the legislature by this Board, or otherwise." In this decision, the Board showed caution and to no avail members White and Schultz voted against it. Thus it appeared that there would be no chance for a dormitory for Bemidji at least until after 1921. To help change the Board's decision, the Bemidji Commercial Club named a committee of three--county attorney Graham Torrance (son of Normal Board President Ell Torrance); postmaster A. P. Ritchie, and superintendent of schools W. C. Bolcum--to meet with the Board. Although the Board's minutes do not mention the meeting, the Bemidji delegation--subsequently changed to Ritchie, F. S. Lycan, and Judge C. W. Stanton--went to St. Paul in February, 1919, to plead its case. One might presume that its influence was significant, judging by the resolution passed by the Board on February 11, 1919:

Whereas, since the last meeting of the Board, it has been made to appear that a liberal building policy is to be adopted with reference to state institutions, therefore Resolved by this Board that requests for appropriations for dormitories and equipment at normal schools be made of the present legislature, instead of postponing the same for two years.

So the Board recommended \$100,000 each for dormitories at Bemidji, Winona, and Mankato, and instructed the secretary to "present these resolutions to the proper committees in the legislature."

At the same time the three-man committee chosen in November to recommend a president for Bemidji Normal had been active. By mid-January, White informed the Pioneer after recently returning from Minneapolis where he had attended a meeting of his committee, that "there were about fifteen or twenty applicants for the position, some



of them educators of good reputation and standing."<sup>29</sup> Moreover, White reported, the choice had been narrowed down to three persons, but he named no names. The Pioneer did, however, and concluded in its speculation that it would most likely be John Munroe, superintendent of schools at Faribault, even though "he is known as a progressive in education, even to the point of radicalism." The suspense was lifted, and the Pioneer's prediction proved wrong, when the State Normal Board selected Bemidji's first president at their February 11, 1919, meeting. The manner in which the official minutes reported the selection, however, conjured up all kinds of questions that were not answered. Let the minutes themselves present the enigma:

Mr. White, Chairman of the Committee to consider persons for the position of President of the Bemidji School reported that the Committee had not agreed upon a man to recommend for the position and the Committee would require more time. An extended discussion followed. No decision was reached at this time.

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The Board reassembled at three o'clock and unanimously elected Mr. M. W. Deputy, formerly of Mankato but now of Kansas City, Missouri, as president of the Normal School at Bemidji at a salary of \$4,000. Mr. Deputy was communicated with by long distance telephone. Further assurance was given him of increase of salary so as to place him in two years upon the same basis as the other presidents, if the school progressed satisfactorily.

Deputy accepted two days later and arranged to begin his duties at Bemidji on May 1, 1919. Bemidji Normal School had its first president although it may never be known just what went on at the Board meeting

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<sup>29</sup>January 14, 1919, p. 1. Though hardly intended, the phrasing of White is such to suggest the questionable reputations of the remaining candidates.



the day he was chosen.<sup>30</sup>

The Pioneer ran a picture of Deputy (see next page for a 1925 picture) in its February 24, 1919, issue along with an article on his background. Manfred Wolfe Deputy was born in 1867 on a farm near Vernon, Indiana, and attended rural schools. His first teaching experience was in rural schools, and he later became a high school principal, a city superintendent of schools, and a county superintendent of schools, all in Indiana. His professional preparation included a two-year course at Southern Indiana Normal, Mitchell, and four years as a student at Indiana University. He received a B. A. degree in philosophy and psychology in 1904, and an M. A. in education in 1905. Beyond this he did graduate work at Teachers' College, Columbia University. In 1909 he went to Eastern State Normal in Charleston, Illinois, where he taught pedagogy and served as director of the elementary school connected with the normal. From 1911 to 1916 he served as a teacher of pedagogy and director of the elementary school at Mankato Normal. From 1916 to 1919, he served as director of teachers' training and extension work in the public schools of Kansas City, Missouri, and organized a standard two-year normal course there. Deputy was married and had one

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<sup>30</sup>A bulletin printed by Bemidji college in 1938 gave some additional information on what went on at that February, 1919, Board meeting: "From the forty or more active candidates the committee did not arrive at a conclusion and asked for an extension of time. It was the Board's opinion that the selection should not be longer deferred. During the discussion director J. L. Washburn suggested the name of M. W. Deputy. Because Mr. Deputy was well-known to other members of the Board and to the presidents of the other colleges, his appointment was unanimously favored." The Northern Student, Bulletin of the State Teachers College, Bemidji, Minnesota, Vol. XI, No. 2, January, 1938, p. 10. That the Board would select a president in this almost casual, spur-of-the-moment manner seems difficult to accept.





To our worthy and beloved president  
Manfred W. Deputy  
we dedicate this first student publication of  
Vemidji State Teachers College



daughter.<sup>31</sup>

### Funds For A Dormitory

By the end of February, 1919, the Bemidji Normal School had a president selected and one building half completed. It next wanted funds for a dormitory. Again the immediate future of the new school lay in the bills before the state legislature and in the hands of the politicians who would guide them along their difficult route.

Fortunately for the newly founded school, two new representatives from the sixty-second district, the district in which the new normal was located, proved to be stalwarts in supporting the school. Representative Arthur E. Rako of Bemidji and Franklin J. McPartlin of International Falls both landed seats on the all-important appropriations committee; Rako had the further advantage of sitting as a member of the committee on the university and state schools, a position which provided him an additional lever for getting appropriations. Then, too, Senators Nord and McGarry were back to espouse the cause of Bemidji Normal in the upper house. Nord was in an advantageous position in that he was a member of the finance committee.

Besides having good representation in the legislature, several other factors aided Bemidji's quest for funds in the 1919 session. The general attitude of the state administration had brightened since the

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<sup>31</sup>Several years after Deputy had been in Bemidji, the May 27, 1927, Pioneer quoted him as saying: "I had expected to spend the rest of my days in Kansas City, but I had been raised and brought up on a farm, and had the true spirit of the Northwest within me. I had been at Mankato and knew the sturdiness of the people; I had faith in this northern Minnesota country. I was sure that the Bemidji school was being established because you needed it."



previous year and understandably so in view of the fact that the anxiety connected with the war had given way to optimism and a desire for revitalization of the state and its agencies. A second factor which provided impetus to a greater expansion of state educational facilities in general, and of normal schools in particular, was the appointment on January 20, 1919, of James M. McConnell as State Superintendent of Education. McConnell, who replaced C. G. Schultz, served in this position until his death in 1933. As a former teacher of history at Mankato Normal, he was already aware of the numerous problems facing teacher-training schools. His sincere devotion to forwarding the cause of teacher education in Minnesota proved to be a boon for all the struggling schools.<sup>32</sup> Still another favorable circumstance was the fact that able Judge Ell Torrance presided over the State Normal School Board. Judge Torrance of Minneapolis was the father of County Attorney Graham Torrance of Bemidji--the county seat of Beltrami County--and the local citizens had great faith in Judge Torrance's ability. They felt that they had a staunch supporter in an influential position, one who would not necessarily show favoritism but who on the other hand would not permit the well-established schools or any other pressure group to force the newest normal school into a

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<sup>32</sup>There were several changes in title of the person who served in the capacity as the head of the state public schools; regardless of the title, the person served as ex officio member and secretary of the State Normal Board. Almost all the authors who have written on Minnesota public education during McConnell's long tenure have paid warm tribute to the man. An example of this can be seen in a small book by Dudley S. Brainard, History of St. Cloud State Teachers College (St. Cloud: St. Cloud State Teachers College, 1953), p. 47. McConnell's work is also noted in J. McKeen Cattell, ed., Leaders in Education (New York: The Science Press, 1932), p. 592.



disadvantageous position.<sup>33</sup>

When the legislature began, Bemidji partisans had a slight scare thrown into them when it was discovered that the appropriations for Bemidji Normal had not been included in the budget submitted by Governor Burnquist. But the omission proved to be an error, and a correction was forthcoming immediately, averting a costly setback. Once the Board's resolution calling for a \$100,000 dormitory appropriation reached the legislature, Representative Rako and his compatriots assumed the task of guiding it, along with a \$40,000 maintenance and equipment appropriation, through the tortuous course of budget sniping. Both Rako and Senator Nord kept a close watch on developments while Bemidji newspapers and other backers supported their legislators with editorials and letters.<sup>34</sup>

On March 18 the appropriations committee of the House reported favorably on the dormitory request; within a week a joint committee of the House and Senate met and placed in their recommendations all the Bemidji requests. The legislature approved these recommendations, as usual, in the closing days of the session. The financial struggle had been waged successfully again, and it was a jubilant Bemidji when the

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<sup>33</sup>Editorial originally published in the Minneapolis Tribune, reprinted on the editorial page of the Pioneer, March 18, 1919. Torrance served as a Board member for eighteen years, the last twelve as president; he retired from the Board in 1920. Torrance had also been the national commander of the Grand Army of the Republic; his papers are on file at the State Historical Society and are filled with correspondence regarding the G.A.R. He was listed in Who's Who In America, 1920-1921, Vol. XI (Chicago: A. N. Marquis & Company, 1920), p. 2848. A large man physically, his picture is shown on p. 26. At the University of Minnesota, Duluth, "Torrance Hall" is a dormitory named after him.

<sup>34</sup>Bemidji Sentinel, February 28, March 7, 1919.



good news arrived. The distribution of the funds for Bemidji Normal included the following:<sup>35</sup>

Maintenance, including summer sessions and library	\$27,400
Repairs, betterments and equipment	\$ 1,250
Equipment for the new building available for the year ending July 31, 1919	\$10,300
Maintenance available for year ending July 31, 1919	\$ 3,000
Women's Dormitory	<u>\$100,000</u>
total	\$141,950

One problem that luckily ended up being a diversion occurred in the 1919 legislative session. A rumor of a proposal spread among the legislators that the newest school at Bemidji be permanently limited to being an academy for the training of rural teachers. The proposal, whose origins were vaguely traced to "state education circles" or "the education department," came under immediate attack by Bemidji area legislators and the regional newspapers.<sup>36</sup> Fortunately, perhaps, the proposal was never drafted into bill form, and the local papers paid tribute to the legislators for not allowing the plan to gain any real backing.

#### Selecting the Teaching Staff

All in all, the 1919 session proved to be a very successful one for Bemidji Normal. With sufficient funds secured, a president hired,

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<sup>35</sup>Minnesota, Session Laws (1919), c. 466.

<sup>36</sup>A sample response can be seen in a Sentinel editorial on February 7: "Students in this section of the state will grow to depend on the local Normal for a full course in education. To many it will fill the place of a university, and the expense of going to the Twin Cities will be eliminated." Later years bore that statement out, although it must have sounded far-reaching in its day.



and a building nearing completion, plans could be readied to open the doors to the first students. The Normal Board had already made plans back in March for its opening when State Superintendent McConnell announced that there would be a six-week Teachers' Training School held in Bemidji starting June 23, 1919, with President Deputy in charge of arrangements.

Deputy arrived for a brief one-week stay in Bemidji in April, and resident director White showed him around. After spending some time at the site where the construction was progressing on the main building, Deputy announced at a Commercial Club meeting that a regular year's session would open that fall if equipment could be secured. That same week Deputy traveled around the area, visiting schools and giving short talks to students and teachers. Before returning to Kansas City to conclude his business there, he announced via the newspapers that there could be no dormitory that first year of school and appealed to Bemidji residents to "open their homes that proper accommodations may be provided for the one-hundred-and-fifty students expected to enroll" in September.<sup>37</sup>

Deputy attended his first meeting of the State Normal Board on May 13, 1919. At the meeting the Board approved the general plans submitted by the architect for the Bemidji dormitory. They also approved the summer school plans and accepted the position that the faculty for the summer session be selected by the Department of Education

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<sup>37</sup>Quoted in the Bemidji Weekly Pioneer, April 30, 1919, p. 1. The Bemidji Women's Community and Civic Club conducted a canvass of the town of rooms available for students and prepared a directory of them for Deputy to send to students who made inquiry. By May 14 they reported having sixty rooming places, and at forty of them students could also take their board.



with the approval of Deputy and resident director White; the Board then designated the summer school as the first regular session of the Bemidji Normal School (see Appendix II for a copy of the brochure prepared by Deputy describing the first summer school and the course offerings). Apparently two members of the Bemidji staff had already been selected, because the Board in its last-minute business approved formally the hiring of Miss Mabell Bonsall, mathematics; and Miss Emma Grant, methods and training work. (These two were the highest paid on the staff that summer of 1919, getting \$311 and \$383 respectively for teaching in the one six-week session.)

On June 10, 1919, two weeks before the school would open, Deputy announced that the selection of the faculty had nearly been completed; that the building was nearly finished and that much of the equipment for it had arrived;<sup>38</sup> that sidewalks had been laid in front of the building; that he "was much encouraged by the number of requests for information" and felt that there would be about one hundred students in the first summer session. City officials, for their part, announced that they would provide sidewalks from town to the school, and that they would pave the street in front of the school before paving any other major town street.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>There were no electrical fixtures installed that first summer, however; see next page for picture of completed main building.

<sup>39</sup>Neither the street nor the sidewalks were completed for many years, however. As late as 1932, Deputy wrote to the city council: "We respectfully call attention to the fact that . . . the City Council would provide for the paving and laying of sidewalks to the proposed college. Undoubtedly some of the council members and the mayor will recall the former enthusiasm which the city had about this matter and will think it proper to carry out the work." Letter from Deputy to City Council and Mayor, June 29, 1932. Random correspondence of Deputy on file in the Special Collections Room, A. C. Clark Library, Bemidji State College.



1922



BEMIDJI STATE TEACHERS COLLEGE



With Deputy again present, the Normal School Board met on June 17, 1919, and gave official approval to the Bemidji faculty and their salaries for both the summer school and the first full school year beginning in September. For the latter, the faculty included the aforementioned Misses Grant of Springfield, Illinois (who had taught the previous year in the Kansas City Normal), \$2,300; and Bonsall, Terre Haute, Indiana (who also became acting Dean of Women), \$1,900; Mr. Marion J. Atwood, Madison, Wisconsin, history and geography, \$2,000 for 10½ months (though Atwood was hired for the full school year, he resigned at the end of the summer session); Miss Eunice Asbury, Bloomington, Indiana, \$1,700 for nine months; Maude Kavanaugh, Rural Department, \$1,600 for nine months; Miss Helen Reinheimer, secretary (to Deputy) and accountant, \$1,250 for full year. Only half of the faculty members that first year held a degree of any kind. What also might be noted were the several persons--Grant, Bonsall, Asbury--whom Deputy essentially brought along with him when he came.

In addition to the above persons who were to teach in both the regular year and the summer session, the Board also approved for the 1919 summer term: Miss Ellen Nystrom, writing and handwork, \$225; Harry Olin, agriculture, \$100; James W. Smith, physics, \$100; Ernest Durbahn, manual training, \$100. The last three persons were listed as part-time only (see next page for picture of first summer school faculty).<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>Minutes of the Normal School Board, June 17, 1919; information on background of faculty provided by the June 20, 1919, Pioneer. Olin, Smith and Durbahn were on the Bemidji high school faculty during the regular school year.



## First Summer School Faculty, 1919



Left to right:  
Mr. Harry Olin  
Mr. J. W. Smith

Miss Ellen C. Nystrom  
President M. W. Deputy  
Miss Ethel Kadlich

Miss Mabel Bonsall  
Miss Eunice Asbury  
Miss Helen Reinhelmer

Miss Daisy Wood  
Miss Emma B. Grant  
Mr. Marion Atwood



### The School Doors Open

Bemidji accepted the first students to its long-awaited normal school on June 23, 1919, at 8:00 a.m. Said the Pioneer that evening: the school opened "under the most auspicious circumstances and the outlook is indeed flattering." By noon the first day the enrollment had reached sixty, and Deputy was reported as "much encouraged" by the numbers. By the end of the third day and supposedly the last day to register, "there were 123 enrolled and more coming," said the Pioneer, which then announced that Deputy had extended the registration period to the entire week. The final total reached 130 students (only 6 were men) from 17 Minnesota counties (see Appendix III for all the enrollment figures at Bemidji to date).<sup>41</sup>

When the summer session ended on August 1, 1919, the Pioneer that evening wrote glowingly of the school's success and the "splendid work" of President Deputy in getting everything organized and operating after being on the job such a short time. In view of such an excellent start, the article predicted, the first regular session to start the

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<sup>41</sup>Between the registration period and the end of the first session, the local Bemidji papers offered no news about the normal school. Miss Maria Krogseng, now age sixty-nine and a retired school teacher living in Saum, Minnesota, was one of the students enrolled that first session. In an interview she indicated that because of the distance from the school to down-town eating places, noon lunches were prepared by the domestic science class and sold for 17 cents a meal. However, students regularly walked up town for noon meals anyway, said Miss Krogseng, because "We were used to walking great distances in those days." What she remembered most fondly about that first session was "that nice Mr. Deputy" talking to the students at regular meetings ("we called them convocations"). Miss Krogseng is remembered in the records for having written the winning lyrics to the school song "Hail to Thee Bemidji College" which she wrote during the regular school year of 1921-1922, and first sung to the tune of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." Later the melody was changed, and later yet the school song was changed.



next month would see over one hundred students enrolled.

Meanwhile, Deputy and resident director A. P. White continued to worry publicly about the recently financed dormitory. Though the state promised that the architectural plans would be ready in June, and the newspapers predicted its completion by the start of the winter term, it was not until August 11, 1919, that bids were called for. The sum of \$100,000 had been allotted for the dormitory, the amount to include both construction and equipment. When the Board opened the bids August 20, the lowest bid for the general construction alone was \$102,000. The plans went back to the drawing boards. The original building was to be L-shaped, but the wing was eliminated to cut costs. When the Board submitted the readjusted plans, the contracts were awarded September 10, 1919, and construction started soon afterwards. Klarquist and Sons, the builders of the first building, again received the bid of \$66,470 for the general construction of the two-story brick structure which would contain 14,816 square feet of floor space.<sup>42</sup>

In preparation for the students' arrival for the regular session to begin September 2, 1919, the Women's Community and Civic Club announced that it had found 130 rooming accommodations available in town. Miss Bonsall, acting dean of women, received the list of rooms and assigned students to their quarters. President Deputy publicly emphasized that even though students would be housed in various parts of the city, they would still be required to observe

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<sup>42</sup>The building was used as a dormitory until 1966, when it became faculty offices. The basement of the building was used as a dining area until after World War II, when it became a student union. When a separate student union building began operation in January, 1968, the basement was used for classrooms.



dormitory rules and violators would be reported. As one editor later observed: "The school was run on rather strict Methodist lines in the first years."<sup>43</sup>

The first regular year's session began with registration on September 2, 1919. "Everyone of the thirty-eight students enrolled for that quarter registered between eight and ten o'clock. No one dropped out during the term," said a later college bulletin regarding the first enrollment.<sup>44</sup> Fourteen of the students who enrolled in the summer session stayed on for the fall term. On Saturday afternoon, September 6, the Women's Community and Civic Club sponsored a get-acquainted reception at the Normal to which the general public was invited. The local papers estimated that between 200 and 225 people attended, a large turnout in comparison to the number enrolled. There was a program which included several musical selections, and which concluded with an address by President Deputy. The Pioneer deemed the entire event "decidedly successful."

The courses offered during the first year--and in subsequent years--were: 1) a two-year curriculum for high school graduates

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<sup>43</sup>A Brief History of Beltrami County (Bemidji: Beltrami County Historical Society, 1963), p. 56. Deputy was a very strict Methodist himself, according to statements made by his contemporaries. For example, Deputy allowed no one, including male faculty members, to smoke on campus. And the thought of anyone drinking alcoholic beverages was, of course, abhorrent to him.

<sup>44</sup>The Northern Student, Bulletin of the State Teachers College, Bemidji, Minnesota, Vol. XI, No. 2, January, 1938, p. 11. That no "one dropped out" was not confirmed by Kenneth Kenfield, age sixty-seven, one of the students enrolled that first fall term, who indicated in an interview that he dropped out after one month and transferred ("There was nothing but girls here," he said). The Sentinel of September 5, 1919, said more hopefully than honestly that there were forty students enrolled and "new students are arriving daily."



leading to the advanced diploma allowing holders to be eligible to teach in any elementary school in the state; 2) a one-year course open to high school students which awarded them a certificate permitting the holder to teach only in rural schools; 3) a five year course in which eighth grade graduates were eligible to enroll to pursue what was then called "undergraduate" studies, or high school courses. Essentially students in this five-year program took four years of high school in three years and then two years of normal school work; at the end of the fifth year, they received the standard two-year diploma.<sup>45</sup> (See Appendix IV for a copy of the brochure describing the first regular session, 1919-1920)

In connection with the Normal, Bemidji ran an elementary school--or Observation School as the first brochure called it--that consisted of kindergarten through grade four, inclusive. The classrooms were on the basement floor of the building, and the enrollment totalled eighty-one. Miss Emma Grant was in charge of the school; Miss Letheld Hahn taught kindergarten and grades one and two; Miss Lucy Dunigan taught grades three and four in the school. The purpose of the school was, said Deputy, to illustrate the best methods of teaching for the Normal School students enrolled. The "college" students also did their observation and student teaching in this on-campus elementary school.

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<sup>45</sup>The State Department of Education then offered a variety of teaching certificates, most of them temporary, to accommodate the need for teachers; realism dictated that the standards could not be high for certification, an eighth grade diploma being the minimum. All the so-called undergraduate work was discontinued in 1927, except that in summer sessions teachers in service below high school graduation still had the privilege of enrolling to improve their certificates, to meet the requirements for certification renewal, or to work toward graduation.



Once the first session with its thirty-eight students began, the local papers offered little news about the school, very likely because there was not too much news to report. There were no men's athletic organizations at the time; indeed, there were only ten men enrolled. The only extra-curricular activity provided was a Dramatic Club. The school purchased a Webster dictionary for its first library acquisition in the fall of 1919. To this lone volume the school added a second-hand set of the Encyclopedia Britannica which the school bought for \$10.<sup>46</sup>

The Normal School Board at its October 14, 1919, meeting formally approved the employment of the aforementioned Misses Hahn and Dunigan, and also the hiring of Miss Mary Deputy, President Deputy's daughter, to teaching physical education and English at a salary of \$1,200 for nine months.<sup>47</sup>

The existing records of the college registrar do not list the names of the students for each quarter; instead they are lumped together as "Students Enrolled, 1919-1920," with their names and home

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<sup>46</sup>The Northern Student, Bulletin of the State Teachers College, Bemidji, Minnesota, Vol. XI, No. 2, January, 1938, p. 11. The library holdings, or lack of them, remained a constant problem throughout Deputy's nineteen-year tenure. It had to be an understatement when he wrote in his report in October, 1920: "Because of the lack of funds, only the beginning of a general reference library has been made." Minnesota, First Report of the State Board of Education, Twenty-first Biennial Report of the Department of Education, 1919-1920, p. 63.

<sup>47</sup>Miss Deputy's background and training had been in landscape gardening, despite what she taught at Bemidji. (As one instructor put it who had taught under Deputy: "In those days we were all Renaissance men.") Miss Deputy had both a B.A. and M.A. degree from Indiana University. She married F. Vernon Lamson, Bemidji, one of the students enrolled in the first regular school year. She later became a professional landscape architect in New York city. She had no children, and at this writing is still living in New York.



town addresses. The list for the first year totalled fifty-eight names of those enrolled for some portion if not all of the school year. That ten of the names were male was a bit out of the ordinary; the Pioneer found it remarkable and wrote on December 8 that "several young men enrolled and according to percentage of attendance, the young men are greater in number than in any other normal in the state."

At its January 15, 1920, meeting, the Board gave Deputy an early vote of confidence for the work that he had done by reelecting him as president for the ensuing year of school. Meanwhile work continued on the dormitory through the winter, and the superintendent of construction indicated that it would be completed by June, 1920, in time for summer school. Because of this progress, Deputy announced he would accept application for rooms and boarding at the dormitory for the 1920 summer session. Still, the completed dormitory would only hold about fifty students, so again from Deputy's office the call went out to Bemidji citizens to provide rooms for the summer students. Deputy estimated that the number might be as high as 300.<sup>48</sup>

The Bemidji Normal School conducted its first commencement exercises on June 3, 1920. State Commissioner of Education James McConnell delivered the main address, and resident director A. P. White

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<sup>48</sup>The biggest news regarding higher education that winter and spring dealt with the widespread rumor that Hamline University was leaving St. Paul and would move to Bemidji or at least to some town in the northern part of the state. The local editors fulminated at great length on the pristine virtues of the country versus the inherent sinfulness of the city. By the end of May, however, Hamline officials announced they were staying in St. Paul, and the local editors went back to reporting the possibilities of the local normal.



gave out diplomas to four graduates.<sup>49</sup> It is fitting that the names of these first graduates should be recorded: Mrs. Cora Bernhard, Bemidji; Georgia L. Brown, Brainard; Josephine M. Parker, Bemidji; and Margaret Romens, Happyland.<sup>50</sup>

Summer school sessions for the first twelve years brought in more students than were enrolled in the regular years' sessions. President Deputy prepared for the 1920 session by enlarging his faculty to twelve members. In addition to those on the regular year's staff--Grant, Bonsall, Asbury, Kavanaugh, Hahn, and Dunigan--(but not Mary Deputy) he added G. H. Sanberg, superintendent of schools at Crookston, history and civics; Bemidji high school principal J. W. Smith, physics; Bemidji superintendent of schools, R. O. Bagby, history and grammar; A. E. Shirling, Polytechnic Institute, Kansas City, geography and Hygiene; Florence Musch, sewing; Mrs. Grace Thacker, Northwestern University, home economics. Deputy also employed Mrs. Thacker for the next regular year, and besides her teaching, she was appointed dean of women, or as the Normal Board minutes called it, "Preceptress."<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>Those who graduated were able to do so after only one year at Bemidji because of the transfer of credits from other schools.

<sup>50</sup>Prior to graduation, Miss Deputy's physical education classes put on an outdoors pageant during the last week of school for the general public, and the pageant became traditional for the next few years. The show was mainly dancing and an exhibition of body exercises, "including the aesthetic dancing of the high school girls. In spite of the strong wind which made it difficult to give some of the exercises, the results were excellent," concluded the Pioneer, May 27, 1920, p. 1.

<sup>51</sup>Minutes of the Normal School Board, April 13, 1920; the hometowns of the summer school faculty are given in the Bemidji Sentinel, June 4, 1920, p. 1. Of note to high school history teachers, the Board at the April 13 meeting appointed Fremont P. Wirth to instruct in history at Bemidji beginning in the fall of 1920. Wirth later went to George Peabody College and while there wrote several very successful high school history textbooks.



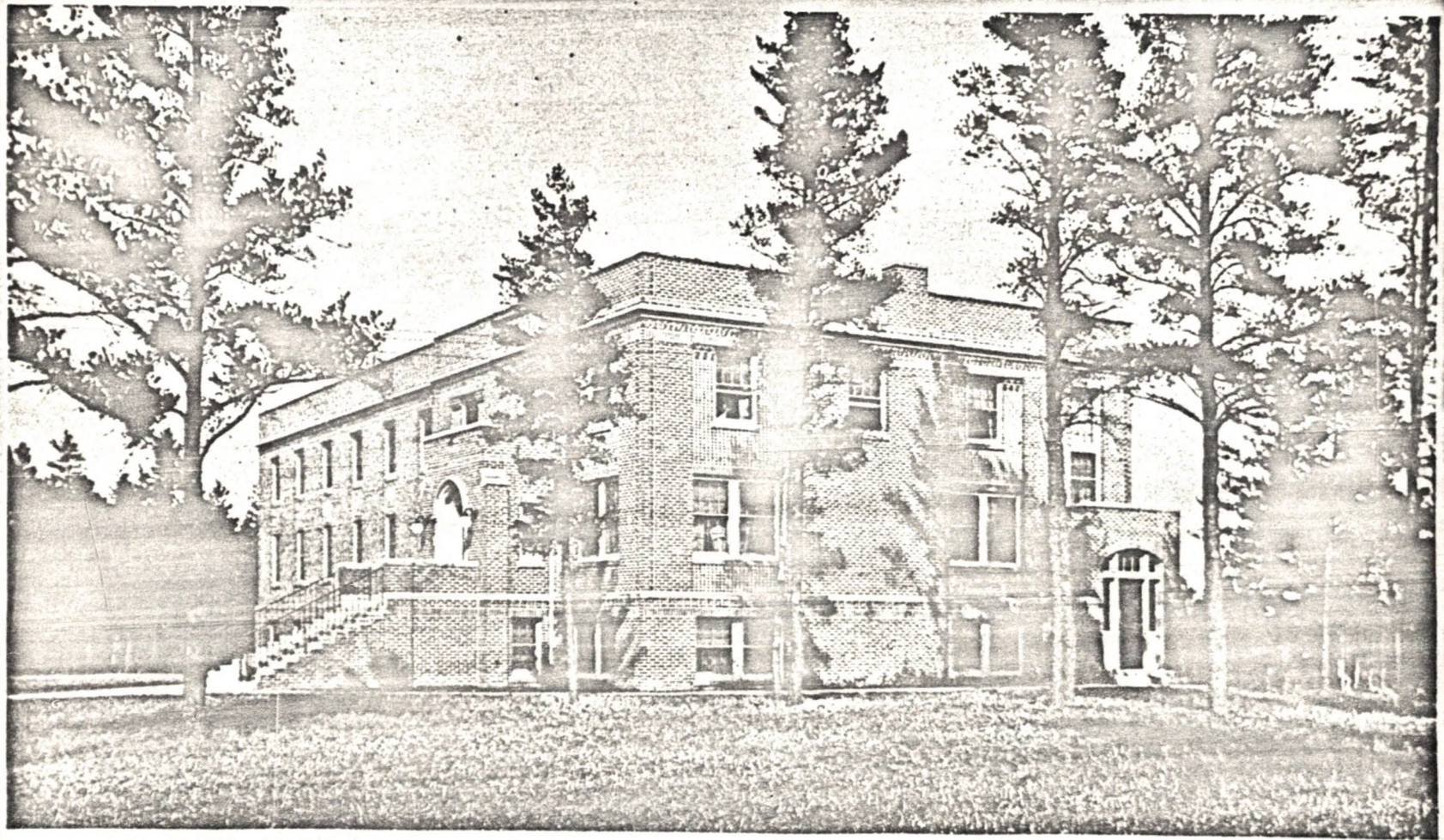
The bulletin prepared by Deputy describing the summer offerings in 1920 varied little from the first one. The most significant addition for 1920 was the statement that women could stay on campus, at least some of them, living and eating in the newly completed dormitory named Maria Sanford Hall (see next page for picture). This one factor aided significantly the initial growth of the school. Without the building of this residence hall, it would have been exceedingly difficult for the school to attract a student body of mensurable size. It must be remembered that the student body in its first years was made up overwhelmingly of girls, that the town did not have the facilities to house a large influx of youthful schoolgirls, and that the prevailing moral and ethical standards of the time dictated that the traditional domicile for girls at college should be a dormitory.<sup>52</sup>

Thus with an almost new main building and a brand new dormitory, the school welcomed students for its second summer session of 1920. "The enrollment exceeded all expectations," said the Sentinel, and whether this was true, 292 students--only 8 of them men--enrolled for the session. This figure nearly tripled the previous summer session and augured well for the future. Deputy revealed extra pleasure in

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<sup>52</sup>The school named the dormitory after Maria Sanford, a Minnesota teacher; although eighty-three years old, she had come to Bemidji Normal to speak in both 1919 and 1920. Ten days after her second visit to Bemidji, she passed away after delivering an address to the Daughters of the American Revolution in Washington, D. C. "As a memorial to this woman whose matchless spirit, speaking power, and character had made a profound impression on all members of Bemidji College, the dormitory was named Maria Sanford Hall." The Northern Student, Bulletin of the State Teachers College, Bemidji, Minnesota, Vol. XI, No. 2, January, 1938, p. 14. It was not recorded if the faculty was consulted on naming the building, for no minutes were kept of any faculty meetings during Deputy's nineteen years as president.





MARIA SANFORD HALL

1922



pointing out that the summer enrollment was larger than that at Duluth normal school.

Judge Ell Torrance, Normal Board president, filed a report to the state department of education on the normal schools covering the biennial period ending June 30, 1920. Among the many items mentioned in his lengthy review, he noted that the highest total enrollment for all the normals in the 1913 to 1920 period was 4,208 for the year 1916, and the lowest was 3,233 for 1919. At the end of the 1920 school year, St. Cloud Normal had the largest enrollment with 1,057, and Moorhead next with 900; Bemidji, of course, had the lowest with 58. The enrollment of the remaining state normal schools in 1920 were Winona with 732; Mankato, 755, and Duluth, 330. Receipts and appropriations for Bemidji Normal in its first school year totaled \$30,328.65.<sup>53</sup>

President Deputy's first published report appeared in the same publication; he covered the period ending September 30, 1920, the time when his school was just starting its second regular year. He began by writing that the establishment of the Bemidji Normal "came at one of the most critical periods through which the schools of the state and nation have passed," namely World War I. He blamed the decreased attendance in all normal schools on the current economic conditions caused by the readjustments following the war; these conditions "without a doubt have curtailed the initial enrollment of this school," he emphasized. Deputy presented the figures of attendance for the first regular year and the two summer schools, and then wrote what he called

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<sup>53</sup>Minnesota, First Report of the State Board of Education, Twenty-first Biennial Report of the Department of Education, 1919-1920, pp. 52-55.



the two large aims to be kept in mind in developing the school:

(1) school standards conducive to sound scholarship, (2) well-trained teachers. Further on in his report he added the additional aim of service, "especially to the rural schools." Expanding on this topic, he added: "Probably more than three-fourths of all students who have enrolled have been rural teachers, and due attention has been given their interests." As to major problems, he cited lack of housing for both faculty and students, and a shortage of classroom space, especially for the elementary school, the latter being "located on the basement floor . . . in rooms designed for science and industrial departments." He concluded by stating essentially that the problems of the fledgling Bemidji Normal could be ameliorated by a generous appropriation from the next legislature.<sup>54</sup>

Before the reports were published, the second regular year of school had begun on September 7, 1920. The courses of study were practically the same as the year before and were the same offered by the other Minnesota normal schools. Among the changes, the school had added a fifth grade to the elementary school, and now had a faculty of ten. The biggest change was the enrollment; it went up from thirty-eight to ninety-seven for its second regular school year.

Thus one can say that by the fall of 1920, Bemidji Normal School had gotten started. From a school on paper in 1913, it had become a school of brick by 1919 along with a faculty and a student body. It had had one regular year and two summer sessions of operation by 1920; it had a faculty of ten, two new buildings, and had

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<sup>54</sup>Ibid., p. 63.



graduated four students. But its permanence was by no means assured. For the next decade the faculty and the Normal Board were forced to meet numerous problems ranging from apathetic legislatures to opposition from liberal arts colleges. It had been hard to get it started; it would be just as hard to keep it going.



## CHAPTER IV

### FROM NORMAL SCHOOL TO TEACHERS COLLEGE: 1920-1929

Time, perspective, and closer study reveal the importance of Bemidji Normal School's getting two buildings--the main building and the dormitory--almost from the start in 1919 and 1920, because essentially those were the only two buildings used during Deputy's entire nineteen-year administration. The only additions in his tenure were a wing added to the main building for an elementary school and a heating plant, both structures begun in 1925. That was all. Not until December 15, 1937, did work begin on another building on campus. Despite crowded conditions in the 1920's that required the use of tents in the summers and hall corridors in the winters, the legislature gave money for building purposes only once in this long period.

#### Legislative and State Board Actions

Plausible reasons can be offered for the failure of the legislators to bestow funds for more building in the decade. Minnesota experienced a 15 per cent rise in population between 1910 and 1920, and this rise, plus the fact that the value of more education was slowly being realized by the citizenry in general, tended to bring about an increase in normal school enrollments. But unfortunately the over-all wealth of the state did not grow as fast as the demand for new educational facilities. These two incompatible factors meant trouble for



expansion-minded normal schools as the 1921 legislative session opened.<sup>1</sup>

In outward appearance, the Bemidji Normal's representation in the legislature, that is the representatives and the senator from the sixty-second district, seemed to be as strong as ever. Along with Senator Leonard H. Nord, the voters returned Representatives Arthur E. Rako and Franklin L. McPartlin. Senator P. H. McGarry, from the fifty-second district at Walker, another former supporter of the college, also won reelection. Again, as in 1919, these men obtained their same, rather influential committee memberships.<sup>2</sup>

But one startling difference set the 1921 legislature off from its predecessor. No longer were the legislators prepared to support an expanding building program on a statewide basis. Times were not that good economically. Certainly the residents of Bemidji favored a building appropriation for their normal school, just as citizens of other localities favored state-sponsored projects in their home towns, but economic and political realities combined to prevent any specific area from imposing its wishes on the legislature, since cooperation within the respective houses and between them was necessary before allocations for state buildings could be made. But a preponderance

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<sup>1</sup>The increase from 1912 to 1922 in the estimated wealth of Minnesota was at the modest rate of 57 per cent while that of the whole country was 72 per cent. In 1920 the purchasing power of the dollar was 40 as compared with 100 in 1913. William W. Folwell, A History of Minnesota (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1926) III, 322. U. S., Department of Commerce, Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1957 (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1960), p. 12. The changing Minnesota population figures as listed: 1910, 2,075,708; 1920, 2,387,125; 1930, 2,563,953; 1940, 2,792,300; 1950, 2,982,483; 1960, 3,413,864.

<sup>2</sup>Minnesota, Legislative Manual (1921), pp. 179, 181, 183.



of the constituents did not favor building projects which were downstate or upstate, as the case might be. In short, Minnesota was caught in the recession that followed World War I.<sup>3</sup>

An abetting factor that curtailed the legislature's desire to build was the decline in the ability to pay taxes. With the legislature under predominately agrarian influence, and with the wholesale price index of farm products falling from 150 in 1920 to 88.4 in 1921 (on the basis of 1926 equals 100), it seemed obvious that the farming areas would be vociferous in their opposition to expanded state spending. Shrinking tax revenues accompanied by an abhorrence of deficit financing presented little alternative for the state building program for 1921-1922; it had to be reduced.<sup>4</sup>

To make matters even more unfavorable, the wholesale price index of building materials had not fallen as much as the wholesale price of farm products. The disparity in the decline brought about a relative rise in building costs and affected both private and government contracting. In turn, the lack of building served to depress the economy even more. Indeed, editorials advised that the cost of building materials be reduced to stimulate the lagging economy. These realized little effect, however, and Governor J. A. O. Preus, along with the legislators, had little grounds for optimism as the session began.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Bemidji Weekly Pioneer, January 13, 1921, p. 1; January 20, 1921, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup>Historical Statistics of the United States, p. 116; U. S. Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1965, p. 13.

<sup>5</sup>Editorial in the Bemidji Weekly Pioneer, February 3, 1921, p. 4.



The Normal School Board had sensed the temper of the times the previous fall. In a meeting at Moorhead on October 12, 1920, the Board returned to the presidents their previously submitted budgets with the notation that the schools must retrench, cutting out all but absolutely necessary expenditures. The budgets then would be significantly reduced by the time they were to be presented to the legislature in hopes that the legislators would recognize the austere nature of the requests and approve them as submitted. The Board granted to Bemidji Normal, however, permission to submit its requests without retrenchment since, in the Board's judgment, Bemidji had not received a sufficient appropriation after actual operations had begun in 1919. To cut Bemidji's budget after only two years of operation would have had the effect of nearly stifling the school's program before it got started, and the Board acted accordingly and, to Bemidji partisans, wisely. Bemidji's recommended appropriation for maintenance was set at \$72,700 and \$77,300 for the two fiscal years 1922-23. Moreover, the Board approved a \$75,000 request for an addition to the dormitory at Bemidji.

At the next Board meeting held less than two weeks later, October 23, 1920, President Ell Torrance resigned from the Board. Reluctantly, the Board moved on without him, realizing that asking him to continue despite his age (seventy-six) would be asking too much from the august gentleman who had served on the Board for eighteen consecutive years, the last twelve as president. Into the position of president moved Edwin J. Jones of Morris who, though an able man, did not have the veneration and experience that Judge Torrance had been able to acquire in his long tenure. Bemidji Normal thus suffered a loss, for



the judge had always expressed a friendly attitude towards the little normal school in northern Minnesota.

Still it seemed doubtful that Torrance or anyone else could have insured that Bemidji's financial requests would be approved by the 1921 legislature. The realities of the situation dictated otherwise, and gradually the Bemidji supporters at home, in the legislature, and on the Board saw the futility of struggling for any large appropriations. Instead the Board led a drive to update the state statutes which had an important bearing on the normal schools.<sup>6</sup>

The normal school presidents brought three proposals to the Board meeting on January 25, 1921. In a suggestion that aroused considerable controversy, the presidents recommended that the Board abolish the students' pledge to teach in Minnesota in order to get free tuition at the normal schools. This oath, which apparently many regarded as a rather odious device, had provided a form of insurance against students obtaining a free education when that education would not be used in Minnesota classrooms.

The oath read:

I declare that I will faithfully attend the State Normal School for the purpose of fitting myself to teach, and that I will, upon ceasing to be a student of the school, teach in the public schools of Minnesota for two years unless excused or time extended by the president of the school; in lieu of the fulfillment of this pledge by so teaching and as compensation for the privileges of the school, I will pay cash tuition at the rate of ten dollars per term. I will report annually to the school until fulfillment of this pledge.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., April 7, 1921, p. 6.

<sup>7</sup>Adopted and printed in the Minutes of the Normal School Board, June 2, 1913.



The presidents opposed this requirement; they had asked the Board on several occasions to recommend eliminating it. The Board had hesitated to act because of frequent criticism from sources unfriendly to the normal schools alleging that many graduates did not or would not teach in Minnesota. The presidents, however, had found enforcement difficult. If a graduate married or for any other reason failed to secure a teaching position in the state, an obligation to pay existed. To collect the back tuition was not easy, and the attorney general's office had not been especially interested in bringing a considerable number of suits for the collection of small sums.<sup>8</sup>

From all this came the Board's decision to approve a milder version of the oath: "I declare it to be my intention to teach in the public schools of the State of Minnesota for not less than two years after leaving the state normal school."<sup>9</sup> Students who would not sign the pledge, and apparently they were rare, could continue taking courses as in the past at the rate of ten dollars per term. While the new oath was not a complete success in the eyes of the normal school presidents, at least a modification had been achieved.

The second suggestion of the presidents concerned the authorization of the Board to seek legislation which would expand the normal school curriculum to four years and allow the conferring of the degree of Bachelor of Education, or Bachelor of Science in Education, on

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<sup>8</sup>Dudley S. Brainard, History of St. Cloud State Teachers College (St. Cloud, Minnesota: St. Cloud State Teachers College, 1953), p. 48. This small publication traces quite carefully the shifting policies of the Board throughout the Board's long history.

<sup>9</sup>Minutes of the Normal School Board, January 25, 1921.



four-year graduates. Four-year graduates who followed a prescribed curriculum would then be allowed to teach in any elementary or secondary school in the state. This proposed move from a two-year normal school to a four-year teachers college, whether or not it was a mistake, was part of a trend in higher education then going on throughout the country.<sup>10</sup>

That the private colleges in Minnesota had been opposed to this proposition was understandable. When such an expansion of the normal schools had been proposed just before World War I, opposition had come from the liberal arts colleges and the university, since they provided the high school teachers for the state. While it may have been instinctive for private liberal arts colleges to protect their programs and graduates, they seemingly failed to realize that the number of high school students was growing, and that the number of towns which could support a high school was growing, and that other sources of high school teachers would be needed.<sup>11</sup> (See Table 2 and 3 next page.)

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<sup>10</sup>Lindley J. Stiles et al., Teacher Education in the United States (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1960), pp. 97, 98. Normal schools were at the peak of their numerical strength around 1900, with 210 institutions in 1890 and 258 in 1910. Twenty years later, 196 normal schools were still in operation, and the number declined rapidly thereafter as four-year teachers colleges developed. By 1910 there were 11 teachers colleges, and by 1930 there were 140. Then began the trend towards state teachers colleges becoming simply state colleges which offered B.A. as well as B.S. degrees.

<sup>11</sup>Ellwood P. Cubberly, Public Education in the United States (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1947), p. 627, gives the growing number of pupils per thousand in public high schools nationally; for Minnesota, see John E. Dobbin, Ruth E. Eckert, T. J. Berning, eds., "Trends and Problems in Minnesota's Public Schools," Higher Education in Minnesota, Minnesota Commission on Higher Education, 1947-1949 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1950), p. 36 and Table 6.



TABLE 2  
GROWTH OF PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS IN MINNESOTA

Year	High Schools		Pupils		Teachers	
	Number	Increase in Each Decade	Number	Increase in Each Decade	Number	Increase in Each Decade
1899-1900.....	115	...	12,436	.....	511	.....
1909-1910.....	207	92	28,562	16,126	1,210	699
1919-1920.....	240	33	64,060	35,498	3,272	2,062
1929-1930.....	547	307	123,402	59,402	5,268	1,996
1939-1940.....	661	114	191,989	68,527	8,047	2,779

TABLE 3  
NUMBER OF EACH TYPE OF GRADED ELEMENTARY AND HIGH  
SCHOOL IN MINNESOTA, 1920 TO 1943

Year	Elem. Schools			High Schools			
	8-Year	6-Year	Junior H.S.	Jr.-Sr. H.S.	Senior H.S.	4-Year H.S.	H.S. Depart. (1-2-3-yrs.)
1920...	501	...	...	...	...	240	...
1925...	570	179	10	...	...	257	180
1930...	470	263	71	...	53	293	129
1934...	428	275	85	...	63	409	19
1935...	526	272	90	...	69	403	20
1936...	273	452	119	140	98	239	19
1937...	190	539	139	215	117	153	15
1938...	171	567	144	242	124	119	18
1939...	165	575	151	248	128	108	19
1940...	154	585	156	259	133	99	14
1941...	152	584	157	260	135	95	14
1942...	154	573	158	257	136	101	11
1943...	156	552	160	236	137	120	7

Source: Minnesota State Teachers Colleges in Transition, Bulletin of State Teachers College, Moorhead, Minnesota, Series 42, No. 2, August, 1946, pp. 20, 21.



The major argument that the liberal arts colleges and the university used was similar to that used in the middle of the nineteenth century when normal schools were beginning to be established, that is, that the existing schools would adequately provide enough school teachers. Moreover, though not openly stated, it was implicit in the argument of the liberal arts colleges that any preparation outside of their own kind was ipso facto inferior.

Opposition, however, did not come from all the educators connected with the liberal arts colleges or the university, for a great number recognized the future need for more secondary teachers and favored the proposal even though it meant a possible reduction of their own prestige as well as a loss of students who would be drawn off to the new teachers colleges. In any event, the Board approved the proposal to make the normal schools four-year colleges and named a committee to prepare legislation to give effect to their recommendation.<sup>12</sup>

The third proposal of the presidents asked to change the names of the normal schools to teachers colleges. On the surface this seemed a rather mild proposal and an inevitable consequence of the four-year curriculum, and its adoption would be in keeping with some of the other states in the nation.<sup>13</sup> Yet, semantics entered in as the term "normal school" had, in some circles, connotations of derogation at worst and at best was certainly inferior to the term "teachers college." This

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<sup>12</sup>Minutes of the Normal School Board, January 25, 1921.

<sup>13</sup>Iowa, for example, had changed the name of its one state teacher-training institution at Cedar Falls to teachers college in 1909; see footnote 10 for a brief discussion of this trend.



alleged inferior status was a rather standard interpretation of why the liberal arts colleges had regularly attempted to keep the term "normal school" in vogue for those schools other than themselves.<sup>14</sup> The Board adopted this third proposal too on January 25, 1921, the resolution reading:

Resolved, that this Board approve the recommendations of the Presidents of the State Normal Schools that the State Normal Schools and the State Normal School Board be designated hereafter as State Teachers College and State Teachers College Board respectively; and that said Board be authorized to award appropriate degrees for the completion of the four-year courses in said schools. . . .

All of the Board's recommendations went to the legislature with the vigorous support of James McConnell, Commissioner of the State Department of Education. All subsequently became law, the legislature offering no serious objections to the Board's proposals.<sup>15</sup>

Unfortunately, this could not be said of the budget struggle, the ramifications of which were to be felt by all the state schools. At the March 4, 1921, meeting of the State Normal Board--the final one using the old title--the problem of limiting the collective budget to \$1,600,000 faced the Board members. A committee of the Board had met with the finance committee of the senate and the appropriations committee of the house. On March 4 the chairmen of the two legislative committees met with the Board and told them in effect that the Board

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<sup>14</sup>Chris A. DeYoung, Introduction to American Public Education (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1950), p. 366.

<sup>15</sup>Minnesota, Session Laws (1921), c. 260. It appeared that the legislators were far more concerned with the present than the future. Though the decision to allow the normal schools to become four-year degree-granting teachers colleges would eventually cost the state much more money, this argument was not voiced effectively in 1921.



could not expect to get more money than had been appropriated in the last biennium for maintenance, that there would be no money for the purchase of land or for additions to buildings, and, most likely, no money for faculty salary increases.

The figure of \$1,600,000 was far below the Board's original request of \$2,000,000 early in the session. It must also be remembered that the request had been a scaled-down version of an even higher budget. Faced with the further cut, the Board had to forego its land procurement plans entirely, and reexamine its building plans. The faint hopes of a dormitory extension for Bemidji shrunk to miniscule proportions.<sup>16</sup>

A further blow fell when Senator Leonard H. Nord, Bemidji's representative and a member of the finance committee, died on March 5, 1921, at a time when his voice was sorely needed. While the Normal Board had viewed Bemidji's budget as an exception, there was no evidence which indicated that the legislature would do the same.<sup>17</sup>

The outcome of the budget struggle, as expected, cut deeply into all departments, with the normal schools getting about two-thirds of the amount requested. The collective budget voted the normals came to \$1,422,955, well below the projected figure presented to the Board in March. The legislature killed the proposed addition to the Bemidji dormitory, and \$12,000 per year was slashed from the

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<sup>16</sup>Minutes of the Normal School Board, March 4, 1921; editorial in the Bemidji Weekly Pioneer, April 21, 1921, p. 6.

<sup>17</sup>Bemidji Weekly Pioneer, March 5, 1921, p. 1.



recommended maintenance appropriation. The final figures for Bemidji read:<sup>18</sup>

Maintenance, including summer sessions and library, available for the year ending June 30, 1922	\$ 60,650
Maintenance, including summer sessions and library, available for the year ending June 30, 1923	\$ 65,650
Repairs, betterments, and equipment available for year ending June 30, 1922	\$ 9,000
Repairs, betterments, and equipment available for year ending June 30, 1923	\$ 6,000
Maintenance available immediately	\$ 11,700
	<u>\$153,000</u>

With resignation, Bemidji and the other normal schools, by then teachers colleges, curtailed their plans and hoped that the allotted sums would reach far enough to sustain their minimum programs. Moreover, there was some reason for taking heart, for the proposals regarding extra-financial matters were enacted into law. The legislature laid the basis for conferring four-year degrees. (Because it took so long to draw up an acceptable curriculum and then implement it, it was not until 1928 that Bemidji awarded a bachelor's degree.) The fact that the legislature authorized the state normal schools to become teachers colleges and award degrees was as propitious an action as could have been desired. Indeed, for the infant Bemidji school, the advance in three years from a pine-covered site on the shores of Lake Bemidji to a teachers college with authorization eventually to grant degrees was

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<sup>18</sup>Minnesota, Session Laws (1921), c. 473. The 1919 allotment for Bemidji Normal had been \$142,950 for the biennium.



nothing short of tremendous. Hence, though the overall results of the 1921 legislature were not as financially advantageous as hoped for, the term was not a failure. The school had not been cut off without funds nor lessened in its scope of activity, and the laws other than those concerning money were progressive.<sup>19</sup>

The need for more money in 1921 can be seen in the actions of the State Board on March 4, 1921. Though there was no tuition charge per se for those who signed the pledge to teach in Minnesota, the Board at that meeting allowed the schools to charge a fee of three dollars for activities, i.e. concerts, ball games, and the like, and another five dollars for book rentals; the two charges together were collectively called "term fees."

When the Board reconvened on April 26, 1921, it met for the first time as the State Teachers College Board. At this meeting, it passed several items directly related to Bemidji: it set the president's salary at \$5,400 for the next school year; it formally approved summer session faculty members; it ruled that the one-year (beyond high school) elementary diploma would no longer be continued after June of 1922 (this seemed to be more of a semantic change, for while the diploma was discontinued, the one-year curriculum continued as a course of study for the preparation of rural teachers leading to a certificate rather than a diploma). The Board expressed--again--its

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<sup>19</sup>An argument can be supported that some of the older Minnesota normal schools had already moved towards the ends set forth in the new laws, and that the laws were a recognition of circumstances existing. For example, most of the schools by 1921--Bemidji excluded--had a three-year program that led to a special certificate allowing holders to teach in junior high schools in such fields as physical education, music, and drawing.



marked disapproval of independent action on the part of the presidents in connection with the budget and the presentation of the same to the legislative committees. It authorized the colleges to charge a tuition fee of not more than \$25.00 per person per term for those enrolled in the three-year program who did not sign the pledge to teach in Minnesota. Lastly, the Board adopted a new type of two-year diploma that the presidents had recommended.

The year 1922 proved to be a very difficult one for the Board and for all of the new colleges. Vexatious financial problems compounded by costly fires early in the year at Mankato and late in the year at Winona required the Board to meet in extra sessions to ameliorate the situation. Prior to the second fire, at its August 8 meeting, the Board passed a motion to include in the proposed legislative budget for Bemidji \$113,000 for a wing to the main building for an elementary school, \$90,000 for a dormitory wing, and \$50,000 for a heating plant. But the second fire forced a drastic alteration in the legislative requests.

By the time the 1923 session of the legislature met, little hope remained for any major appropriations for Bemidji.<sup>20</sup> Yet the Board did ask for a dormitory extension for Bemidji Teachers College.

The legislative strength of Bemidji had diminished for the 1923 session due to the loss of several friendly legislators. In the sixty-second district, David Hurlbut of International Falls replaced F. J. McPartlin as representative from Koochiching County, and W. T. Noonan of Baudette replaced A. E. Rako as representative from Beltrami

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<sup>20</sup>Editorial in the Bemidji Sentinel, December 29, 1922, p. 4.



County.<sup>21</sup> McPartlin, a staunch backer of the college while a house member, chose to run for the vacated seat of the late Senator Leonard Nord and lost the election. In the primary election, McPartlin placed second in a field of three candidates. The other two contenders were Harry A. Bridgeman and Absie P. Ritchie, both of Bemidji, and though the Bemidji papers boomed Ritchie for the position, he placed third behind McPartlin. In the general election, Bridgeman won handily. The new senator retained his predecessor's seat on the finance committee, but being a first-year man, he could not speak with the authority of former Senator Nord.<sup>22</sup>

As mentioned, David Hurlbut, city attorney of International Falls, filled the vacated seat of McPartlin. He failed to obtain a committee membership on the appropriations committee which McPartlin had held, a set back for the college. Lastly, Alfred L. Thwing, a newcomer to politics, replaced P. H. McGarry of Walker, and thereby the college lost another former supporter who had had four previous terms in the senate and two in the house. All in all the legislative representation from the Bemidji area lost a wealth of experience along with important committee assignments. The closing hours of the session proved how costly those losses would be.

Problems of growing magnitude faced the 1923 legislature as only spotty gains could be noted in the state economy. Certainly the

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<sup>21</sup>Minnesota, Legislative Manual (1923), pp. 147, 681. Rako, who had fought successfully for the dormitory appropriation in 1919, did not seek re-election in 1922. Noonan, his replacement, had been the columnist writing the legislative news for the Bemidji newspapers during the 1919 and the 1921 sessions; his style of writing was excessively breezy though colorful.

<sup>22</sup>Bemidji Sentinel, June 30, 1922, p. 1.



building picture was no brighter than in 1921. The cost of materials increased 11.3 points on the wholesale price index between 1921 and 1923, while the wholesale price of farm products increased only 3.0 points during the same period, to 91.6 (1926 equals 100). Concerned citizens again led a drive to hold down spending by the state.<sup>23</sup> And on the local level in Bemidji, a rather typical example of a town struggling against higher taxes on all levels, meetings were held and committees formed, all pointed at reducing the tax bill.<sup>24</sup>

As if a less experienced group of legislators and an unfavorable economic situation were not enough of a handicap, the destructive fires on the campuses of Mankato and Winona college added more gloom to the hopes of a dormitory appropriation for Bemidji. The first fire in February, 1922, damaged the main building and library at Mankato severely, the loss amounting to well over \$100,000. Even after renovations were made, the public examiner's reports showed a net loss in the value of the buildings at Mankato between June 30, 1921, and June 30, 1923, to be \$70,900. Insurance did not cover the costs of the fire; consequently, the state bore the full impact of the loss.<sup>25</sup> The second catastrophe occurred at Winona on December 3, 1922, with the loss estimated at \$500,000. This figure was borne out by the public

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<sup>23</sup>Historical Statistics of the United States, p. 116; editorials in Bemidji Weekly Pioneer, March 22, 1923, p. 9; April 12, 1923, p. 9.

<sup>24</sup>News items in the Bemidji Sentinel, January 19, 1923, p. 1; February 2, 1923, p. 1.

<sup>25</sup>Minnesota, Twentieth Biennial Report of the Public Examiner, 1921, p. 151; Minnesota, Twenty-First Biennial Report of the Public Examiner, 1923, p. 134.



examiner's reports which showed that the decline in the value of the Winona buildings after June 30, 1923, was \$254,635. The remainder of the loss consisted of equipment, books, and personal effects. The destruction, not being covered by commercial insurance, was paid out of a state insurance fund, which meant out of the general revenue.<sup>26</sup>

The College Board met within a week of the Winona fire and voted to include a request for appropriations of \$525,000 for Mankato, and \$750,000 for Winona in their budget to replace damaged or destroyed buildings. This resulted in the drastic cutting or complete elimination of other proposed building projects. Yet the Board had little choice, for the school at Winona, the oldest in the state (1860), had to be rebuilt, and the main building at Mankato had to be repaired. So into the hopper of the legislature went a bill which authorized the issuing of certificates of indebtedness in the sum of \$1,300,000 for rebuilding purposes at Mankato and Winona. The legislature reduced the amount to \$990,000, and it was this figure that appeared in the 1923 Session Laws. Bemidji's projected dormitory addition, amazingly enough, was not killed until the fading hours of the session. Amid the confusion, excitement, and last-minute compromising that usually characterized the last days of the session, the Bemidji bill floundered in the house and died.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 129; Erwin S. Selle, ed., The Winona State Teachers College (Winona, Minnesota: By the author, 1935), p. 52. For a more recent history of Winona, see Jean Talbot, First State Normal School: Winona State College, Quarterly Bulletin of Winona State College, Series 55, No. 4, August, 1959.

<sup>27</sup>Senator Harry Bridgeman, despite being new, waged a commendable battle and the senate approved the appropriation. Recognition of Senator Bridgeman's many years of service in behalf of Bemidji College occurred in 1964 with the naming of a new \$630,000 industry and arts building after him.



What was appropriated was \$72,000 per year for maintenance, including summer sessions and library, and \$15,000 for the two years for repairs, betterments, and equipment. In reviewing the 1923 session, Bemidji College could see only an improved chance for building appropriations in 1925, a wispy hope that would depend on no more calamitous fires, a good economy, and convincing and experienced representatives in the legislature.

The recommendations of the State Teachers College Board, of course, also had an influence on the legislative field. Though the legislature did not approve all the Board's recommendations, unless a college's proposal was endorsed by the Board nothing came of it. Bemidji had marked success in getting its requests put into Board recommendations; the rub lay in getting them transformed into laws.

Other facets of legislative reality also played an important role in determining legislation. For example, pressure groups representing liberal arts colleges and the university exerted efforts from session to session in an attempt to mold legislation. The conclusion that appears most plausible regarding these groups was that their desire to see the youth of the state educated transcended the desire to protect any special school.<sup>28</sup>

While all of the above factors had tangential bearing, it was the poor financial straits of the state that caused the most difficult

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<sup>28</sup>Though liberal arts colleges received no state money directly, many graduates of them--some on the boards of directors of the colleges--were members of the legislature, and some tried hard to protect their alma maters. Their role is discussed in Archie C. Clark, "The Status, Policies, and Objectives of Minnesota State Teachers Colleges" (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1941), p. 80.



problems which Bemidji and the other state colleges experienced in the first years after 1920. In this period the state seemed torn between what appeared to be a prosperous industrial group and a decidedly depressed agricultural community. But compared to the national industrial outlook, Minnesota lagged in manufacturing, too. In 1919, Minnesota produced 2.03 per cent of all manufactured goods in the nation; in 1923, this figure went down to 1.65 per cent. Essentially neither industry nor agriculture was economically healthy, and the spending of the state legislature reflected it. These facts and conditions collectively accounted for the demands to hold down state spending. President Deputy and his supporters would have to wait until 1925 before seeing any further building appropriations.<sup>29</sup>

As indicated, the State Teachers College Board sympathized with the needs of Bemidji. In the budget requests of the Board adopted October 14, 1924, three of the seven items that Deputy had called his "greatest needs" were sent to the legislature: \$120,000 for an extension to the main building for an elementary school, \$100,000 for a dormitory extension, and \$65,000 for a heating and power plant building.

Economically, the times were a little better when the forty-fourth legislature began in 1925. The index for all farm products had gone up to 109 compared to 91.6 in the previous session; the prices on all commodities rose to 103.5 compared to 100.6 in 1923. Nationally the country had moved into the period of what historians call the

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<sup>29</sup>Minnesota, Economic Analysis of the State of Minnesota, Report to the Minnesota Resources Commission by the J. G. White Engineering Corporation, 1945, Vol. II, p. 171. The index of real income of farmers by 1921, on the basis of 100 for 1910-1914, was down to 75, and never passed the high point of 93 in June, 1928.



"seven fat years" before those seven lean years of the depression. But again in the jargon fitted to those times, agriculture was one of the "sick industries" of the 1920's, and Minnesota was then primarily an agricultural state.<sup>30</sup> To illustrate, in 1919 the farm crops of Minnesota were worth \$506,000,000 and in 1929 only \$310,000,000; in that same period the amount of land on which crops were grown increased by nearly 16 per cent. It seemed understandable that Republican Governor Theodore Christenson called for careful fiscal responsibility in his message to the 1925 legislature. Christenson, along with an all-Republican slate of state officials, began the first of three consecutive terms in 1925. As to representation from the Bemidji area, only Bridgeman in the senate and Hurlbut in the house were experienced representatives. The Pioneer interpreted the governor's message this way: "Governor Christenson will become Minnesota's economy executive if he has his way." All in all, Bemidji State Teachers College expected no largesse from the 1925 legislature.<sup>31</sup>

Thus, in summary, when the session ended, the Pioneer wrote with honesty and surprise: "Considering the state of the legislature . . . the institution fared well under the circumstances. . . ." <sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>Theodore C. Blegen, Building Minnesota (Boston: D. C. Heath, 1938), p. 389. Farm lands in Minnesota increased from 18,400,000 acres in 1900 to 30,900,000 by 1930. By 1936, Minnesota ranked first among states in production of butter, rye, barley, and flaxseed; second in corn, and third in oats.

<sup>31</sup>Bemidji Daily Pioneer, January 7, 1925, p. 1. Price index statistics taken from Historical Statistics of the United States, p. 116. Information on governor taken from Minnesota, Legislative Manual (1925), pp. 691, 735.

<sup>32</sup>April 27, 1925, p. 1.



Bemidji College was the institution that fared well, receiving \$105,000 for construction of the elementary school wing to the main building, and \$65,000 for the heating and power plant building.<sup>33</sup> The Pioneer went on to speak hopefully of even larger building appropriations for the local college in the next legislatures following, not realizing, as was indeed impossible then, that 1925 would be the only year between 1919 and 1937 when the state would allocate any money for buildings for Bemidji Teachers College. After 1925, it was back to receiving only maintenance funds, and in the 1930's, even these funds proved difficult to obtain.

#### Enrollments, Students, and Student Life

Unable to build any more buildings until after 1925, school officials had to learn to get along with the facilities available and make its development around them. Though very new and not very big, Bemidji attempted to serve its function of serving the citizens of northern Minnesota. The function at the start was to provide facilities for young people to learn to become elementary school teachers. The students who attended came predominately from the region close to Bemidji; most came from the rural communities and farms.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>Minnesota, Session Laws (1925), c. 424. Bemidji's appropriations and receipts for maintenance and equipment totalled by June 30, 1925, \$84,784.26. Minnesota, Financial Statement of the State Board of Education and Public School Statistics, 1925-1926, Bulletin No. 4, p. 190.

<sup>34</sup>More information on the background of the Bemidji students is given in Chapter V. A detailed analyses of the background of all the teachers college students can be found in A. C. Clark's doctoral dissertation, "The Status, Policies, and Objectives of Minnesota State Teachers Colleges," Chaps. vii, viii, ix.



Ninety-seven students enrolled at Bemidji in September, 1920, and this was the same number when the school closed its regular year June 3, 1921. In the fall, the Board and all the college presidents had a meeting at Bemidji and several members of both groups gave short talks to the Bemidji student body at one of the regular assembly programs which were mandatory for students to attend. The newspaper account of the talks suggested the general tenor of the school, the paper indicating that before the men spoke "the regular program of hymns and responsive readings was given."<sup>35</sup>

The student body was composed of three groups or classes which at that time were called the junior class (first year beyond high school), the senior class (second year beyond high school), and the five-year class (those who had not graduated from high school). In the 1920-1921 school year, at its highest enrollment point, there were 68 students in the five-year course, 46 juniors, and 23 seniors.<sup>36</sup> In these last two groups, a large student turnover occurred each year throughout the decade. Naturally the seniors left, also a considerable number of juniors did too because one could get a certificate to teach in rural schools with one year of training beyond high school, and many took advantage of the opportunity.

Faculty members organized extra curricular activities during the 1920-1921 school year. Misses Eunice Asbury and Edith Morse formed two literary clubs, the Bi Nor Sku and the Athenian, with the

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<sup>35</sup>Bemidji Daily Pioneer, September 17, 1920, p. 1.

<sup>36</sup>Not all of the 137 students were enrolled at the same time; as indicated, the most enrolled for any one quarter that year was 97.



student body divided into two groups and every student belonging. Membership was mandatory. Miss Morse also organized the Tanki Ki Ci Camp Fire Club the same year, with membership optional. When Mrs. Dorothy Torrance MacMillan, granddaughter of Judge Torrance, became the music instructor in the spring of 1921, she organized the first girls' glee club.<sup>37</sup>

One of the school traditions adopted in 1920 was the school colors of green and white. Reportedly, an assembly hour had been set aside for the selection of colors, and after the initial balloting resulted in a deadlock, a student named Cyrillus Freeman arose from her seat and said: "As we sat here discussing the question, I happened to glance out the window. The sight that met my eyes was fresh green pines silhouetted against pure white snow. What could be more appropriate than green and white." On the first round of balloting, Miss Freeman's choice of colors had received one vote, but after her remarks, according to the report, her idea "was immediately accepted unanimously."<sup>38</sup>

In the fall registration of 1921, 157 students enrolled; 164 enrolled in the winter term, and 158 in the spring quarter. All in all a total of 211 different students enrolled for some portion of the

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<sup>37</sup>The Northern Student, Bulletin of the State Teachers College, Bemidji, Minnesota, Vol. XI, No. 2, January, 1938, p. 12. The information in this Bulletin was approved by Deputy; it was published to honor Deputy upon his retirement.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 14. For the record, the assembly program was held in the month of February, but in view of the climate, the same scene described by Miss Freeman could have been viewed three months on either side of the date given. In some of the publications, Miss Freeman's first name was listed as Phyllis rather than Cyrillus.



school year and the number included only 16 men. All of the state teachers colleges faced a relative dearth of males on campus. For example, Winona never had a student body with over 10 per cent men until 1924, and it had been in operation since 1860.<sup>39</sup>

President Deputy required Bemidji Students to attend twice-a-week assembly programs and to go to classes on Saturdays. (A copy of the daily program for the fall term of 1921 is given in Appendix V.) There were, however, no Monday classes. Deputy believed strongly that Sunday should be a day of rest, a rest which should include no student having to study for Monday classes.

For the sports-minded, the most interesting extracurricular activity begun in the 1921-1922 school year was the organization of the first basketball team by Fremont Wirth, who along with Deputy was the only male member of a faculty of fifteen. On the eve of the school's first game, December 16, 1921, the Pioneer wrote that Coach Wirth "had developed a formidable squad and indications are that the school will stand on its own against any school in this section of the state." Bemidji won the game, 51-11, over Kelliher high school because, according to the Pioneer the next day, "They had the advantage of weight and previous basketball experience." (Coach Wirth refereed the second game at Kelliher that evening between two local teams, and the score of that game, 6-2, was more typical of the period.) Bemidji played eighteen games that first season, mostly against area high schools. However, they traveled as far as St. Cloud for a game against the

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<sup>39</sup>Erwin S. Selle, ed., The Winona State Teachers College, p. 52.



teachers college, and also to the Iron Range where they played Hibbing and Virginia junior colleges. Home games were played in the armory, a distance of about a mile from the school, and the slate included as one opponent the "Bemidji Naval Militia," whatever that was.<sup>40</sup>

Beginning with the fall session of 1922, Bemidji printed the first of its annual or biennial catalogs or bulletins, as they were sometimes called. This first forty-three page catalog gave the essential information found in most college catalogs today: faculty names, costs, course descriptions, student organizations, and the like. It also included the names of every student registered, home town included, beginning with the first 1919 summer school. The catalog separated the faculty into the Academic and College Department, and the Elementary School Department, the former having twelve members and the latter six. The publication stipulated the grading system used, noting that per cent equivalent were in general use in the state, and so along with letter grades, for transcript purposes the school would employ the following percent values: 93 per cent for A; 87 for B; 82 for C; 77 for D. Along with the explanation came the vague warning: "It is expected that a student shall have at least as many grades above D as D's before being recommended for a certificate or before receiving a diploma from

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<sup>40</sup>After Wirth left Bemidji in 1924, his first college teaching job, he received his Ph. D. degree in history the next year from the University of Chicago, and then began to teach history at George Peabody College, a position he held until his retirement in 1955. While there he wrote several highly successful textbooks used in junior and senior high school American history classes. He died in 1960, at age seventy. Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XLVII (December, 1960), p. 561.



the College."<sup>41</sup>

The oldest record-book that the Bemidji State College Registrar's office has is a little black book labeled only "Journal." The carefully scrolled handwriting inside it began with the fall registration of 1922 and indicated that on September 16, 1922, 187 students paid a student activity fee of \$3.00 each. The rest of the 201 students that fall--all but 12 were women--came straggling in later, the last entry showing three registrations on October 13. Apparently all the students signed the pledge to teach in Minnesota, as no indication was given of any student paying any more than the activity fee (fees from 202 students were collected but one student's check bounced). By the end of the quarter, November 29, the student activity fund had amassed \$642.52, all safely deposited at the local Farmers State Bank. The first activity expenditure in the fall of 1922 had been \$8.48 for an all-school party on September 20, and then five days later, an all-school picnic costing \$19.90.

The College Lyceum Program, open to the public, began in 1922 with Miss Mabell Bonsall of the faculty as chairman. The program offerings that year included three lectures and two musical groups, for all of which the sum of \$1,475 was paid out of student activity

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<sup>41</sup>First Annual Catalog, State Teachers College, Bemidji, Minnesota, 1922, p. 13. The practice of listing the names of the most recently enrolled students in the college catalogs continued through the 1939-1941 publication, and then it was dropped. Enrollment was lowest during the years of World War II; in one summer session, only thirteen students were enrolled. Though it is difficult to document, contemporaries of Deputy who worked with him--and thus were presumably prejudiced--maintained in interviews that the quality of academic work done in classes was at a high level.



money.<sup>42</sup>

The enrollment continued to grow steadily those first years of the 1920's, and the school seemed to be progressing well towards meeting the definition of a college. In the fall of 1923, the enrollment figure came up to 223, with a then record male population of 25 on campus. The student-faculty ratio was a highly desirable 14 to 1. Despite the men students enrolled, the college catalogs couched their terminology as though aimed only at the females. For example, in the 1923 catalog under the section called Student Welfare, it said: "The girl who gives all of her time to work and none to play is not an ideal student." It should be noted quickly, however, that Deputy's definition of play was most austere; only reluctantly did he allow dancing on campus even if properly chaperoned, but he himself would not participate.<sup>43</sup>

In the social calendar listings for the school year 1923-1924, the college promoted and featured the lecture-music series in connection with the Lyceum programs. The varied fare included a lecture by Arctic explorer Vilhjalmur Stefansson. Throughout the decade, the

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<sup>42</sup>"Journal," (unpublished record of student enrollments at Bemidji State Teachers College from 1922-1939, on file at the Registrar's Office, Bemidji State College), p. 7. Along with enrollment figures, this book also recorded disbursements paid out of student activity fees. No item was too small to dismiss as miscellaneous. For example, it duly recorded that \$1.49 was paid to Mary Deputy, as chairman of an indoor track meet; and that \$0.17 went to Fremont Wirth for "basketball season expenses."

<sup>43</sup>According to a faculty member who taught under Deputy, Deputy put up with dancing on campus to keep the students from frequenting "those awful gas houses," as Deputy reportedly called the filling stations near the college, and also he did not like to have students associating with "those rowdies downtown."



social calendar always included a dinner at the home of President and Mrs. Deputy for fall and winter quarter graduates, and a reception at their home for the entire student body and faculty held near the end of the spring term.

Student organizations for 1923 included the Musical Art Club, which was actually a community organization outside of the college to which students could belong; a girls' glee club; two literary societies--the aforementioned Athenian and the second one by then called the Laurean; Camp Fire Girls, connected with the physical education classes; a student government association; and various athletic groups for both sexes, although the only interschool competition was in boys' basketball. One last organization connected with the college was the Parent Teachers Association, in connection with the college elementary school which by then, 1923-1924, had 205 children in grades kindergarten through eight inclusive.

The registrar's book showed that 223 enrolled for the fall term in 1924, and that 24 dropped out before the term ended. In the winter quarter, 244 started and 31 dropped; and lastly, in the spring term, 31 more students were added to make a total of 244 at the end of the school year. Rather curiously, the registrar's book indicated that 25 "Mid-Spring" students enrolled--rural teachers who had finished their school year and took double sessions of classes on Saturdays--but this number was not included in the official enrollment for the spring quarter. Of the 244 students in the 1924-1925 year, 30 were boys. From this number a men's glee club was organized, and according to the catalog, "any young man having reasonable ability and interest is



eligible to the club, which meets twice a week for the study of part songs." In athletics, the school became a member of the Minnesota Junior and Teachers College Conference; to basketball the school added men's track in the spring of 1925 as an intervarsity sport.<sup>44</sup>

According to the college catalog for the 1924-1925 school year, the school adopted the 3.0 honor point system (A, three points, B, two points, etc.) and a stiffer grade point average for graduation. All students had to have a least as many honor points as credits--an average of C--before they could graduate. Another rule required that a minimum of one year resident work be required of every candidate for graduation with a two-year diploma. Board officials would not allow newly enrolled students to get their diplomas without spending at least one year on campus. Though not all were offered, the catalog listed seventy-seven different courses and course descriptions; of these, Education had the most courses with sixteen.

Throughout the decade the college had the perennial problem of finding student housing. The only dormitory, Sanford Hall, housed about fifty girls, although double that number could eat there in the basement cafeteria. Living rates at the dormitory were uniform; board and room were furnished for \$6.00 a week. Those living elsewhere--at costs of rent varying from \$1.50 to \$6.00 a week--could take their meals at Sanford Hall for \$4.50 a week. Each year Deputy was required to ask Bemidji residents to furnish lodging for college students, and somehow the students were accommodated.

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<sup>44</sup>The Northern Student, Bulletin of the State Teachers College, Bemidji, Minnesota, Vol. XI, No. 2, January, 1938, p. 12; Catalog, State Teachers College, Bemidji, Minnesota, 1925-1927, p. 17.



That the crowded conditions that Deputy complained about were real was indicated in the State College Board authorization of March 26, 1925. The Board allowed Bemidji "to rent for the spring term additional rooms in a private dwelling located one-half block from the college building, at a rental of \$12.00 per month, to be used to provide additional recitation rooms necessary because of lack of capacity in the main building."

Total enrollment reached a new high in the fall term of 1926. The figure totaled 254, and a Saturday extension class added 12 more. The college charged eight dollars a term from each student, which entitled the student to "the use of all textbooks and of the library; admission to lectures, concerts, entertainments, and other functions of the college; and tickets to contests in which the college teams compete," according to the college catalog that year. Excluding these "term fees," as they were called, tuition was free to students who signed the declaration to teach in Minnesota two years; the rest were to pay \$20.00 tuition a term in 1926. There is no indication, however, noted in the registrar's book of anyone paying anything but the term fees in the entire decade.

The college had organized several new student clubs by the 1926-1927 year. These included a Sketch Club, which met one hour a week; the Kindergarten-Primary Club, for students who planned to teach in those grades; the Century Club, an organization for the furthering of outdoor activities; the Little Theater Club, a group interested in drama; the Women's Athletic Association; and the Nautilus Club, a somewhat deceiving title as the purpose of the organization was to



"enable the members to be discriminating in their reading, and to develop an appreciation of literature."<sup>45</sup>

In the fall of 1926, R. E. Mendenhall organized the college's first football team. Considering that there were only twenty-six boys enrolled, this was no small accomplishment. The school played four games that fall, one each against high schools at Deer River and Thief River Falls, and two with Cass Lake high school (Bemidji won one, lost two, and tied one). After their first game and first loss to Cass Lake (33-0), the local newspaper felt that "the Peds," as the town papers nicknamed the athletic teams, had done very well considering the male personnel available: "Barely enough have turned out to form one team, and Coach Mendenhall was forced to go through scrimmage work with the local high school eleven, so as to have the practice."<sup>46</sup> The second meeting against Cass Lake, October 27, 1926, found the Peds winning their first game 13-0, and it was the first football game played on the college field by the lake near Diamond Point park.

The 1927 fall quarter enrollment dropped to 207, 36 of them men, from the 1926 high of 254. The enrollment declined, as usual, during the year so that by the end of the school year, only 194 were on the registrar's list. In the breakdown of classes, the registrar's figures indicated that there were 99 in the freshmen or, as it was then called, the first-year class; 139 in the second-year class; 5 in the third-year class (i.e., college juniors enrolled in the new four-year curriculum); and 1 member of the fourth-year class. There were

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<sup>45</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>46</sup>Bemidji Weekly Pioneer, October 14, 1926, p. 9.



also 7 in what was called the fifth-year course, a course designed for non-high school graduates leading to a two-year diploma. Although newly enrolled students had to be high school graduates by the fall of 1927, those who previously had been enrolled were permitted to complete the five-year programs under which they had started.<sup>47</sup>

As the above figures suggest, the march to become a viable four-year college was very slow. Despite the ballyhoo made over the adoption of the four-year curriculum for the teachers colleges, there was at first little attraction for students to obtain a bachelor's degree. There seemed, however, to be little embarrassment suffered by school officials in the late 1920's in pretending it was a four-year college when it was hardly that. The attitude and remarks attributed to Deputy regarding this reflect more of a philosophical resignation on his part rather than any embarrassment. In effect he said to keep on going as before, do as well as possible with the popular two-year program, and gradually the four-year program would appeal to more students.

Only a few changes occurred on campus in the 1927-1928 year in student organizations. The Athenian and Laurean literary societies merged into the Nautilus Club with Miss Ruth Brune as advisor, and a "B" average was made a requirement for membership. The school added a publications committee, and whether there was a cause and effect relationship, the college published the first formal issue of the Northern Student. This first issue had in its contents the announcements for the 1928 summer session, the calendar for the 1928-1929 school

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<sup>47</sup>The last section in this chapter gives a more complete discussion of the changing curriculums in the 1920's in the state colleges.



year, and four articles on current educational topics written by members of the faculty. The second issue was devoted entirely to news about and articles by the elementary school pupils. In the years following these first publications, the college used the name Northern Student on all of its printed materials whether they were newspapers, bulletins, or articles written by faculty members.<sup>48</sup>

Bemidji College held its first Homecoming on October 6, 1927. The event was held at the same time there was an area teachers convention in Bemidji so a considerable number of alumni were present. Rather strangely, President Deputy was not in town that weekend. The Northern Student portrayed vividly a description of a portion of the day:

At twelve o'clock the day of the game, the college students [including the members of the football squad] assembled in front of the high school building, some afoot, others in decorated cars, and led by a pep band, paraded through the downtown district. Then came the big game. The whistle blew at three o'clock and the game was on. In a short time one thousand fans present saw the seasoned St. Cloud team carry the ball over our goal line. . . .<sup>49</sup>

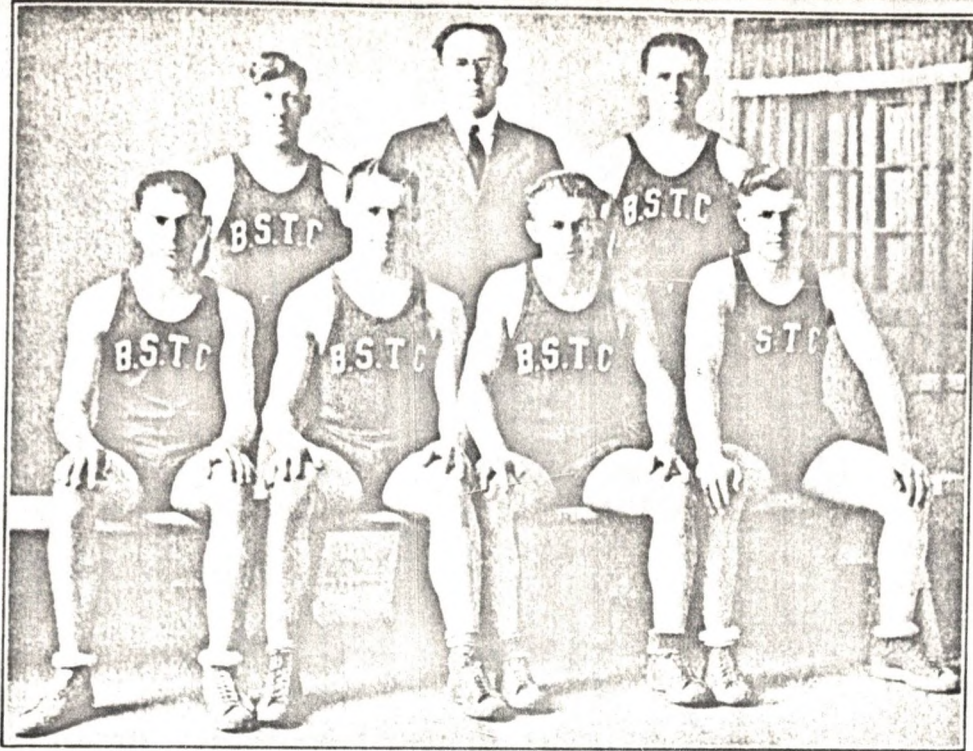
At an alumni association meeting the morning of the game, it was voted to telegraph the score of the Homecoming game that afternoon to President Deputy who was visiting in the East. In view of the 26-6 loss, one wonders if it was carried out. (See next page for picture of

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<sup>48</sup>President Deputy gave the name to these publications. According to a historical sketch of the college written in 1938 and appearing in one of these Northern Students, Deputy had remembered his college newspaper, the Indiana Student, and he substituted Northern for Indiana for the new title. Vol. XI, No. 2, January, 1938, p. 14. Former faculty member Ruth Brune Mangelsdorf, who was the editor of this particular bulletin, indicated in an interview how hard she and Deputy had worked together on it both for inclusion of important facts and the accuracy of them. However, other documentation does not always confirm the information given in this aforementioned bulletin which was published to honor Deputy upon his retirement.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., Vol. I, No. 4, June, 1928, p. 26.





**BASKETBALL TEAM 1927-28**

Top row, left to right: Keeler, forward; Coach, R. E. Mendenhall; Stapleton, guard. Bottom row, left to right: Reigel, center; Wilson (captain), guard; McCrady, forward; Bradford, forward.



**FOOTBALL TEAM 1927**

Wilson, tackle; Staple-



the 1927 athletic teams.) However, in this their second season, the football team won five and lost three games, with scores ranging from a 44-0 win over Park Rapids high school to a 69-0 loss to Hibbing junior college.

The Northern Student is an invaluable source of information on Bemidji College, especially after it began publication regularly in 1929. Though much of the information in it might be labeled historical trivia, nevertheless a great deal of what went on at the college regarding enrollments, students, and student life was recorded in these publications.

What happened to students after graduation from Bemidji was noted in the June, 1928, Northern Student. From 1919 to 1928, the number of graduates totaled 385, and 293 of them were teaching at the time; 92 were not teaching. Of the 92 not teaching, 54 were "married and homemakers"; 10 were attending school; 4 were doing office work; 3 worked in hospitals; 3 clerked in stores; 11 were working at home; 2 were unable to teach because of ill health; and of 5 there was no record.

Commissioner of Education James McConnell offered more statistics on all Minnesota teachers college students which he presented to the Board and which were included in the Board Minutes of August 17, 1928 (see Tables 4 and 5 next page). His figures dealt with enrollment and graduation statistics over a period of three years, 1925-1928. With the exception of summer school enrollments, Bemidji was bested in numbers by her sister colleges in this period. Still new, still remote--in a sparsely populated area without good roads to provide easy access--it could not catch up very fast with the rest. Limited essentially to just



TABLE 4

## COMPARATIVE ENROLLMENT

COLLEGE	Average Enrollment Fall, Winter, Spring Terms			Average Enrollment for Three Years	Summer Session Enrollment			
	1925- 1926	1926- 1927	1927- 1928		1925	1926	1927	1928
	Winona	564	508		500	524	354	263
Mankato	653	502	455	537	591	423	452	453
St. Cloud	982	812	821	872	791	678	658	735
Moorhead	539	454	449	481	473	443	382	362
Duluth	305	394	383	361	605	522	514	488
Bemidji	236	240	209	229	469	336	340	298
	3,279	2,910	2,817	3,004	3,283	2,665	2,650	2,723

Source: Minutes of the State Teachers College Board, August 17, 1928.

TABLE 5

## GRADUATION

COLLEGE	1925-26			1926-27			1927-28		
	De- grees	3-Yr. Dip.	2-Yr. Dip.	De- grees	3-Yr. Dip.	2-Yr. Dip.	De- grees	3-Yr. Dip.	2-Yr. Dip.
Winona	4	4	262	7	.	230	12	.	168
Mankato	.	1	299	1	.	250	.	.	188
St. Cloud	.	4	467	.	.	388	2	.	376
Moorhead	1	1	221	10	.	207	10	.	180
Duluth	.	9	139	3	.	186	2	.	200
Bemidji	.	1	73	.	2	79	1	.	82
Totals	5	20	1,461	21	2	1,340	27	.	1,194

Source: Minutes of the State Teachers College Board, August 17, 1928.



two buildings that were already overcrowded with the small enrollment it did have, the enrollment peaked in 1926 and then started downward. All the state college enrollments show this downward trend, and the College Board interpreted it largely as the workings of supply and demand in the elementary teacher market. Moreover, the reason that more were not enrolled in the four-year program seemed clear: teachers with only two years of training could obtain teaching certificates and secure jobs at salaries almost as high as those paid to four-year graduates. Because neither economic nor social rewards were that much greater, there was little external motivation to go to college an extra two years.<sup>50</sup> Indeed, it appeared that many students would not have entered the teaching field at all if more than two years of training had been required. And certainly the two-year enrollment drained away many students who might possibly have entered the four-year curriculum. All in all, Bemidji and the others felt declining enrollments in the late 1920's that did not pick up significantly again--and somewhat ironically--until the earliest years of the depression.<sup>51</sup>

In 1928, Bemidji's enrollment dropped below the 200 mark for the first time since 1921; 194 students, 29 of them men, signed up for school that fall. By the next spring the number dipped to 184. The

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<sup>50</sup>The Bulletin, Bulletin of the State Teachers College, Moorhead, Minnesota, Series 46, No. 2, August, 1950, p. 19. The report indicated that even as late as 1948, the average salary obtained by Moorhead two-year graduates was \$225.44 per month for nine months, while that obtained by the few elementary degree graduates was \$276.94; in that same year, only 5.4 per cent of all Minnesota teachers college students were enrolled in the four-year programs in the various colleges.

<sup>51</sup>Minnesota State Teachers Colleges in Transition, Bulletin of the State Teachers College, Moorhead, Minnesota, Series 42, No. 2, August, 1946, pp. 27, 28. See Appendix III for all enrollment figures.



continued relative disinterest in working for a degree might be seen in that only 14 members of what would be called juniors and seniors made up the 194. But interestingly enough, of these 14, 10 were men. Slowly, very slowly, more males began to move into teaching positions in elementary schools, and many had hopes of moving into the position of principals.

In the 1928-1929 school year, the clubs and organizations on campus remained the same. In women's athletics, the college added basketball and track to soccer, volleyball, and baseball--all intramural--and in the summer, Red Cross awards were presented in swimming for the first time. In connection with the college, the elementary school, or the training school as it was often called then, added a ninth grade in 1928 with a total of 245 students in grades kindergarten through nine inclusive.<sup>52</sup>

As the college began its tenth year of operation in the fall of 1929, the enrollment figure crawled over the 200 mark again but just barely as 208 enrolled; by spring quarter the figure went down to 181. Thus it was around the figure of 200 that the enrollment seemed to settle during the regular school year in the 1920's at Bemidji State Teachers College.

#### Faculty and Staff

During his entire presidency of nineteen years, Deputy did not have his faculty separated into either departments or divisions. Nor

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<sup>52</sup>The Northern Student, Bulletin of the State Teachers College, Bemidji, Minnesota, Vol. XI, No. 2, January, 1938, p. 18. These same grades were continued until 1962 when the junior high grades were phased out. In 1950, the elementary school moved into a new building and was renamed the Laboratory School.



were any faculty members given any rank or class under him. Regardless of the degree held, all faculty members were called "instructors," a title that apparently grated on some who held advanced degrees. The faculty had no organization of any kind to promote and work for benefits for itself; such an attempt by the faculty would have been regarded by Deputy as a direct slap in the face to him. It would have been interpreted as a crude way of saying that Deputy's judgments were in error and that he did not treat all members fairly.<sup>53</sup>

Judging from interviews with those who worked under him, President Deputy was exceedingly paternalistic to faculty and students alike. He would chastise on the spot any male faculty member who came on campus smoking. And the thought of any female smoking, faculty member or student, was abhorrent to the man.<sup>54</sup>

Deputy knew personally every student and regularly helped all of them to work out their schedules. He also knew of their personal and financial problems, often digging into his own pocket to help some student out. His large house two blocks from the campus was regularly opened to the students.

All faculty members were expected to be present at every school function, and if someone missed, Deputy would corner the absentee as

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<sup>53</sup>The smallness in numbers of the faculty meant very few formal faculty meetings, and no minutes of the meetings were kept. Regarding the meetings, one male faculty member under Deputy put it this way in an interview: "A couple of times a year Deputy would call his flock together, deliver some pleasant homilies, and then dismiss the group."

<sup>54</sup>Reportedly it was to Deputy's traumatic dismay when he learned of his daughter Mary smoking in the attic of their home. "He never fully recovered from the shock," said a former faculty member in discussing this. Another reported incident involved Deputy chastening a male faculty member for allowing the stem of his pipe to stick out from his vest pocket, thus permitting students to witness the hateful thing.



soon as possible to inquire if the person had been ill or out of town. Apparently these were the only excuses he would allow. The subject of salaries was supposed to be taboo among the faculty, and no one was to know what anyone else received during the year (though faculty salaries were published in the State College Board Minutes, they were not made available to faculty members). A raise in salary of \$100.00 a year was regarded as almost excessive, and who got the raises, of course, Deputy alone decided.

The dean of women, Miss Margaret Kelly, worked very closely with Deputy to make young ladies out of the students. Though the community still had the aura of rough lumberjack days, Deputy was insistent that his staff indoctrinate the students in proper etiquette. Miss Kelly was also in charge of Sanford Hall, and at evening meals--with candles and linen table cloths--the girls, and the boys who ate their meals there, were instructed, sometimes reluctantly and painfully, in the proper social graces.<sup>55</sup>

In the fall of 1920, Deputy had a staff of seven women and one man, Fremont Wirth who taught history. Physically on campus, there was one main building and one half-completed dormitory. The grounds surrounding the construction site was described as a mess. In the spring of 1921 the school spent \$3,000 on improving the campus grounds.

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<sup>55</sup>Information derived from interviews with professors emeritae Mabel Parker and Ruth Brune Mangelsdorf who both joined the Bemidji faculty in 1924. They indicated that though there was some negative reaction to the efforts of Miss Kelly to improve the students socially and culturally, all realized after graduation what good she had done for them, and alumnae eagerly sought her out at Alumni gatherings for belated thank yous. Both spoke very highly of Deputy as a person, with Mrs. Mangelsdorf referring to him as "the most humble, the most unpretentious man," who yet "towered above his faculty" and was "a wonderful person."



The underbrush between the buildings and the lake was cleared, a thousand yards of black dirt was leveled and seeded for lawns, and the college constructed several drives and walks along the lakeshore.

When the fall term of the 1921 year began, Deputy had a faculty of fifteen, again with only one male counterpart, Fremont Wirth. Including Deputy, eleven held at least a bachelor's degree; only four had a master's degree, and none had a doctorate (see Appendix VI for a copy of the bulletin giving the names and academic background of the 1921 staff). Salaries averaged about \$1800 for nine months for the teaching faculty while Deputy received a twelve-month salary of \$5,400. Considering the times and what money would buy, Deputy's salary seemed substantial.<sup>56</sup> Faculty and students, however, had limited library facilities to use in 1921. Authentic library records began with the books accessioned that year, during which the number of volumes was estimated at 900.<sup>57</sup>

Deputy showed constant concern for a neat-looking campus, and a campus that would have plenty of trees. Each spring he presided over an annual "tree planting day," and apparently felt strongly enough about this to include it regularly in the calendar of events each year in the college catalogs. By the end of the 1922 school year, he could

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<sup>56</sup>In 1920, Deputy received \$5,000. For sake of comparison, Thomas Kane became president of the University of North Dakota that year and received \$6,000. Louis G. Geiger, University of the Northern Plains: A History of the University of North Dakota, 1883-1958 (Grand Forks: The University of North Dakota Press, 1958), p. 290.

<sup>57</sup>The Northern Student, Bulletin of the State Teachers College, Bemidji, Minnesota, Vol. XI, No. 2, January, 1938, p. 11. The Bemidji library still has the first book accessioned on September 10, 1921: Handbook of Nature Study by Anna B. Comstock.



happily write in his report that driveways and walks had been laid on campus, and that athletic grounds, including tennis courts, a running track, a hockey field, and recreation grounds had been partially completed. Around the two buildings, he wrote, the ground had been regraded, lawns started, and trees, shrubs, and vines planted.<sup>58</sup> The following year, with a \$7000 legislative allotment for repairs, betterment, and equipment, the recreation grounds were completed, including the levelling and surfacing of a football field. There was still plenty of work to be done, however, for in 1923 "the campus east of the building [the area between the lake and the main building] was a wilderness," according to a later description of the campus.<sup>59</sup>

Two more male members joined the staff in 1923 along with Deputy and Wirth: Roy Schofield, geography, and Earl W. Beck, education. Though neither held doctorates, both came in at \$2,800 which was above the average salary of about \$2,000. Deputy's salary jumped to \$5,500 that year as he presided over a faculty that numbered twenty, with six of these teaching in the elementary school.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup>Minnesota, Twenty-Second Biennial Report, Department of Education, 1921-1922, pp. 137-138.

<sup>59</sup>The Northern Student, Bulletin of the State Teachers College, Bemidji, Minnesota, Vol. XI, No. 2, January, 1938, p. 9.

<sup>60</sup>With the exception of St. Cloud, all of the state college presidents received the same salary. In his history of St. Cloud college (see footnote 8), Dudley Brainard wrote briefly about the disparity, stating only that "the Board recognized his outstanding leadership by re-electing him at a salary of \$6,200, which was \$700 more than was paid to presidents of other teachers colleges." p. 60. Their president, J. C. Brown, left St. Cloud in 1927 to become president of DeKalb, Illinois, State Teachers College.



Deputy summed up the progress of his school in its first few years in his report to the state Department of Education which appeared in the fall of 1924. He began by giving the enrollment figures, noting that the interesting feature of the enrollments for each year to date had been the substantial increase in the number of high school graduates who were starting college (between 1921 and 1924, the number of high school graduates rose from 109 to 232). He attributed this desirable trend to three causes: first, the development of more extensive high school facilities in northern Minnesota; second, the greater emphasis placed on high school graduation as an entrance requirement; and third, the tendency of public schools to employ teachers with broader academic and professional training. Because of the greater supply of better qualified teachers and the corresponding decrease in the number of five-year students (those who had not graduated from high school), wrote Deputy, the College Board at its April 8, 1924, meeting had passed a resolution providing that only students with at least one year of high school work be admitted in the regular year, beginning September, 1924. Deputy was pleased to see the standards being raised. "Probably it will be only a short time until the five-year course should be discontinued," he concluded on that topic. (It was discontinued in 1927).<sup>61</sup>

Deputy went on in his 1924 report to list what he called the "greatest needs of the college"; whether they were in order of preference he did not indicate. Provision for more classrooms and a larger library space were the first needs mentioned; after this he

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<sup>61</sup>Minnesota, Twenty-Third Biennial Report, Department of Education, 1923-1924, pp. 158-160. Though the errors may be clerical or mechanical, it might be noted that Deputy's enrollment statistics do not always agree with the Registrar's figures.



listed dormitory expansion, an auditorium, a gymnasium, a training school, and lastly, a separate heating and power plant building. He lamented that during the regular school year there had been 500 students--the college students and the elementary school pupils--in the one main building, and under the present conditions, it was impossible to control the ventilation and heating. He complained that the library would seat only forty students, that there were no extra classrooms or study rooms available for either faculty or students during periods of no classes; that a large tent had to be used for three summers in a row to accommodate the numbers; that the college was compelled to depend on "uncertain arrangements made temporarily" with the renting of the armory or high school for all indoor events to which the public was invited. Alas, said Deputy essentially, will not the legislature recognize our needs and help us out? Other than the enrollment growth, the only positive remarks on the biennium just ended that Deputy made were words to the effect that at least the campus looked good, and that it had been developed to provide for "athletics and outdoor activities through tennis courts, running track, soccer and football field, baseball diamond, and swimming docks."<sup>62</sup>

When the school began in the fall of 1924, the faculty of twenty-five had been upgraded so that seventeen had at least a bachelor's

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<sup>62</sup>Ibid. After 1924, the state Department of Education did not publish the reports of the state teachers college presidents; at the same time the name of the publication was changed to Financial Statement of the State Board of Education and Public School Statistics, and the information pertaining to state colleges was limited to amounts of money appropriated and enrollment figures. Although the presidents filed quarterly reports to the Board, neither the Board office nor the State Archives have copies of these reports; however, there is an incomplete set of Deputy's reports in the Deputy papers on file in the Bemidji State College library.



degree and eleven held master's degrees. Fremont Wirth took a leave of absence for that school year, the leave turning out to be permanent, and Archie C. Clark, who received a beginning salary of \$2,700, replaced him. Clark remained on the faculty in variety of roles, including the presidency, until his retirement in 1964.<sup>63</sup>

As indicated in the section on legislative action, the legislature came through only that one time in 1925 with money for new buildings. That summer and fall, continued interest grew as to when these two structures--a wing to the main building for the elementary school, and a separate heating plant--would be started. Delays for many reasons found the final bids for both buildings put off until December 10, 1925, when contracts were let. The company of A. G. Wahl and Sons of St. Cloud received the contracts for the general construction of both buildings for \$96,149. C. H. Johnston, who had designed the school's first two buildings, was again the architect. When completed, the wing to the main building contained 20,376 square feet of floor space, and almost doubled the available floor space that there had been before. Construction on both buildings began in earnest in the spring of 1926 and were completed for occupancy the following summer in time for summer school. At the same time the college enlarged the library in the main building to give seating capacity for eighty-five readers, doubling its former capacity. (The term "main building" was used until 1959 when the Board officially named it

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<sup>63</sup>"I believe I held almost every job at this school except that of Dean of Women," Clark once remarked. For most of his tenure, Clark was chairman of the division of social studies. Clark passed away in 1966; the school named its new \$1,400,000 library after him in formal ceremonies at commencement exercises, June 4, 1967.



"Manfred W. Deputy Hall." The old library is now room 218 in Deputy Hall and used as a classroom.)

The 1926-1927 regular school year found several important faculty changes. The college hired its first staff member with a Ph. D. degree, Raymond E. Mendenhall, who taught history and physical education.<sup>64</sup> Of the remaining 25 faculty members, 11 held a master's degree, and 5 had a bachelor's degree. Nine members, however, nearly all instructors in the elementary school, had no degree. Deputy received a salary of \$5,500; the next highest paid was Miss Telulah Robinson, director of the campus elementary school, who received \$3,200. Only one other staff member received at least \$3,000 that year, Roy Schofield in geography. As was very common throughout the decade, the pay raises from the previous year averaged less than \$100 per person, and several received no raise at all.

Not until 1929 did Bemidji and the rest of the state colleges belong to any national accrediting agency. Until then both the Board and the presidents--as separate groups and together--had often discussed the advisability of applying. After consideration, based largely on the assumption that they could meet the requirements, a motion carried at the meeting of the presidents, on March 19, 1928, to approve the plan of inspection by the American Association of Teachers Colleges and recommend to the College Board that Minnesota teachers

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<sup>64</sup>Mendenhall left after two years, and no one else with a doctorate was hired that decade. In 1928 Miss Elsie K. Annis joined the faculty in women's physical education and remained at Bemidji until her retirement in 1963.



colleges apply for membership.<sup>65</sup>

The presidents appointed Deputy to bring the recommendation to the attention of the Board, and this done, the Board members discussed it off and on throughout the year. Finally, on February 6, 1929, the Board approved it with the stipulation that "if any one or more of this six colleges fail of such accreditation, all applications be withdrawn." Subsequently, the Board made application and all the state colleges were accepted as Class A Colleges.<sup>66</sup>

In summary, regarding the faculty of Bemidji college in the 1920's, the staff did not experience a big turnover each year. For example, between the staff of 1926 and 1929, there were only three replacements. Deputy's paternalism did not drive faculty members away. By the end of the decade, salaries for nine-month teaching duties averaged about \$2,500 for a faculty that numbered around twenty-five for the regular school year. One thing grew faster than the faculty in the decade, however; that was the number of faculty committees. For the 1929-1930 school year, the college catalog listed

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<sup>65</sup>Minutes of Presidents Meetings, Minnesota State Teachers Colleges, March 19, 1928 (in the files of the President's Office, Bemidji State College). The teachers college presidents met irregularly several times a year, but official minutes were not kept until July 27, 1927. Prior to this, if a president missed a meeting, one of the other presidents would write him a letter telling him what had happened. At this first meeting at which minutes were taken, they authorized six one-man committees; Deputy headed the committee labelled Relationship to Public Schools of Minnesota. At their meetings they worked on such things as a uniform calendar for the school year, athletic eligibility, standards, and the like.

<sup>66</sup>In view of the fact that Bemidji had graduated only one person with a degree by that day, it seems strange that the school would be given a Class A rank. Conversely, this does not say much about the accreditation standards of the agency or of the period.



the following faculty committees: athletics, lectures and entertainment, loan fund, extra curricular activities, social affairs, scholarship and graduation, entrance requirements, student activity budget, and publications. As president, Deputy became an ex officio member on all of them. It appeared that Parkinson's law had taken effect at Bemidji State Teachers College.

#### Summer Schools

In terms of enrollment, summer schools brought the most students to Bemidji in the decade of the 1920's. The total enrollments were as follows:

1920	292
1921	428
1922	476
1923	531
1924	537
1925	469
1926	336
1927	340
1928	298
1929	334

The college held one six-week summer session each year, the session beginning about the middle of June and continuing to the end of July. Though a boon to the school, it also brought problems. Judging from the descriptions in the local newspapers and the reports of President Deputy, housing both on and off campus provided the major problem. The newspapers seemed cooperative in aiding Deputy to



find rooms each summer, but, generally, once that was done and the attendance figures duly reported, the local papers forgot about the summer session news. But Deputy could not forget it; he had to find some way to accommodate the large numbers on campus, and the means he used, if not the answer, was to erect a large tent between the main building and the lake (see next page for pictures). Out of necessity, the college used the tent for several summers in a row. Normally the college used the tent for assembly programs of the entire student body. It was, however, sometimes used for larger classes and as a practice area for choir rehearsals.<sup>67</sup>

One significant characteristic of summer schools was the importance paid to visiting lecturers. In the brochures sent out announcing summer school dates and courses available, Deputy regularly inserted a paragraph emphasizing the assembly programs.<sup>68</sup> He seemed capable of corraling any man of note who came into the area to speak at his summer school assemblies. When Governor J. A. O. Preus came to Bemidji primarily to address the annual convention of the Minnesota Fire Department Association held in town, Deputy got him over to talk at a morning assembly program. Sometimes the lecturers would stay a week or longer and give talks every day. For example, William L. Bryan of Indiana University came for a week in the summer of 1922 and lectured twice a

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<sup>67</sup>The tent was first put up in the spring of 1922--and used for graduation exercises that year--"to take care of the exceptionally large enrollment which is anticipated" for summer school. Bemidji Sentinel, June 2, 1922, p. 1.

<sup>68</sup>Under the section called Special Features in the 1921 summer school brochure, it states that "provision will be made for special programs of interest to all, including a series of lectures" to be given in the tent.





FRONT VIEW OF CAMPUS AND BUILDINGS

Summer School 1923

DAILY PROGRAM

9:30 to 10:15 A. M. Assembly, Lectures and Chorus

7:45 to 9:25 A. M.	10:20 to 11:55 A. M.	2:00 to 3:40 P. M.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*American History Methods</li> <li>Geography II</li> <li>Sociology</li> <li>*Arithmetic Methods</li> <li>*Drawing</li> <li>*Rural Methods and Management</li> <li>Psychology 2</li> <li>Grammar I</li> <li>Geography of North America</li> <li>Composition I</li> <li>Geometry II</li> <li>*Primary Methods</li> <li>*Hygiene</li> <li>Algebra I and II</li> <li>Grade Supervision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>American History I</li> <li>*Geography Methods</li> <li>Physics II</li> <li>Arithmetic I</li> <li>*Industrial Art</li> <li>Rural Sociology</li> <li>Tests and Measures</li> <li>*Grammar Methods</li> <li>*Foods and Cookery</li> <li>Civics I</li> <li>Penmanship</li> <li>*Upper Grade Methods</li> <li>Nature Study</li> <li>*Playground Methods</li> <li>Literature (Types)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>American History II</li> <li>Geography I</li> <li>Physics I</li> <li>Arithmetic II</li> <li>*Library Methods</li> <li>Psychology 1</li> <li>Grammar II</li> <li>*Garment Making</li> <li>*Advanced Civics</li> <li>Composition II</li> <li>Geometry I</li> <li>*Reading Methods</li> <li>*Music Methods</li> <li>Tennis and Swimming</li> <li>Children's Literature</li> </ul>

Subjects with Roman numerals, for non-high school graduates, may be applied on first and second class certificate or on five year diploma.

All subjects not marked with Roman numerals will give required or elective credit toward advanced diploma advanced courses.

Subjects marked with \* for high school graduates, may be applied on certificates or advanced diploma.



SUMMER SCHOOL ASSEMBLY



day--in the tent. The college invited the general public to all the lecture programs.<sup>69</sup>

As Deputy pointed out in his official reports to the Board, Bemidji College aimed its summer school programs at meeting the needs of the rural teachers. He believed that most of the students in the summers were interested in meeting certain certificate requirements in order to qualify for positions in rural and semi-graded schools, and the college would help to serve their needs. To substantiate this point, he listed several statistical tables in his reports, including the following:

	1920	1921	1922
Enrollment (Summers)	292	428	484
Credit toward First Grade Certificate	71	126	173
Credit toward Second Grade Certificate	119	191	115
Credit toward college diploma	59	93	107
Intending to teach in rural school the following year	171	251	302

In many respects, students at summer school got the full treatment just as they would were they in the regular school year. Along with the assembly programs--held each day with attendance mandatory--the college also held summer graduation exercises. Nineteen students

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<sup>69</sup>The only news item played up in the local newspapers regarding the 1922 summer session suggested the cooperativeness of the townspeople in promoting good relationships with the college. About 425 students were taken by the citizenry on an "auto ride around Lake Bemidji and a trip through the big sawmill of the Crookston Lumber Company," located across the lake from the college. There must have been some logistics problems, for Deputy said there were still some 75 students who did not get to go because there were not enough cars, and he asked if someone would please take them too. Whether this last group got to make the epic journey was not recorded. Bemidji Daily Pioneer, July 15, 1922, p. 1.



received diplomas at graduation exercises on July 24, 1923, marking the completion of their work and the end of summer school. Essentially full graduation exercises were held, as there was a principal speaker, Judge C. W. Stanton of Bemidji, and the college's resident director A. P. White was there to hand out the diplomas. There was a full program, as Deputy made brief comments, the glee club sang several numbers, and what sounded the most interesting of all: "Mrs. Edith B. Ness, secretary to President Deputy, gave a whistling solo."<sup>70</sup>

The peak enrollment figure during President Deputy's tenure occurred during the summer school of 1924 when 537 students enrolled. That summer also marked the fifth anniversary of the opening of the school, and the occasion was not overlooked. The State College Board members and all of the teachers college presidents came to Bemidji as special guests. The school held two programs--in the tent--one in the morning and the other in the afternoon of June 24. At the morning assembly program for the students, presidents Charles Cooper of Mankato and B. W. Bohannon of Duluth spoke. In the afternoon program for the public, along with musical selections between talks, Commissioner of Education James McConnell, former Board president Judge Ell Torrance, and St. Cloud president J. C. Brown all spoke. After the program, the guests went on a boat ride around Lake Bemidji and then traveled by automobile to Itasca State Park for evening dinner, a distance of some forty miles from Bemidji.

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<sup>70</sup>Bemidji Weekly Pioneer, July 26, 1923, p. 8. Commencement programs appeared to be more interesting in those days. However, the use of the tent for graduation facilities left much to be desired, according to interviews with persons who fought off mosquitoes during ceremonies.



In relation to the fifth anniversary program that summer, the Bemidji Daily Pioneer made one of its rare editorial comments about the local college that decade, but what it said should be said of any college in any community at any time: "The college means much to the city . . . not alone from a financial point of view as a source of steady revenue to the businessmen of the city, but its effect on the atmosphere of the community is a helpful and inspiring one." The editorial went on to note how the entire area benefited from the many worthwhile college-sponsored functions available. All in all, concluded the editor, the college made the city the "educational center for all this part of the state."<sup>71</sup>

Having reached the high point of enrollment of 537 in the summer of 1924, the following summer began the first year of an almost steady decline in students for the next ten years. In part, all of the teachers colleges experienced this decline. After fees were returned to four students, the registrar's book indicated the final figure for the 1925 summer school to be 469, which was still a sizeable number for that time. The ten-page, 5 x 7-inch brochure describing the features of the session revealed little changes from the past, with one significant exception. The college held morning classes of sixty-eight primary children in connection with summer school for the college students to observe and do practice teaching. Again listed first in the special features of the session were "the fine course of lectures and entertainments." At the end of the session, the school held another commencement ceremony, with Miss Mabel Bonsall of the

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<sup>71</sup>June 24, 1924, p. 2.



faculty giving the address for the fourteen students who received their diplomas.

Summer enrollment for 1926 went down again to 336, down 100 from the year before and almost 200 from 1924. President Deputy found some solace by noting the growing number of advanced students, that is, students in the third or fourth year of the four-year curriculum, enrolled and working towards a degree; there were thirty-two. At summer graduation, Edith Bader, grade supervisor of the Ann Arbor, Michigan, public schools, and a summer instructor at Bemidji, gave the commencement address.

Summer school mathematics classes did a very interesting study in 1926. What Bemidji College meant to the town financially was the subject of a project directed by Miss Mabel Rice, training teacher in the junior high portion of the campus school. The figures reported were based on 600 questionnaires sent to various people associated with the college, and also available financial records were used. The results made interesting reading and told a great deal about the financial impact of the college on the community. The total expenditures for each school year were listed as: June 15, 1919, to August 1, 1920: \$53,272.58; August 1, 1920, to August 1, 1921: \$84,566.82; August 1, 1921, to August 1, 1922: \$116,771.33; August 1, 1922, to August 1, 1923: \$138,905.15; August 1, 1923, to August 1, 1924: \$130,344.59; August 1, 1924, to August 1, 1925: \$161,424.78; August 1, 1925, to September 1, 1926: \$166,106.40; the grand total:



\$851,396.65.<sup>72</sup>

During the 1926 summer term, based on the questionnaire returns, students and faculty spent \$25,181.60 in the community; during the regular school year just completed, the same groups spent \$102,591.70. The report estimated that the total amount spent by students and faculty in Bemidji from 1919 to 1926 was \$780,366.50.

In the breakdown of figures cited, the college since 1919 had spent \$36,927.54 for maintenance; \$2,734.93 for postage and telephone; \$2,573.99 for hauling, or as the report phrased it, "drayage"; \$2,900 for printing; \$20,445.89 for fuel, water and electricity; and \$4,175 for other supplies.

The report also cited the results of questionnaires completed by thirty workmen then currently building the heating plant and the wing to the main building. As reported, they each spent an average of \$102.83 per month for the eight months they would be working at the college, or a total of \$24,679.30. The building contractor had spent an added \$3,453 in Bemidji for supplies.

In conclusion, the report stated that the eight summer sessions had brought expenditures in Bemidji totaling \$202,487.84; seven regular years of operation brought about expenditures of \$577,878.66 for a total of \$780,366.50. When the Pioneer ran a synopsis of the report, it headline the article: "State College Has Brot [sic] Huge

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<sup>72</sup>Exactly how these figures were arrived at was not made clear in the report; presumably they were based partially on the annual appropriation from the state. The full report, along with samples of the different types of questionnaires used, appeared in the Northern Student, Bulletin of the State Teachers College, Bemidji, Minnesota, Vol. 1, No. 1, March, 1928, pp. 13-16; a synopsis of the report appeared in the Bemidji Weekly Pioneer, July 22, 1926, p. 3.



Revenue"; though the adjective might have been hyperbolic, nevertheless the revenue brought into the community by the college was impressive.

A potpourri of items in the report dealt with money spent in Bemidji. Summer session students in 1926 each spent an average of \$9.51 a week in town. Three hundred fifty-four students from Bemidji had attended the college, and if there were no college in town, 35 per cent or 129 would never have gone to college while 225 indicated they would have gone to school elsewhere. This would have taken \$77,031 out of the city. Thirteen summer school students in 1926 owned cars purchased in Bemidji; 9 faculty members bought automobiles in town; 8 faculty members owned homes; and the total amount paid the faculty in the 1925-1926 school year was \$65,527 of which they spent \$44,991.36 in Bemidji.

To summarize this report, despite the large number of overlapping figures that make the whole pattern a bit jumbled and admitting that the validity of the statistics was questionable, one has to agree essentially with the local paper: "Thus it is demonstrated that Bemidji State Teachers College is among the most important industries in Bemidji, if an educational institution is rightly classed as an industry." It observed that the report had aroused considerable comment among the businessmen in town "who previously had but a vague idea as to the commercial value of the college. The survey indicates that too often we overlook the value of existing institutions in our anxiety to secure new ones."<sup>73</sup>

Very likely aided by a State College Board ruling, the summer enrollment in 1927 increased slightly to 340, or 4 more than the

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<sup>73</sup>Ibid.



previous summer; of these, 32 were enrolled in the four-year degree program. The Board had ruled in February, 1926, that as of July, 1927, in order to renew a first grade certificate that had been issued upon examination (i. e. to those who did not have a two-year diploma) the holder must have attended a State Teachers College for a six-week term and completed full work. Also those having teaching certificates but who had not taught in the past five years would have their certificates renewed for two more years if they each attended at least one summer session in a state teachers college. These and similar rulings in the continual but slow upgrading of teacher certification helped eventually to sustain enrollments in the teachers colleges.<sup>74</sup>

There was little positive effect, however, in sustaining Bemidji's summer enrollment for 1928. It fell to 298, the lowest figure since the second summer session of 1920. The numbers rose to 334 in 1929 before ebbing downward in the depression and war years. Many persons speculated as to the reasons for the declining enrollments. Some saw it as a direct result in the gradual decline of population growth in the state. Some viewed it as reaching the point where the majority of elementary school teachers had obtained life-time teaching certificates and did not need to return to school. As long as the requirements for legally qualified candidates remained somewhat meager,

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<sup>74</sup>Teacher certification in Minnesota throughout the 1920's and 1930's was in a continual state of flux. What seemed to dictate eligibility to teach was the reality of supply and demand. The upgrading of teacher preparation culminated at long last in 1961 with the ruling requiring all beginning teachers in both elementary and secondary schools to have a bachelor's degree. At this writing there is currently a move to require all public school teachers to have had a year beyond the bachelor's degree in order to remain certified.



there was no need to go back to college. Others saw the decline lying in the movement away from the rural areas and into the larger cities. Yet others believed that the numbers were smaller because young adults saw little financial reward in the profession of teaching; it would take more than internal motivation to lure them to college. Lastly, it was postulated that the agricultural areas around Bemidji were already depressed financially before 1930, and the young people of the area simply could not afford to go on to college.<sup>75</sup>

For whatever reasons, the summer schools at Bemidji which had started out so well at the start of the decade trailed off by the end of it. Still the regular faculty nearly always found employment in the summer session, even at the low point of enrollment. When the enrollment was at its peak in the middle of the decade, Deputy would have to bring in almost a dozen extra faculty members for the summers; even at the low point he usually added three or four to the summer staff, and by the end of the decade salaries for summer were averaging \$400. All in all, summers in the 1920's were pretty good times at Bemidji College.

#### Graduation and the Alumni Association

Graduation time at any school can be a festive occasion, and Deputy attempted to make that at Bemidji. The school had had only one spring commencement as a normal school, the June exercises in 1920. In June, 1921, it held its first commencement as a teachers college. Throughout the decade one is struck by the generally high quality of the persons brought in to speak at both baccalaureate and graduation

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<sup>75</sup>Chapter iv of Clark's dissertation, "Population, Trends, School Enrollments, and Teacher Demand," discusses the times.



exercises. Clearly, Deputy sought out talented people, cooperating closely with Bemidji high school. Often the college and high school shared the costs, the speakers talking to both groups of graduates at separate exercises.

The state colleges adopted a new diploma and Bemidji used it at the June 3, 1921, graduation. Dr. George D. Strayer of Columbia University delivered the graduation address for twenty-three graduates, which included three men. (There were only five males enrolled in the college.)

A tradition of an outdoor pageant accompanied graduation exercises for the first few years. The pageants were held during the last week of the school year for the general public and were often performed in connection with physical education classes. By 1925, however, the pageants had given way to either plays or operas, performed by the seniors at the college and put on in the high school auditorium.

Considering the small number of graduates, the turnout of people for the college commencement exercises was considerable. For example, in 1922, with twenty-one graduates, the Pioneer estimated the crowd at the morning program to be over five hundred. That was the year the tent was first used. Dr. Lucius Bugbee, pastor of the Hennepin Avenue Methodist Church in Minneapolis, gave the commencement address in the morning at the college, and in the evening he addressed the fifty-three graduates of Bemidji high school.

It was in connection with the 1922 graduation that the Bemidji State Teachers College Alumnae Association was formed at a luncheon held June 2 at Sanford Hall. The minutes of this first meeting, recorded



by secretary Anne Brundin, a 1922 graduate from East Grand Forks, stated that the gathering occurred "at the invitation of the College extended by President Deputy." After the luncheon, Deputy acted as chairman and introduced the proposition of forming an association. Dr. Bugbee, commencement speaker that day, then spoke "on the great opportunities of such an association in connection with this new college." Several others, both faculty and alumnae, were called on to speak, "an all seemed of the opinion that as one-half of all the graduates were present then, it was advisable to take steps of organization at that time."<sup>76</sup>

Miss Telulah Robinson of the faculty outlined a plan of organization for an alumnae association that called for a president and a secretary-treasurer as officers and the appointment of a committee to write a constitution. A motion then carried that an alumnae association be formed, and Miss Laila Jerdee, also a 1922 graduate from Bemidji, was elected president with Miss Brundin as secretary-treasurer. Faculty members were declared to be honorary members of the association. A committee was appointed to write a constitution and the group adjourned after deciding to meet that fall in connection with the Northern Minnesota Education Association meeting to be held in Bemidji.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>76</sup>Getting one-half of all the graduates there at one time was not so difficult considering there were only fifty-one graduates in all, which included the twenty-one of the class of 1922 who had graduated that morning and who were all invited to the luncheon. Minutes of the Meetings of the Alumnae Association of Bemidji State Teachers College, 1922-1937 (on file in the Special Collections Room, Library, Bemidji State College), pp. 2-3.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid. The group did meet that October with eleven alumnae present; at that meeting they set the annual dues at \$0.25.



In its fourth regular year of operation, Bemidji College graduated 60 students--only one man--on June 7, 1923. This was more than the total number of the past three years and altogether made 111 graduates. The high school and college again cooperated on a speaker: Dr. Edward A. Steiner of Grinnell College spoke at the baccalaureate service for the college in the morning of June 2, and that night he spoke for high school commencement (the college's share in the expense for Steiner was \$165). Dr. Lotus D. Coffman, president of the University of Minnesota, delivered the commencement address for the college graduates; apparently he accepted no fees for his services.<sup>78</sup>

The Alumnae Association again met in connection with graduation at a Sanford Hall luncheon. At this meeting, the secretary-treasurer reported that twenty-seven persons had paid their dues, and after disbursements for the year of \$3.50, there was a balance in the treasury of \$5.95. The group elected new officers for the coming year, and they adjourned until the same time the next year.<sup>79</sup> In reading through the minutes for the entire decade, there seemed to be a pattern followed at each alumnae meeting: there was a luncheon, the president of the

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<sup>78</sup>Annual Catalog, State Teachers College, Bemidji, Minnesota, 1923, p. 60; Bemidji Weekly Pioneer, June 7, 1923, p. 1. As a note of interest, when Goffman left his position as head of the Model School at Eastern State Normal School, Charleston, Illinois, in 1909, to go to the College of Education at the University of Minnesota, it was Deputy who succeeded him at the Charleston job.

<sup>79</sup>Minutes of the Meetings of the Alumnae Association of Bemidji State Teachers College, 1922-1937, p. 9. Ervin McPherson, an alumnus, also paid his dues in the year 1923. How Mr. McPherson fit into the Alumnae Association before it became the Alumni Association in 1927 was not recorded. According to one graduate, the "invitation" of Deputy's for the graduating class to attend the alumnae meeting during graduation was akin to a ukase.



association welcomed the returnees, a faculty member introduced the members of the current graduating class that had been invited to attend, the secretary-treasurer told how much was spent and what was left in the treasury, Deputy made a few remarks, the alumnae debated about having a fall meeting at teachers' convention time, officers were elected, Old Lang Syne was sung, and the meeting adjourned until the next time when the whole performance was repeated. With minor exceptions, little was accomplished for the college at these meetings, although one may concede that the meetings offered group sociability and a chance to renew acquaintances.

When graduation came in 1924, the large tent--set up mainly for summer school purposes--was again the scene of the exercises, first to hear the baccalaureate address on June 1 by Dr. Thomas F. Kane, president of the University of North Dakota, and then the commencement talk on June 5 by Dr. Paysen Smith, Commissioner of Education for the state of Massachusetts. A. P. White, resident director, awarded diplomas to twenty-five students. By the end of that summer session, forty-seven diplomas had been awarded for the 1923-1924 school year.<sup>80</sup>

In 1925 Dr. Henry C. Swearingen of St. Paul gave the baccalaureate address, and Francis B. Blair, State Superintendent of Public Instruction in the state of Illinois, and a long-time friend of Deputy, gave the commencement address. Seventy-two received their diplomas that

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<sup>80</sup>This was White's last graduation as Bemidji College resident director, a position he had held since before the school opened. Taking his place on the Board on September 29, 1925, was his successor, R. H. Schumaker of the First National Bank, Bemidji. Schumaker completed one four-year term. (See Appendix I for picture.)



spring, a new high.<sup>81</sup>

In 1926 the college used the Methodist Church as the site for both its baccalaureate and commencement exercises. Dr. Roy Smith, pastor of Simpson Methodist Church, Minneapolis, delivered the baccalaureate talk; Dr. J. S. Young of the political science department of the University of Minnesota gave on succeeding days the commencement addresses to both the high school and the teachers college graduates. Forty-two college students received their diplomas that June (See Appendix VII for a copy of the brochure listing the many activities of commencement week, 1926).<sup>82</sup>

In 1927 the college and high school again shared both the baccalaureate and commencement speakers, Dr. T. W. Stout, pastor of the Methodist Church in Bemidji, and Commissioner of Education James M. McConnell. The Pioneer gave a lengthy synopsis of McConnell's talk which discussed the big changes in Minnesota public schools. McConnell stated that in 1910, there were only about 14,000 enrolled in Minnesota high schools with 11 per cent of them graduating; in 1926, he said,

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<sup>81</sup>Pioneer, June 4, 1925, p. 1. As to those commencement exercises in the tent, a faculty member who went through several of them shook her head at the thought of them. She told in an interview how the faculty would march up the aisle in the loose sand and the straw spread around, sit in their academic garbs and often swelter in the heat, and at the same time swat mosquitoes and pick off bugs. Moreover, she added, as they sat there trying to look serious, there was one male faculty wag who would rustle the straw behind the women and then loudly whisper "Mouse!"

<sup>82</sup>The brochure indicated that the seniors put on a production of the play "A Mid-Summer Night's Dream" in the high school auditorium. According to the Pioneer, the performance was excellent and it played before a full house. Today it is unlikely that the seniors would ever select such a play, and if they did, it is more unlikely yet that it would be performed before a full house.



there were 84,000 enrolled and 17 per cent graduated. He estimated that 15,000 would graduate from Minnesota high schools that year, 1927, or 1,000 more than the total high school enrollment in Minnesota in 1910. He saw this as having a distinct bearing on the state teachers colleges in the training of teachers for high schools as well as elementary schools.<sup>83</sup>

At the end of the 1928 school year, the college graduated 81 students. The first person to receive a bachelor's degree from Bemidji State Teachers College (the only one in the 1920's) did so in the spring quarter commencement exercises: Leonard H. Vogland, Milaca, Minnesota. President A. F. Hughes of Hamline University and Dr. M. E. Haggerty, Dean of the College of Education, University of Minnesota, gave the baccalaureate and commencement addresses.

At the 1928 spring alumni meeting, with about seventy present, the Alumni Association passed a significant resolution. It voted to offer an Alumni Scholarship "for the best all-round first-year student. The award to be . . . in the form of free tuition for the second year of the two-year course." It also voted that the "best all-round second-year student working for the two-year diploma be presented a specially engraved pin." To finance these awards, which were subsequently carried out--the recipients to be selected by a special committee of the faculty--a motion carried that the constitution be changed to read: "The membership fees shall be \$0.50 per year"<sup>84</sup>

<sup>83</sup>June 3, 1927, p. 1.

<sup>84</sup>Minutes of the Meetings of the Alumnae Association of Bemidji State Teachers College, p. 32. The wording of the secretary appears to be in error regarding a scholarship for "tuition" as tuition was free to those who signed the pledge to teach in Minnesota; hence it would seem that she meant a scholarship for the payment of "term fees," that is activity and book rental fees.



The final year of the decade of the 1920's found Bemidji College awarding diplomas to 79 graduates. Though hardly a high figure, nevertheless the number of graduates had risen considerably since that first 1920 graduation when 4 received diplomas. In the decade, the graduation figure averaged 54; the highest number for any one year was 82 in 1927. And along with the stability shown by increased numbers of graduates was the organization of a body of college alumni. From these two things Bemidji partisans could hold a cautious optimism.

#### Curriculum Changes

When students enrolled at Bemidji Normal and later at Bemidji State Teachers College, the school required ninety-six hours of credit (twenty-four term units) for graduation.<sup>85</sup> Such a diploma allowed the holder to teach in any type of elementary school in Minnesota. After two years of successful teaching, the diploma holder received a life certificate to teach from the state Department of Education. Two years of schooling beyond high school permitted a person to teach elementary school the rest of his life. Those high school graduates who completed one year (twelve term units) beyond high school received a first-grade certificate from the state to teach in rural schools or ungraded elementary schools. After the first two years of teaching, this certificate had to be renewed. The bases for renewal changed regularly, depending upon the need for teachers. Non-high school graduates who came to Bemidji took a five-year curriculum and were required to earn 240

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<sup>85</sup>A term unit consisted of the work in one subject for twelve weeks amounting to sixty class hours of forty-five minutes each, or forty-eight class hours of fifty-five minutes each.



quarter hours (60 term units) in order to graduate and receive a diploma, the same diploma that was awarded high school graduates who took the two-year course. Essentially, those students in the five-year curriculum took their high school work in three years and then did two years of college work. These were the options open to the students until 1922.<sup>86</sup>

In 1922, Bemidji added what the other state teachers colleges already had in operation. It was called the three-year course, that is three years of college beyond high school, and graduates from this course received a special diploma permitting its holders to teach physical education, drawing, and music in the junior high schools. Thirty-six term units were required for the special diploma. This program had little appeal in Bemidji. In 1926 there were two enrolled and it was discontinued after that year.<sup>87</sup>

The courses of the two-year curriculum give the best indication of the preparation of elementary teachers in the 1920's. In the first year there were no electives; the school required students to take

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<sup>86</sup>In reference to the needs of the area and the opening of the school in 1919, Deputy wrote: "It was thought that not a few young people in northern Minnesota were without high school facilities, and that among them were many who would ultimately become teachers." Consequently, a five-year curriculum was provided for such students. Minnesota, Twenty-Second Biennial Report, Department of Education, 1921-1922, p. 137. Whatever the changes in the curriculum, the presidents on every occasion referred to the education of teachers as the only function of the teachers colleges.

<sup>87</sup>Six general electives beyond those included in the two-year curriculum and the following six specified subjects were required for the three-year special diploma: history of education, psychology, advanced composition or literature, supervision or administration, educational sociology, teaching of special subject. It is difficult to see much special training in this curriculum.



grammar, composition, reading, geography, United States history and civics, music, psychology, sociology, introduction to teaching, arithmetic, and drawing. With the exception of United States history and civics, which was a two-unit course, all were for one unit. In the second year students took special methods of teaching, hygiene and sanitation, literature, psychology, observation of teaching, penmanship and spelling, teaching, and electives. Teaching in the campus elementary school counted three units; observation and penmanship and spelling counted one-half unit each, and all the rest were for one unit, with four units of electives allowed.<sup>88</sup>

The course of study for the five-year curriculum was similar to the courses required in high schools today; only in the last year of the program were students allowed two units of electives; all the rest were prescribed. (See Appendix IV for list of courses required.)

After approval (in April, 1921) by the legislature to allow the normal schools to become teachers colleges offering a four-year curriculum, the Board governing the colleges met on June 2, 1921, to act on the authorization. It passed a resolution: "Resolved, that it is the intention of the Board to establish and develop the four-year curriculum as soon as possible. That the presidents be directed to prepare a curriculum, based on a four-year course, and report the same for the consideration of the Board!"

The presidents went to work on a four-year curriculum. But not until March 26, 1925, did they submit what they called a "tentative

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<sup>88</sup>First Annual Catalog, State Teachers College, Bemidji, Minnesota, 1922, p. 20.



program" for elementary teachers. The Board adopted the program provisionally and instructed the presidents to work on a permanent four-year program.<sup>89</sup>

Meanwhile, little by little, the Board raised the entrance requirements. It began by requiring students to have at least one year of high school, then two, then three, and finally by the fall of 1927, only high school graduates were allowed to enroll during the regular school year. As more high school work was required, the Board phased out slowly the old five-year curriculum so that by the fall of 1927, the college catalog read that "sub-collegiate work will be discontinued beginning with September, 1927. Non-high school graduates are no longer admitted to the college except teachers in the summer session," when programs were arranged to allow those to finish who had already started in the five-year curriculum.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>89</sup>The newly adopted four-year program for elementary majors is described in the Minutes of the State Teachers College Board, May 5, 1925. The problems of the presidents and the on-going discussions on curriculum changes can be followed in part in the Minutes of the Meetings of the Presidents, Minnesota State Teachers Colleges, July 27, 1927, to March 29, 1943 (on file in the President's Office, Bemidji State College). These questions are also taken up by Dudley S. Brainard, History of St. Cloud State Teachers College (St. Cloud, Minnesota: St. Cloud State Teachers College, 1953), pp. 61-62.

<sup>90</sup>Annual Catalog, State Teachers College, Bemidji, Minnesota, 1927-1928, p. 10. Classes for the five-year students and the two-year students were supposed to be separate, but according to a faculty member who taught at the time, this was not always the case and it proved difficult to teach people in the same class with a wide variety of backgrounds. In the summer session of 1928 there were sixty-six students still in the five-year program; they kept coming well into the 1940's. The catalog suggests the influence of other cultures on the speech patterns when it stated that using good English would be a mandatory requirement for graduation: "The student should make every effort to eliminate personal speech defects, foreign accents, and obscure enunciation." p. 14.



For those who enrolled in the four-year program when it started in the fall of 1926, 192 quarter hours of credit representing four years of work beyond high school were required (the two-year diploma required 96 quarter hours). Students who had taken their two-year diploma could come back and start in the third year of the four-year curriculum. In addition to meeting general education requirements, such students were required to organize their work to include two majors, one of which had to be in the field of education, and two minors, one of which had to be in a field other than either of the majors. A major consisted of 24 quarter hours exclusive of required subjects in the first two years, and a minor consisted of 12 quarter hours also to be taken in the third and fourth year. Majors were offered in the following groups rather than in single subjects: (1) education and teaching, (2) science and mathematics, (3) social science and geography, (4) language and literature, (5) arts and expression. Courses were numbered in the 100's, 200's, 300's, and 400's, corresponding respectively to freshmen, sophomore, junior and senior courses. Students were required to take 48 quarter hours each in groups 100 and 200, and 96 quarter hours in groups 300 and 400.<sup>91</sup>

With the temporary four-year program launched for elementary majors, the questions connected with adopting a permanent four-year course of study presented not a few problems for the presidents and the Board. They discussed them at length at different Board meetings and at separate meetings of the presidents. Some of the questions that

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<sup>91</sup>Minutes of the State Teachers College Board, May 5, 1925. Understandably the three-year program in all the colleges was dropped when the four-year program began in the fall of 1926.



had to be worked out included: Should the new curriculum consist of two years added to the existing two-year curriculum or should a new unified course of study unrelated to the existing curriculum be adopted? Should the first two years of this new course include a general education curriculum, or as it was called then, a "junior college" curriculum which two of the colleges already had? How about certification of four-year graduates to teach in comparison with graduates with similar training in the liberal arts colleges? Should the new program include preparation for secondary school teachers as well as elementary?<sup>92</sup>

Not until March 19, 1928, at a meeting of the college presidents, did the presidents give their approval to the "Preliminary Report Concerning the Degree Curriculum" which had been worked out after many meetings and which they presented to the State College Board the next day. This lengthy report recommended a four-year course for both elementary and junior high school teachers built on a "unity basis" rather than consist of a patchwork of the existing two year program with an additional two years of work tacked on. (The presidents still wished, however, to allow two-year graduates to return to college and complete their degrees in two more years.) They recommended that the permanent four-year curriculum prepare teachers for both elementary and junior high schools; the program would include training for: (1) teachers or principals in elementary schools of either the six or

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<sup>92</sup>Despite the great amount of time and effort that went into the starting of the four-year curriculum, large numbers did not enroll in it at first. Bemidji had only two students enrolled in the program in the 1926-1927 regular year.



eight-year type, (2) teachers or principals in junior high schools organized as such, (3) teachers in high school teacher-training departments, (4) supervisors of elementary schools, and (5) teachers of physical education, general industrial training, music, and fine arts in the junior high schools. When these recommendations came to the Board, it took them under advisement for further study, and the knotty problem went back to the talking stage again for almost another year.<sup>93</sup>

Significantly, it may be noted, the presidents did not recommend that their colleges prepare teachers for senior high schools. It would appear that they still acquiesced in the negative attitudes maintained by the University and the liberal arts colleges. To recommend junior high training but not senior high presented obvious problems. For example, are the two clearly separate? Thus at the September 25, 1928, Board meeting Commissioner McConnell recommended extending the work of the four-year course to include the training of senior high school teachers as well as elementary and junior high teachers. On this proposal, the Board again procrastinated, the secretary's minutes reading: "The matter was discussed at length, with the conclusion that the question should be presented for formal action at the next meeting."

The next meeting occurred on December 4, 1928, but still the Board did not come entirely to grips with it. What it did was to pass a resolution which would add McConnell's recommendation to the earlier presidents' report received by the Board in March, 1928, but

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<sup>93</sup>Minutes of the State Teachers College Board, March 20, 1928.



not yet formally adopted or approved. Finally three Board meetings later, on May 10, 1929, the Board formally approved the new four-year curriculum as recommended by the presidents along with McConnell's addition. This curriculum, then referred to as "permanent," covered eight pages in the minutes of the meeting. In brief, it provided for 34 credits of required work for the first year, 30 the second year, 20 in the third, and 12 in the fourth year of subjects which were called "constants"; the constants would be roughly akin to general education courses in colleges today. For both elementary and secondary teachers-to-be, general fields to major in were specified as education, English, social science, science, mathematics and foreign language; special fields of majors were specified as music, fine arts, industrial arts, and physical education. One minor and one major were required. There was a definite provision as to the courses and number of hours constituting a major and minor in each of the general or special fields. These ranged from 20 hours in mathematics to 42 hours in music. Ninety-six credits of constants, plus the credits required in a major and a minor, plus credits for elective courses had to total 192 credits for graduation. Those who fulfilled these requirements would be awarded a Bachelor of Education degree.<sup>94</sup>

Perhaps the most important effect of this action by the Board can be seen in the gradual enrollment growths in the junior and senior years throughout the college system in the years following. The increase became attributed mainly to the number enrolled for the

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<sup>94</sup> Catalog, State Teachers College, Bemidji, Minnesota, 1929-1930, pp. 24-26. The title of the degree was changed to Bachelor of science in 1939.



preparation of teachers for secondary schools, especially men. To illustrate, in 1929-1930, 67 students graduated from the six teachers colleges with degrees; in the 1939-1940 school year, 448 graduated with degrees. In the secondary field, there were no graduates, of course in 1929-1930, but ten years later there were 331 graduates from the state colleges. (See Table 6, next page for indication of percentage change of students enrolled in freshmen through senior classes; see Table 7, page 185, indicating the number of two-year and four-year graduates.) It should be observed in Table 6 that in the fifteen-year period represented, there was a steady decrease in the number who finished two-year courses for the diploma, and on the other hand a constant increase in the number who finished four-year courses. By 1939-1940, the total number of four-year graduates was about three-fifths of the number who finished the two-year course. Though the goal of a college degree for every public school teacher was still in the future, an important trend in that direction began with the Board action of May, 1929, and the state teachers colleges played a significant role in sustaining the drive to upgrade public school staffs.

#### Summary

By 1929, by the end of the first ten years of Bemidji State Teachers College and the first decade of the presidency of Manfred W. Deputy, some important goals had been secured and milestones reached. Though still the smallest teachers college, the school had taken its place with its sister institutions and became comparable to them in most criteria. In a sense, the college became taken for granted, a position not necessarily undesirable; it had achieved the position comparable to



TABLE 6

PER CENT OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN EACH COLLEGE CLASS IN  
MINNESOTA TEACHERS COLLEGES AT FIVE-YEAR INTERVALS

Year	COLLEGE					
	Winona	Mankato	St. Cloud	Moorhead	Duluth	Bemidji
<u>Freshman Class</u>						
1919-1920	52.5	59.5	64.8	....	61.3	....
1924-1925	51.2	59.0	56.2	59.9	53.9	....
1929-1930	33.7	43.3	35.1	47.1	32.2	26.8
1934-1935	30.2	31.6	28.4	28.1	30.5	....
1939-1940	33.0	36.4	26.3	28.7	33.7	30.1
<u>Sophomore Class</u>						
1919-1920	35.0	38.4	30.9	....	36.1	....
1924-1925	43.0	38.6	38.0	36.4	32.1	....
1929-1930	41.4	41.2	49.9	36.7	34.8	43.3
1934-1935	33.6	36.8	39.0	42.6	31.1	....
1939-1940	29.9	33.4	38.5	37.0	27.3	36.6
<u>Junior Class</u>						
1919-1920	2.0	2.1	3.4	....	1.1	....
1924-1925	5.0	2.4	....	3.4	7.9	....
1929-1930	17.2	14.7	13.5	11.5	22.2	17.5
1934-1935	19.2	17.8	18.3	16.1	24.3	....
1939-1940	18.9	16.0	19.4	19.7	20.6	16.1
<u>Senior Class</u>						
1919-1920	....	....	....	....	....	....
1924-1925	....	....	....	....	....	....
1929-1930	3.3	.8	1.5	4.4	7.2	3.9
1934-1935	16.0	8.8	11.2	11.1	11.4	....
1939-1940	16.3	10.5	11.7	9.5	10.9	7.4

Source: Minnesota State Teachers Colleges in Transition, Bulletin of the State Teachers College, Moorhead, Minnesota, Series 42, No. 2, August, 1946, p. 27. In some of the columns, the four figures do not add up to 100; where this occurred, the remaining numbers refer to students designated only as "special students."



TABLE 7

NUMBER OF TWO-YEAR AND FOUR-YEAR GRADUATES OF MINNESOTA  
TEACHERS COLLEGES, 1925-26 TO 1939-40

Teachers College	Year			
	1925-26	1929-30	1934-35	1939-40
Winona:				
4-year secondary.....	.....	.....	28	56
4-year elementary.....	4	12	27	19
3-year.....	4	.....	...	...
2-year.....	262	205	88	68
Mankato:				
4-year secondary.....	.....	.....	36	56
4-year elementary.....	.....	3	13	30
3-year.....	1	.....	...	...
2-year.....	299	214	136	124
St. Cloud:				
4-year secondary.....	.....	.....	71	100
4-year elementary.....	.....	13	17	33
3-year.....	4	.....	...	...
2-year.....	467	397	201	209
Moorhead:				
4-year secondary.....	.....	.....	42	40
4-year elementary.....	1	19	11	21
3-year.....	1	.....	...	...
2-year.....	221	201	141	136
Duluth:				
4-year secondary.....	.....	.....	26	48
4-year elementary.....	.....	12	8	9
3-year.....	9	.....	...	...
2-year.....	139	127	89	82
Bemidji:				
4-year secondary.....	.....	.....	11	31
4-year elementary.....	.....	8	4	5
3-year.....	1	.....	...	...
2-year.....	73	75	65	63
Total:				
4-year secondary.....	.....	.....	214	331
4-year elementary.....	5	67	80	117
3-year.....	20	.....	...	...
2-year.....	1,461	1,219	720	682

Source: Paul Heaton, Minnesota State Teachers College in Transition, Bulletin of the State Teachers College, Moorhead, Minnesota, Series 42, No. 2, August, 1946, p. 28.



the other state colleges in the minds of the public and the purse of the legislature. It had developed from a normal school of secondary grade to an institution of college grade; as the high school grades were slowly deleted, expansion into the third and fourth years of college work were allowed, even though few students at first went beyond two years. This curriculum development culminated in the decision to organize a completely new four-year course instead of merely adding two more years to the existing two-year program. A decisive measure was the adoption of the program for the preparation of secondary teachers as well as elementary, a decision that significantly aided its operation in the difficult decade that followed.

At the end of the first ten years, Bemidji College became accepted as a member of the American Association of Teachers Colleges. While only 50 per cent of the first 1919-1920 faculty held degrees of any kind, 80 per cent of the 1929-1930 had this qualification on a staff of thirty members. From that first Webster dictionary in 1919, and the first book accessioned in 1921, the library by 1929 counted 5,000 volumes. The size of the student body had settled down to about 200 students in the regular school year while the one six-week summer session approached an average of 400 in that beginning ten-year period of operation.

Under the capable leadership of President Deputy, a personal leadership that found him involved closely with both students and staff, the school had gotten started, and it kept going; its future appeared promising. The depression years following, however, contained this promise, and the 1930's too became a period of trying to keep going.



## CHAPTER V

### INTO THE DEPRESSION: 1929-1937

In many ways, for Bemidji State Teachers College, the depression years were as difficult as those beginning years. As it was for many individuals in the depression, so was it for the institution: a difficult period of trying to retain what it had, to simply hang on, as it were, making the best of what was available and hoping for better days ahead.

#### The Shrinking Finances

The dismal economic decline following the stock market crash of 1929 rendered more serious the depression in Minnesota which had been in existence in the rural areas since 1920. For example, price of farm products sank to new lows. Beginning with 1930, the price index for farm products was at 88 (based on 1926 equals 100), and in the succeeding years it went to 64, 48, 51, 65, 78, before reaching even 80 again in 1936. Moreover, as the country sank into the depression, a dry period unprecedented in the history of Minnesota came in the years 1933, 1934, and 1935. Land values decreased and bank failures increased, particularly in the smaller rural communities.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>U. S., Department of Commerce, Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to the Present (Washington, D. D.: Government Printing Office, 1960), p. 116.



Consequently, and quite obviously, a temporary halt came for the state teachers colleges to the generally steady progress which had characterized much of the previous decade. A temporary halt came also for the graduates seeking employment. In the 1920's all graduates, both of the two-year and the four-year programs, readily obtained positions in city and village school systems as well as in schools in rural areas. But in the early years of the depression especially, the comment made by President Deputy in a letter to a faculty member on leave was quite typical: "Not many graduates are yet placed. There are absolutely but few vacancies."<sup>2</sup>

By 1932 the consequences of the depression were visible on every hand, and the State Teachers College Board reacted to the times with the resolution:

Resolved, that this Board recognize the widespread economic depression throughout the state and nation, the necessity for limiting except in cases of emergency . . . any increases in salaries or expenditures for other activities until such time as present economic conditions shall have passed.<sup>3</sup>

In March 1933, the legislature cut salaries of all state employees receiving over \$1,200 a year by 20 per cent, and at the same time required that the College Board establish a tuition charge for all students. The Board fixed the tuition charge at \$10.00 a term with an additional \$5.00 for non-resident students. Since tuition was

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<sup>2</sup>Letter from Deputy to Miss Talulah Robinson, April 20, 1932, in the Manfred W. Deputy papers in the Special Collections Room, A. C. Clark Library, Bemidji State College. All letters hereafter cited are in his collection.

<sup>3</sup>Minutes of the State Teachers College Board, April 25, 1932. Representing Bemidji College on the Board as resident director from 1931 to 1939 was Dr. D. H. Garlock, a Bemidji physician. (See Appendix I for picture.)



charged, the legislature cancelled the pledge to teach for two years in Minnesota. When tuition charges began in 1933, reportedly the wry comment of the students was: "We get a raise and the faculty gets a cut."

The position taken by the legislature to allow Bemidji State Teachers College to hang on and little more can be seen in Table 8 (next page) which lists the total legislative appropriations for Bemidji in the years 1930 to 1937; there was little variation in the appropriations in this seven-year period, regardless of the changing enrollments. In fairness, however, and in comparison with Minnesota's neighbors--North Dakota for example--the maintenance of the same level of appropriations in these troubled times was a remarkable achievement of the legislature.

Table 9 (page 191) shows the money allotted to the state colleges for building purposes in the 1930 to 1937 period; as indicated previously, Bemidji fared very poorly in receiving building appropriations.

#### Enrollments

The depression did not affect adversely college enrollments in the first years of the decade. The regular school years ending in 1929 and 1930 showed the normal 200 enrolled at Bemidji. During the following two years, with the country sinking to the bottom of the depression, the enrollment in the state colleges often increased, as can be seen in Table 10.

It appeared that during the first few years of the depression, if college age persons could not find an available job, they went to



TABLE 8

FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF THE BEMIDJI STATE TEACHERS COLLEGE  
(By the Purchasing Agent)

MAINTENANCE FUND - APPROPRIATIONS AND RECEIPTS								
(ending June 30 of year listed)								
	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937
Balance	\$ 144.53	\$ 1,081.03	\$ 711.58	\$ 1,563.88	\$ 2,661.75	\$ 1,543.90	\$ 778.01	\$.....
Annual Appropriation	92,165.00	92,165.00	97,165.00	97,165.00	87,404.00	87,404.00	98,700.00	98,700.00
Swamp Land Fund	2,107.74	2,353.49	2,424.87	2,386.37	2,103.88	2,715.17	2,633.09	3,227.10
Refunds	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Misc. Receipts:								
Registration Fees	5,108.65	3,535.50	5,524.50	5,971.50	865.00	8,774.10	11,787.61	8,886.33
Tuition	160.00	50.00	10.00	50.00	8,140.15	.....	.....	.....
Textbooks sold	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Certificate Fees	65.50	22.00	4.00	.....	.....	.....	2.00	1.00
Indorsement Fees	13.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	.....	1.00	.....	.....
Merchandise sold	862.04	644.53	749.34	725.20	520.93	539.90	594.19	465.64
Miscellaneous	345.13	538.46	784.55	517.87	680.42	518.46	601.27	440.80
Fuel	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Library Fines	.....	.....	.....	.....	32.00	.....	.....	.....
Light for Dorms	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>100,894.04</b>	<b>100,391.01</b>	<b>107,375.84</b>	<b>108,380.82</b>	<b>102,408.13</b>	<b>101,496.53</b>	<b>115,096.17</b>	<b>111,720.87</b>

<sup>a</sup>Information taken from the Minutes of the Meetings of the Minnesota State Teachers College Board.



TABLE 9

## STATE APPROPRIATIONS FOR BUILDINGS AND LAND

	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937
Bemidji	\$							\$220,000
Duluth	\$ 21,400							
Mankato	\$ 5,605	\$ 21,270						\$240,000
Moorhead		\$740,000		\$29,400				
St. Cloud	\$225,000		\$10,000	\$780	\$2,211			
Winona								

Source: Table from President's Office Files, Bemidji State College

TABLE 10

## ENROLLMENTS OF THE SIX STATE COLLEGES

(Based on the maximum enrollment of the three quarters)

	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937
Bemidji	210	293	335	287	233	234	213	193
Duluth	445	521	607	446	456	454	449	448
Mankato	522	607	679	577	538	546	575	566
Moorhead	541	662	688	527	468	429	497	514
St. Cloud	883	1001	1101	855	703	728	727	724
Winona	443	506	485	448	388	391	401	392

Source: Table from President's Office Files, Bemidji State College.

college. It seems evident that numerous young people came to college during these years who would have obtained work in other vocations had conditions permitted. However, these somewhat strange enrollment increases did not continue, as the above table indicates. Difficulty in



obtaining a teaching position combined with the fact that many parents could no longer afford the costs of college produced a slump in enrollments after 1932. For those who did hold teaching jobs, Table 11 (next page) gives a general indication of where these teachers were while Table 12 (page 194) indicates their academic training.

The depression period also showed a steady increase in the proportion of students who sought and received a four-year degree. The fall term of 1930 found only 18 of 210 Bemidji College students working for a degree; the fall term of 1937 found 42 out of 193 students seeking a degree. Though the numbers were not large, the trend in the growing number of graduates in the four-year program up to 1943 might be seen in Table 13 (page 195).

A larger proportion of men enrolled also characterized the decade of the 1930's at Bemidji College. Again using the same years, 1930 and 1937, the fall enrollment of 1930 had 53 men out of 210, the highest ratio of men to date; in the fall of 1937, 83 out of 193 were men, or 43 per cent of the student body. At no time in the short history of the school did the percentage of men get so large on the Bemidji campus as in the late 1930's, and this increase was directly connected with the growth of the four-year curriculum in the preparation of men for secondary school teaching positions.

Summer school enrollments did not change much in the period of the depression; in comparing the figures with those summer sessions in the previous decade, however, the average was 275 or nearly 100 less than in the 1920's. Indeed, for the first time the regular year's enrollment exceeded the summer session enrollment in 1932 and



TABLE 11

PERCENTAGE OF FOUR-YEAR GRADUATES OF MINNESOTA TEACHERS COLLEGES  
FROM 1931 to 1935 IN VARIOUS TYPES OF COMMUNITIES AT  
THE END OF THE SPECIFIED YEARS AFTER GRADUATION

Type of Community	Years After Graduation				
	1	2	3	4	5
	Per Cent	Per Cent	Per Cent	Per Cent	Per Cent
Ungraded rural	10.7	7.7	7.1	7.6	7.7
Graded rural	3.0	2.6	2.1	1.9	3.1
Towns under 1,000	29.7	29.2	27.8	24.4	9.2
Towns under 1,000-2,500	22.3	24.3	21.7	19.1	20.0
Cities 2,500-5,000	12.2	15.1	16.1	17.1	16.9
Cities 5,000-25,000	13.4	10.5	13.5	19.1	23.1
Cities 25,000 and over	8.5	10.5	11.6	12.4	20.0

Source: Paul Heaton, Minnesota State Teachers Colleges in Transition, Bulletin of the State Teachers College, Moorhead, Minnesota, Series 42, No. 2, August, 1946, p. 50.



TABLE 12

## INSTITUTIONS IN WHICH MINNESOTA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS RECEIVED THEIR TRAINING

Class of School	Per Cent of Teachers					
	Minnesota Teachers Colleges	University of Minnesota	Private Schools or Colleges	High school Teacher Training Departments	High School Only	Out Of State and All Others
All ungraded elementary						
1931-32 <sup>a</sup>	38.3	.8	....	52.9	2.6	5.4
1938-39 <sup>b</sup>	40.71	.21	.30	52.27	....	6.51
Graded Elementary exclusive of three cities - 1931-32 <sup>a</sup>	80.7	1.3	4.3	....	1.4	12.3
Minneapolis, St. Paul, Duluth	48.0	5.2	4.4	....	2.5	39.9
All graded elementary						
1931-32 <sup>a</sup>	69.1	2.7	4.3	....	1.7	22.2
1938-39 <sup>b</sup>	62.93	8.54	6.63	....	....	21.9
Total for Minnesota						
1931-32 <sup>a</sup>	51.9	1.6	1.9	29.5	2.3	12.8
1938-39 <sup>b</sup>	50.68	3.95	3.04	28.82	....	13.41

<sup>a</sup>"A Study of Minnesota Teachers Employed in Elementary Schools, 1931-32," p. 15. State of Minnesota Department of Education Statistical Division, St. Paul, Minnesota, August, 1932 (mimeographed).

<sup>b</sup>"A Study of Teacher Turnover, Supply, Training and Assignment in Minnesota Public Elementary and Secondary Schools," p. 4. State of Minnesota Department of Education Statistical Division, St. Paul, Minnesota, December, 1939 (mimeographed).

Source: Paul Heaton, Minnesota State Teachers Colleges in Transition, Bulletin of the State Teachers College, Moorhead, Minnesota, Series 42, No. 2, August 1946, p. 47.



TABLE 13

## FOUR-YEAR GRADUATES OF BEMIDJI STATE TEACHERS COLLEGE

Year	Bemidji				
	Elementary Program		Secondary Program		Total
	Number of Men	Number of Women	Number of Men	Number of Women	
1934	..	2	13	9	24
1935	..	4	10	1	15
1936	..	2	20	6	28
1937	..	5	8	8	21
1938	..	5	15	10	30
1939	1	7	10	7	25
1940	..	5	22	9	36
1941	3	11	17	7	38
1942	..	9	9	11	29
1943	..	9	13	12	34
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>280</b>

Source: Table from President's Office Files, Bemidji State College.



thereafter kept pace with or exceeded the summer enrollments throughout the 1930's. The attendance figures for the summers were as follows:

	First Session	Second Session <sup>4</sup>
1930	269	
1931	301	
1932	318	
1933	262	
1934	200	
1935	253	
1936	241	
1937	255	49

As in earlier years, the percentage of men enrolled in the summer schools during the depression years was less than during the regular school years. During this period it varied from 11 per cent in 1930 to 30 per cent in 1937.<sup>5</sup>

Never had the student body contained so many persons who faced financial difficulties as in the 1930's. Student loan funds had first begun with a \$100 donation from the Bemidji Women's Study Club given on September 13, 1921. In the depression years, these funds were used to a much greater extent, but the amount of money available to loan was never enough to meet the demand. (Even with regular contributions,

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<sup>4</sup>In Deputy's last year as president, 1937, the college started a second session of summer school, a practice continued to date. Although the second sessions always produced smaller enrollments than the first sessions, the results were nevertheless important as it enabled students to press more rapidly towards graduation and gave summer employment to more faculty.

<sup>5</sup>Information on summer enrollment figures taken from the Registrar's Journal (unpublished record of student enrollments at Bemidji State Teachers College from 1922-1939), on file at the Registrar's office, Bemidji State College.



including donations from the student activity budget, the figure never got up to \$1000 in the 1920's.) At the start of the fall quarter in 1930, there was \$121.52 at the bank. No loan exceeded \$100 to any individual, and as repayment came trickling in, the money was loaned out just as fast as it came in. Though thousands of dollars were loaned out in small amounts in a revolving account, the balance on hand never got above the high of \$748.56 on March 25, 1935. From the beginning of the loan fund in 1921 until 1935, \$11,715 had been loaned out to students, and \$10,200.84 had been repaid.<sup>6</sup> Both the amounts of the gifts and the donors to the loan fund are shown on the next page, Table 14. Bemidji College had no big benefactor who came along either before or after the depression to contribute some large endowment for student financial aid. The only thing coming remotely close to significant outside help was aid to the college from the National Youth Administration which came through with approximately \$3,000 per year from 1933 to 1938.<sup>7</sup> The available correspondence of Deputy and interviews with faculty members who were with him revealed Deputy's deep distress at the financial plight of students who could neither come to college or stay in college because of lack of finances. It was during these years, said one person, that Deputy regularly dug into his own pocket to help students out and that he neither wanted nor expected

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<sup>6</sup>Information on Student Loan Fund and repayments taken from General Accounting Record, on file in Special Collections Room, Library, Bemidji State College.

<sup>7</sup>Report to the Interim Committee on Administration (mimeographed), Bemidji State Teachers College, 1933-1943, Bemidji, Minnesota, January 1944, p. 58. The N. Y. A. appropriations to Bemidji, as cited in this report, were: 1933-1934, \$1,964; 1934-1935, \$4,590; 1935-1936, \$3,780; 1936-1937, \$4,803; 1937-1938, \$2,835.



TABLE 14

## BEMIDJI STATE TEACHERS COLLEGE STUDENT LOAN FUND

Gifts to Fund -

Women's Study Club of Bemidji	9/13/21	100.00	
	12/10/21	100.00	
	5/1/22	75.00	
	6/27/22	40.00	
	2/9/23	125.00	
	6/20/24	91.00	
	3/17/36	<u>50.00</u>	581.00
D. A. R. of Bemidji	6/6/24	18.25	
	6/30/24	16.50	
	11/11/24	6.00	
	2/11/25	34.10	
	5/1/26	36.75	
	3/25/27	25.00	
	5/1/26	36.75	
	3/25/27	25.00	
	3/9/28	10.00	
	1/27/30	10.00	
	2/2/31	10.00	
	11/3/31	25.00	
	2/21/33	<u>20.00</u>	211.60
Student Activity Fund	10/22/23	300.00	
	6/20/24	300.00	
	9/9/24	<u>243.09</u>	843.09
American Association of University Women - Bemidji Chapter	3/21/31	10.00	
	6/10/32	<u>10.00</u>	20.00
Miscellaneous or Single Gifts			
Senior class of '24		15.00	
Proceeds of faculty party	6/14/24	5.00	
Musical Arts Club, Bemidji	4/2/26	5.93	
Roy Luttrell - in appreciation of loan	10/7/27	5.00	
President Deputy	7/1/37	9.21	
President Deputy	1/11/34	1.50	
Mary Bangs	4/1/37	<u>1.00</u>	42.64
Interest collected to 8/1/37			<u>654.35</u>
	Total		2,352.68
Notes written off			<u>-236.00</u>
	Balance of Principal		<u>2,116.68</u>

Source: Table from President's Office Files, Bemidji State College.



repayment.

Numerically, the Bemidji faculty remained rather stable both in numbers and in turnover during the depression years. Such was the case in the rest of the state colleges, too, as Table 15 on the next page shows and, below this, Table 16 reveals the number of students per teacher in this same period.

In academic qualifications, the Bemidji faculty showed improvement in the 1930's. In 1930, 80 per cent of a faculty of 30 held degrees; 14 of these had master's degrees but there were no doctorates. When Deputy began his last year in the fall of 1937, on his staff were 5 with doctorates and 24 with master's degrees. The group without any degree on the faculty had disappeared, while those holding only bachelor's degrees fell to 5 and 2 of them were school nurses who taught part-time classes in hygiene. Table 17 on pages 201 and 202 indicates the rise in the educational level of all the faculties of the state colleges from 1920 to 1945. In 1929, Bemidji's library counted 5,000 volumes; in 1937, there were 15,000 volumes and 125 periodicals, all of which, said the catalog that year, were "carefully selected."

#### Student Background and Student Life

Bemidji and the other teachers colleges in Minnesota provided higher education for the girls and boys from the small towns and farms. Questionnaires filled out by students in the teachers colleges of the state in 1935 indicated that 35.7 per cent came from farms and 27.1 per cent of the students remaining came from communities with a



TABLE 15

## NUMBER OF TEACHERS ON STAFFS

	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937
Bemidji	25	25	27	29	29	29	30	30½
Duluth	33	31	32	36	39	43	43	41
Mankato	45	46	44	47	48	53	52½	53
Moorhead	39	39	43	44	44	45	46	46
St. Cloud	59	60	61	63	61	59	57	60
Winona	36	39¼	40½	40½	40¼	41	39	42½

TABLE 16

## STUDENTS PER TEACHER

	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937
Bemidji	8.40	11.27	13.15	9.90	8.03	8.07	7.10	6.12
Duluth	13.48	16.81	18.97	12.39	11.69	10.56	10.44	10.93
Mankato	12.14	13.80	16.17	12.82	11.69	10.50	11.42	11.09
Moorhead	13.87	16.97	16.00	11.95	10.64	9.53	10.80	11.17
St. Cloud	14.97	16.68	18.05	13.57	11.52	12.36	12.75	12.07
Winona	12.31	12.89	11.98	11.06	9.64	9.54	10.09	9.22

Source: Information for both tables taken from the files of the Presidents office, Bemidji State College.



TABLE 17

## RISE IN EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF FACULTIES OF MINNESOTA TEACHERS COLLEGES, 1920-1945

Year	Winona	Mankato	St. Cloud	Moorhead	Duluth	Bemidji	Total	Per Cent
Number Holding Doctor's Degree								
1920	...	...	...	3 <sup>a</sup>	2	...	5	2.8
1925	...	...	...	...	2	...	2	1.0
1930	...	...	2	2	3	...	8	3.2
1935	5	4	4	3	9	2	27	9.8
1940	8	6	7	8	10	9	48	17.6
1945	9	12	11	12	14	9	67	21.1
Number with Master's Degree Plus Additional Graduate Work								
1920	6 <sup>a</sup>	4	1	5 <sup>a</sup>	1	5 <sup>a</sup>	22	12.6
1925	4	5	5	3	4	7	28	13.3
1930	6	8	14	5	5 <sub>b</sub>	7	43	17.4
1935	14	15	22	9	3 <sub>b</sub>	9 <sub>b</sub>	72	26.2
1940	22	17	35	17	1 <sub>b</sub>	1 <sub>b</sub>	93	34.2
1945	24	25	38	12	1 <sub>b</sub>	12	112	35.2
Number Holding Master's Degree Only								
1920	5 <sup>a</sup>	9	5	4 <sup>a</sup>	2	1 <sup>a</sup>	26	14.8
1925	11	14	7	9	4	5	50	23.8
1930	11	15	10	10	5	10	61	24.7
1935	7	18	20	11	21	10	87	31.6
1940	8	10	17	15	24	23	97	35.7
1945	9	10	19	18	29	12	97	30.5



TABLE 17 -- Continued

Year	Winona	Mankato	St. Cloud	Moorhead	Duluth	Bemidji	Total	Per Cent
Number with Bachelor's Degree Plus Some Graduate Work								
1920	7 <sup>a</sup>	3	9	4 <sup>a</sup>	6	3 <sup>a</sup>	32	18.3
1925	3	4	13	5	5	4	34	16.2
1930	6	8	15	11	7 <sub>b</sub>	0	47	19.1
1935	13	7	7	14	4 <sub>b</sub>	6 <sub>b</sub>	61	22.2
1940	4	1	6	5	4 <sub>b</sub>	2 <sub>b</sub>	18	6.6
1945	7	3	2	4	b	7	23	7.2
Number Holding Bachelor's Degree Only								
1920	7 <sup>a</sup>	5	6	12 <sup>a</sup>	3	3 <sup>a</sup>	36	20.6
1925	4	6	11	11	...	...	32	15.2
1930	11	7	10	5	3	7	43	17.4
1935	3	2	3	3	3	1	15	5.5
1940	1	...	2	2	3	4	12	4.4
1945	1	1	...	1	4	1	8	2.5
Number Holding No Degree								
1920	12 <sup>a</sup>	13	14	6 <sup>a</sup>	5	4 <sup>a</sup>	54	30.9
1925	17	11	13	9	7	7	64	30.5
1930	5	9	12	7	8	4	45	18.2
1935	1	5	4	...	1	2	13	4.7
1940	2	1	...	...	1	...	4	1.5
1945	4	4	1	1	1	...	11	3.5

<sup>a</sup>1922 list; 1920 not available. Table from Paul Heaton, Minnesota State Teachers Colleges, p. 53.



population of less than 2,500.<sup>8</sup> A later study of "What Happens to High School Graduates?" showed that in 1938, high school graduates who were children of farmers made up 39 per cent of the new freshmen in the teachers colleges, 18 per cent of the freshmen in the liberal arts colleges, and 13 per cent of the freshmen in the junior colleges. According to this same study, 25 per cent of the 1938 highschool graduates from schools outside Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Duluth who continued their schooling went to teachers colleges; 24 per cent to liberal arts colleges; and only 17 per cent went to the University.<sup>9</sup>

Tables 18, 19, and 20 on the next three pages confirm the interpretations in the above paragraph and give added information on the backgrounds of the students who came to the teachers colleges. Even though these tables were based on questionnaires tabulated in 1946, the information would be fully as applicable for the 1930's.

Both the cultural backgrounds and the general nature of the make-up of the student body at Bemidji during the depression years can further be seen by reading the student newspapers of the period. Students began to publish a weekly called the Northern Student, on November 20, 1929. In the first years after this date, the paper was usually six pages in length, and nearly always was mimeographed on 8½ by 14-inch paper. In reading the contents, one is struck by the "one-big-happy-family" atmosphere that seemed to have permeated the student

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<sup>8</sup>Archie C. Clark, "The Status, Policies, and Objectives of Minnesota Teachers Colleges (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Southern California, 1941), p. 298.

<sup>9</sup>Paul Heaton, Minnesota State Teachers Colleges in Transition, Bulletin of the State Teachers College, Moorhead, Minnesota, Series 42, Number 2, August, 1946, p. 7. Of the remaining 44 per cent, some went into nurses training, music schools, trades schools, and the like.



TABLE 18  
 OCCUPATION OF PARENTS OF STUDENTS IN EACH MINNESOTA  
 STATE TEACHERS COLLEGE  
 SPRING, 1946

OCCUPATIONAL GROUP	Per Cent of Parents					
	Winona	Mankato	St.Cloud	Moorhead	Duluth	Bemidji
Professional and semi-professional	8.6	3.7	6.0	5.1	11.6	10.3
Proprietors, executives, managers & officials	18.0	15.7	13.8	13.8	9.9	19.6
Clericals, sales	8.1	13.2	10.0	8.8	15.0	5.2
Crafts, skilled workers	15.8	10.8	14.4	19.5	29.6	17.0
Semi-skilled, unskilled	16.2	10.3	14.7	17.4	16.3	14.4
Farmers	25.2	43.5	36.7	33.5	11.2	27.3
Armed Forces	.4	....	....	....	.4	.5
Retired	3.2	1.6	2.0	.7	.4	3.6
Not indicated	4.5	1.2	2.4	2.2	5.6	2.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Table from Paul Heaton, Minnesota State Teachers  
Colleges in Transition, p. 10



TABLE 19

FIRST REASON FOR CHOICE OF COLLEGE GIVEN BY STUDENTS  
IN EACH TEACHERS COLLEGE

Reason for Choice of College	Number of Students					
	Winona	Mankato	St.Cloud	Moorhead	Duluth	Bemidji
Near Home	90	114	91	108	124	93
Low Cost	45	43	47	36	32	29
Opportunity for Individual development	30	29	61	53	22	26
High Standards	18	13	89	28	27	7
Pre-professional credit	9	33	12	17	23	33
Job opportunities while in college	5	2	3	2	...	...
Job opportunities for graduates	3	2	15	8	1	...
Friends attending	9	2	10	10	1	2
Faculty acquaintances	5	...	5	2	1	2
Parents attended	3	2	4	4	...	1
Other reasons	5	1	3	7	2	1
Total	222	241	340	275	233	194

Source: Table from Paul Heaton, Minnesota State Teachers Colleges in Transition, p. 13.



TABLE 20

SIZE OF HIGH SCHOOL CLASS FROM WHICH STUDENTS OF EACH  
STATE TEACHERS COLLEGE WERE GRADUATED

Size of Class	Number of Students					
	Winona	Mankato	St.Cloud	Moorhead	Duluth	Bemidji
1 - 9	1	6	3	9	1	6
10 - 19	18	35	26	43	6	32
20 - 29	22	19	42	44	15	20
30 - 39	35	31	29	30	6	11
40 - 49	18	19	28	23	5	11
50 - 59	10	19	23	6	8	13
60 - 69	6	10	24	12	8	7
70 - 79	1	12	16	6	5	3
80 - 89	2	2	9	8	10	2
90 - 99	3	2	12	2	6	...
100 - 109	2	7	9	10	1	5
110 - 119	2	3	4	1	3	2
120 - 129	5	2	3	13	1	1
130 - 139	2	...	3	6	1	1
140 - 149	4	2	2	1	1	...
150 - 159	6	6	7	3	1	24
160 - 169	4	5	6	...	3	2
170 - 179	1	13	1	5	...	1
180 - 189	1	5	3	2	...	1
190 - 199	5	3	1	...	...	...
Over 200	45	23	55	19	115	41
No report	12	17	34	32	37	11
	222	241	340	275	233	194
Midpoint in class size	60	50	60	36	300	56

Source: Table from Paul Heaton, Minnesota State Teachers  
Colleges in Transition, p. 14.



body and which was reflected in the school paper. With the apparent paternalism that was a part of President Deputy and the smallness of the student body, no doubt this somewhat casual type of family togetherness was reasonably easy to achieve.<sup>10</sup>

Several other distinctive features about the school stood out in the pages of the student newspaper. First of all were President Deputy's twice-a-week assembly programs, each lasting nearly one hour, which all the students were required to attend. Anyone reading about these many assembly gatherings can easily conjure up the image of an English headmaster calling his charges before him regularly to bestow upon them the mantle of civilization which would uplift them, whether or not they wanted to be uplifted, to cultural civility. This appeared to be the case with Deputy who called his brood together twice weekly to be edified or entertained, chastised or cultivated. In most of the sessions, Deputy or one of the other faculty members headed the programs. There were slides shown of someone's trip to China, a talk on character education, a symposium on proper dress, a debate on political or educational problems; and often Deputy would simply read to the assembled group, sometimes from the Bible, sometimes from Charles Dickens or William James, and when he felt in a lighter mood, he would

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<sup>10</sup>Some of the general tenor of the school might be seen in a letter from Deputy to H. T. Hunter, president of Western Carolina Teachers College, on December 4, 1931: "We opened this Teachers College twelve years ago and were much interested in establishing the proper social standards in laying the foundations of the College. Our school functions are limited to college students and faculty members except on special occasions. . . . At the time we opened the College we concluded that unless we provided for reasonable opportunity at the College under our own supervision . . . we might have considerable trouble with the out of school conditions, particularly with the downtown unchaperoned type of dances."



read from the writings of Mark Twain. Later in the decade students and student organizations took a larger role in putting on assemblies, and they offered songs, acts, skits, readings, and the like. And of course Deputy brought in many out-of-town visitors to speak at the assembly gatherings. When the lecturer or entertainer was judged to be of sufficient quality or reputation, the performance would be moved from the smaller assembly room in the main building of the college to the high school auditorium, a distance of some four blocks from the college, and the public would be invited.<sup>11</sup>

One other feature apparent in student life at Bemidji College in the 1930's, as revealed in the student newspapers, was the do-it-yourself entertainment. The various clubs and organizations seemed most active in putting on some type of week-night entertainment for the rest of the student body. One might surmise that this was their substitute for today's television viewing.

The student newspapers also, of course, contained the usual news stories of who was elected to such and such position, who won or lost the athletic contests and why; editorials then were still asking the professors to stop lecturing when the bell rang ending the class period; emotion-charged editorials perennially exhorted students to show more school spirit; there were the usual quips about who was running around with whom, about some faux pas made in class, about alumni news, and new books, and how great it was to be going to a small

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<sup>11</sup>Information from student newspapers and interviews with former faculty members who taught under Deputy. Students had assigned seats at assembly programs and the president's secretary took role. Assembly programs concluded with all saying the Lord's Prayer (Methodist version) in unison.



college. All of these things were reported with an air of folksy casualness and an absence of journalistic style. Though the reader could easily look back on these old student newspapers with a feeling of quaintness and a smile of condescension, the social historian would likely judge them to be an illuminating find of primary source material on the lives of a small group of rural young people tucked away in the woods of northern Minnesota during a grave national period of stress and strain. Though the country might have been in grave financial peril, however, the strain and worry were not to be seen in the pages of the student newspaper. Showing the optimism of youth, things like depressions too would pass. After all they had a faculty whom they admired and trusted, and a president who was highly revered, one who watched over and took a personal interest in each student. The depression, too, would be weathered.<sup>12</sup>

The record is clear that during the depression there was little significant physical growth or change. The school added no buildings until 1938, and the numbers of faculty, students, and appropriations to run the school remained relatively the same. And though the college newspaper records the weekly comings and goings of the school personnel, this source too had a repetitive sameness. A better picture of the

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<sup>12</sup>According to John Schuiling, a former student at Bemidji in the late thirties, Deputy's failure to stamp out smoking was revealed each spring when the snow melted and cigaret butts were found on the ground outside the back door of the main building. The revealing evidence led to a stern lecture at the next assembly program. Deputy's paternalism extended to the janitorial staff too; in a letter from him to Mr. and Mrs. Will Clark, April 21, 1932, he wrote that he would rehire Clark "only on condition that your domestic affairs have become reconciled so that you will be maintaining your home and living agreeably. . . ." Clark was later rehired.



college in this depression period is revealed in the correspondence that came in and out of the president's office; these letters shed a great deal of light on both the school, the times, and on Deputy as the president of a small teachers college struggling to keep going during the worst of the depression years.

#### The Problems of President Deputy

In Deputy's report to the State College Board on September 12, 1931, he wrote with some alarm about the 33 per cent increase in enrollment (to 273) over the previous fall; the number was considerably higher than there were facilities to accommodate them. "Because of the increase we are pressed for room, particularly in library accommodations and in the assembly room which seats only 217 students." (The chairs were rearranged to get all the students in the assembly room). He added that "one of the surprises in our enrollment is the number of students in the rural department. . . ." This statement indicated part of the trend going on throughout the state, that is the growing number of two-year graduates going out to teach in rural schools. Prior to the depression, graduates with the two-year diploma could and often did secure positions in towns and villages whereas the one-year graduates went to the rural schools. By the end of the decade nearly all of the two-year graduates were entering the rural field. Because of this trend the two-year curriculum at Bemidji was revised in 1931 and became designed to prepare students for both the graded and ungraded elementary schools.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup>Quarterly Report of Deputy to the State College Board, September 12, 1931. He discussed the change in the two-year curriculum in his December 11, 1931 Quarterly Report. All the presidents filed these reports to the Board office, but today neither the Board office files nor the State Archives have these reports. An incomplete set of these Quarterly Reports that Deputy filed are located in the Special Collections Room, Library, Bemidji State College.



Deputy's letters in the early 1930's often mentioned automobile transportation and improved road conditions. Deputy believed that good roads had contributed to the enrollment growth; he wrote that this growth "would not have been possible a few years ago without much inconvenience and additional expenses to students because of long distances, poor roads, and limited means of conveyance."<sup>14</sup>

Deputy wrote many letters to the commissioner of education, James McConnell. In several cases, when some question of interpretation came up that needed clarification, he would write to McConnell or to the state attorney general. For instance, on December 4, 1931, he wrote McConnell wondering if faculty members could buy books at a discount for Christmas presents, the purchases to be made from the college book and supply department. To this McConnell scribbled on the bottom of the same letter and sent it back saying "Dangerous practice, I think. . . ."

In the quarterly report to the Board filed at the end of the fall quarter, 1931, Deputy stated that with the large increase of college students, plus some 290 students in the campus school, the main building had about reached its capacity. "The increased enrollment causes oversized classes, with much over-crowding in library, toilets, locker and

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<sup>14</sup>Letter from Deputy to H. Z. Mitchell, September 28, 1931. The college also owned one car at that time, a Chevrolet. One of his letters about autos included a bill to someone for \$17.50 for damage to Deputy's car. There seemed little doubt in his mind as to who was at fault: "Because of the fact that I was on the right of way and that you gave no warning that you were backing out, necessarily makes you responsible for the damage." Letter from Deputy to John C. Johnson, October 20, 1931. One final sample of his correspondence dealing with cars was about a near accident he was in along with the president of the Charleston, Illinois, State Teachers College: "How thankful I am that there was no injury to you . . . in the near accident that we had on the way to Moorhead. I hope that your nervous system was not unduly disturbed. I do not like night driving." Letter from Deputy to L. C. Lord, November 11, 1931.



work rooms." He added: "It has become necessary to arrange some regular classes for the noon hour, on Saturdays, and in the evening, made possible only through the good spirit of faculty and students." Thus at the end of the report, Deputy again, perennially again, called for Board appreciation of Bemidji's building needs, especially for some type of physical education plant that might serve also as an auditorium.<sup>15</sup>

President Deputy had long wanted some type of structure to replace the tent used in summers and which could be used for an auditorium and physical education plant during much of the regular year. On his own, he sought out the costs of some structure to fulfill the needs, for in March, 1931, he received a reply from the Dickinson Construction Company of Bemidji that a building 40 by 80 by 12 feet would cost approximately \$8,500 and if it were done in the summer, a considerable reduction of \$500 to \$800 could be made "by use of regular college force of men to do excavation, rough work, and some carpenter work."<sup>16</sup> Though the idea must have intrigued him, Deputy was not able to do anything about it.

Deputy led a busy life, judging from all the correspondence passing over his desk, along with his frequent trips out of town. It seemed understandable when he wrote to a teacher on leave of absence: "I was very glad indeed to receive your letter several weeks ago, but

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<sup>15</sup>Quarterly Report of Deputy to the State College Board, December 11, 1931.

<sup>16</sup>Letter from C. M. Dickinson to Deputy, March 14, 1931.



have neglected to answer it because of so much demand upon my hours."<sup>17</sup>

Some of his trips he had to forego. For example, he wrote that he could not make a national meeting of educators in Washington, D. C., in 1932 "because of the economic depression."<sup>18</sup>

The question of whether the Minnesota State Teachers Colleges should seek entrance to the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools vexed the presidents and the Board from the time they began talking about it officially in 1929. Finally on June 13, 1931, the Board decided that the colleges could qualify and that in becoming members, they would not establish themselves as liberal arts colleges; the Board then authorized the presidents to make application for accreditation. The first assessment of Bemidji College made by the North Central officials was not especially favorable, as might be expected. Among the two pages of criticism sent to Deputy were these: the North Central Association required colleges to have at least eight departments, and Bemidji had none; the Bemidji library was too small both physically and in number of books, especially so in that part of it which was used by the campus school elementary pupils; the course offerings were too limited in academic areas, notably science; the percentage of junior and senior students was too small. As to faculty standards, "I feel fairly safe, however, in saying that it is distinctly

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<sup>17</sup>Letter from Deputy to Alice Frederickson, January 6, 1932. Miss Frederickson was studying at Columbia University and wrote to Deputy on November 8, 1931: "Whoever invented the saying that a degree from Columbia was easily acquired evidently thought merely in terms of thesis. Those people who are interested in advanced degrees would find it profitable to return to school soon or all possible research problems will have been solved."

<sup>18</sup>Deputy to Charles W. Hunt, January 25, 1932.



too low."<sup>19</sup> Apparently the other teachers colleges did not fare much better in the evaluation because the Board withdrew the applications and decided to defer the matter indefinitely. The attitude of Deputy to the North Central Association's preliminary evaluations can be seen in his letter to Commissioner of Education McConnell: "It is evident that the judgement concerning our eligibility is based entirely on the Liberal Arts standards which do not fit our methods or purposes. Until such point of view can be changed, I see no reason why we ought push our case."<sup>20</sup> McConnell, who had seen the reports on the Minnesota teachers colleges before the presidents, wrote: "Frankly, I am a good deal out of temper with this whole North Central situation, and I am ready to tell them to go hence."<sup>21</sup>

Exactly where the power lay in running the teachers colleges could be seen in a sharply worded letter from a Board member to Deputy. Deputy had requested that the Board allow the use of Bemidji dormitory to the American Legion Auxiliary for occupancy by the area gold star mothers and the district and state officers at a convention in Bemidji, August, 1933. Wrote Stephen Somsen, resident director from Winona, to Deputy: "I think you know my attitude with reference to allowing these

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<sup>19</sup>Letter from George A. Works of the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools to Deputy, January 27, 1932. There was one statement made in the letter that might be construed as a compliment to Bemidji but which did not say much about her sister colleges: "In one respect you show a decidedly better condition than obtains in the other Minnesota Teachers Colleges," but he did not explain what this respect was.

<sup>20</sup>Letter from Deputy to McConnell, February 3, 1932.

<sup>21</sup>Letter from McConnell to Deputy, January 26, 1932. Full accreditation by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools was not granted to the Minnesota teachers colleges until 1943.



people the use of state property." His attitude on this was negative; apparently even female legionaires presented a threat, as he went on to add in no uncertain terms:

I sincerely hope that the Minneapolis people will take time in renovating the bedding so that it will not be returned in time for the Legion meeting. In any event, you have no authority to give any permission to the Legion or to anyone else to make use of any of the school buildings. That is a matter exclusively for the Board to determine, and it is my suggestion that if any application is made to you for the use of the dormitory, you respond with the statement that it is a matter wholly within the jurisdiction of the Board, and that application must be presented to it.<sup>22</sup>

Deputy also received a minor rebuke via the mails from the state offices. State Auditor Stafford King (who at this writing is still State Auditor) wrote to Deputy in 1932 and told him to please fill out the state forms correctly. A little later when Deputy wrote for some missing reports, the reply to him came from the deputy state auditor and seemed most intemperate for a public official: "I distinctly remember sending copies each two years to the libraries of all state institutions. Inasmuch as complaint has been made to the present State Auditor that requests for the State Auditor's report have been made as many as ten times in the past five years and no reply or report has ever been received, I take this as a direct slap at me personally. . . ."<sup>23</sup> Deputy did not back down in his answer. He did acknowledge that he was certain "there has been no intention upon your part or that of the State Auditor not to send the above reports," but the fact still remained

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<sup>22</sup>Letter from S. H. Somsen to Deputy, February 22, 1932. At the April 25, 1932, Board meeting, the request for the Legion to use the dormitory at Bemidji was approved without a dissenting vote recorded.

<sup>23</sup>Letter from M. J. Desmond to Deputy, May 7, 1932. It seems inconceivable that Deputy, described by his contemporaries as so gentlemanly, would ever complain in the manner suggested by Desmond.



that he did not have them and still wanted them sent to him.<sup>24</sup>

In Deputy's quarterly report to the Board on April 21, 1932, he submitted the names and the proposed salaries for the faculty for the next regular school year. In every case he proposed the same figure as the year before. (The salaries for the 1932 regular year had averaged less than \$3,000 per member; E. W. Beck was the highest paid member of the teaching staff with \$3,400.) The Board had cut summer school salaries that year 14 per cent (the average pay had dropped to about \$300 per person), but at its April 25, 1932, Board meeting, it accepted Deputy's proposed salaries. This was the same meeting in which the members had passed the resolution recognizing "the widespread economic depression throughout the state and nation. . . ." As it turned out, even these recommended salaries were too high, as Governor Floyd B. Olson wrote letters on May 21, 1932, to all of the elected and appointed heads of state government and to the University of Minnesota asking to have all permanent employees "join me in giving up one-half month's salary--we might call it having our vacations without pay."<sup>25</sup> The Board agreed, and passed on June 19, 1932, a resolution that put the cut into effect that month for all those whose salaries were paid in twelve monthly installemnts of at least \$100 per month. During the months of September and October, all permanent employees of the state receiving a salary of \$1200 a year or more for nine months received another deduction of one-twenty-fourth of their salaries for these months. The Board also considered seriously the proposition to limit the enrollments at

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<sup>24</sup>Letter from Deputy to Desmond, May 16, 1932.

<sup>25</sup>Letter from Governor Floyd B. Olson to Deputy, May 21, 1932.



the colleges, but aside from recommending that the presidents admit only the very able students, it took no formal action to do so.<sup>26</sup>

This dilemma of increasing enrollments and limited funds can be viewed in a letter from Deputy written to a former faculty member after the fall session opened in 1932: "To our surprise we have a very great increase in enrollment and now have 345 students and need extra teachers now, but there are no funds to pay them."<sup>27</sup> There were no shortages of teachers applying for positions at Bemidji, however, and to these often imploring letters Deputy replied courteously and said in effect to all: alas, we have very few vacancies and no funds to hire more but we'll keep you in mind if something should open up.

On September 15, 1932, Deputy wrote to the commissioner of administration and finance to enlist his aid in supporting Bemidji's budget proposals for the next biennium. Significantly, the Bemidji College needs met the Board's definition of spending for buildings "only in cases of emergency" and, along with maintenance appropriations of about \$110,000 per year, the Board's budget requests included \$100,000 for a building at Bemidji. This was the only school that the Board allowed a building request that year. In his letter to the commissioner, Deputy wrote that "from its opening the college has had the constant problem of meeting required standards each year at minimum

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<sup>26</sup>Minutes of the State Teachers College Board, June 10, 1932. The secretary noted that "it was the consensus of opinion that while at present it appears impractical to fix more highly selective standards for admissions, the Colleges should consistently advise against enrollment of persons whose . . . limitations are such as to indicate lack of ability to become successful teachers."

<sup>27</sup>Letter from Deputy to James M. McArthur, September 27, 1932.



cost and also of making new developments and providing additional work required through natural growth." He went on to trace briefly the enrollment growth, noting pointedly that of the 345 there at the time, all were high school graduates or the equivalent. Notwithstanding this increase of more than 60 per cent from 1929 to 1932, Deputy continued, which compelled the overcrowding of classes and the inability of offer some further necessary work, Bemidji was not recommending an increase in maintenance except to provide for two additional teachers. The Board had recognized Bemidji's needs for building extension too, he concluded, and "because of our lack of facilities we are under the greatest handicap with an emergency situation. There is congestion in every department. . . ." Thus, because of all this, he pleaded, please do not reduce our budget.<sup>28</sup>

Deputy's communication to the commissioner came soon after an architect had been sent to Bemidji to survey the situation and make recommendations. The report of the survey came out November 4, 1932, and confirmed Deputy's position and plight: "The main building is extremely crowded as it was designed originally to accommodate about 200 students" and there were 345 college students there. The elementary school wing of the building was built to house 250 students and there were 315 of them. The three-page typed report discussed class rooms (eight classrooms built to accommodate 30 students have 12 classes

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<sup>28</sup>Letter from Deputy to the Commissioner of Administration and Finance, September 15, 1932. The underlining was done by Deputy. In Deputy's nineteen years as President, the 1932-1933 regular year was his "best" year in terms of high enrollment and his "worst" in trying to accommodate that enrollment. After 1933, the regular year's enrollment steadily went down.



composed of 40 to 42 students); the science department ("the rooms are so small that it is impossible to give the students individual laboratory work of any nature"); manual training (only one room and used by both the college and the elementary school students); art and music ("one small room is devoted in each case to these departments"); library ("this room is very small for a study body of 661"--since both college and elementary school students used the same room); assembly room ("the room used . . . is also very small, seating under crowded conditions only 190 students"); physical education ("we would term this a 'play room' rather than 'gymnasium' which should be devoted to physical education"); administration ("four small rooms provided for this purpose are scattered throughout the building"); faculty room ("a small room is devoted to 28 women faculty members"); nurse's office ("the nurse has her office in the rear of another small office with a screen division").

The report concluded:

In closing permit us to say that under the present arrangement it is utterly impossible for proper instruction to be given to an enrollment that has experienced such tremendous increase. We strongly advise that a sufficient appropriation be made in order to cover the cost of the work set up in this report.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>Preliminary Report of Requirements, Bemidji State Teachers College, Bemidji, Minnesota, for the Commissioner of Administration and Finance, State of Minnesota, prepared by Nairne W. Fisher, Architect, St. Cloud, Minnesota, November 4, 1932, on file in the President's Office, Bemidji State College. The "play room"--gymnasium--described was 28 by 58 feet with a 12 foot high ceiling between beams. To accommodate students for assembly programs that year, the student body was split into three groups and met separately; for full assemblies, the high school auditorium four blocks away was used when available. A faculty member recalled that that year "every nook and cranny of the building" was used, including faculty offices under stairwells and in closets.



Despite all such reports, letters and testimonials, the legislature allocated nothing for any building additions. Not that some legislators did not try, for the Bemidji area representatives certainly worked to get building money for the college out of the 1933 legislature, and Deputy wrote several letters to Harry Bridgeman in the senate and Gustav Erickson in the house, offering encouragement and advice. For example, because the Board had already taken steps to recommend a building for Bemidji and felt no further resolution was needed by them, Deputy wrote Bridgeman: "The situation is now open for you and Mr. Erickson to proceed in such manner as seems best to get our building need before the legislative committees as an emergency need. Dr. Garlock [resident director] and I will give all the help we can." Bridgeman replied that after talking it over with Erickson, they had concluded that it would be best to "let this matter come up in the usual manner and not attempt to make an emergency of this appropriation. From my observations so far it would appear that the Legislature is in a rather hysterical mood. . . ." <sup>30</sup>

His observation of the 1933 legislature seemed accurate. As it turned out, Bemidji State Teachers College was lucky to emerge at the end of the session as still an educational institution and not an insane asylum. State Senator Charles Orr, St. Paul, chairman of the rules committee, submitted a proposal to abolish the work of any or all of the state teachers colleges so that the buildings might be used for insane asylums, reform schools, or prisons. He asked that all of the six schools be investigated, placed under the State Board of Control, and if

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<sup>30</sup>Letter from Bridgeman to Deputy, January 10, 1933.



the schools did not appear to be vitally needed--he felt that at least three could go--the buildings should be turned over for better state use. At the very minimum, Orr and his supporters maintained, all the state colleges should be turned back into two-year normal schools. Orr reasoned that teacher supply exceeded teacher demand, and that this demand could be easily supplied by the university and the liberal arts colleges. Of course all of Orr's suggestions were purportedly made in the interest of economy.<sup>31</sup>

Deputy wrote to Bridgeman that he had read about Orr's resolution in the daily paper, and gave a partial rebuttal: "Senator Orr probably does not understand that the School of Education [at the University] does but little in the training of elementary teachers, and the private schools do nothing in that field of work."<sup>32</sup> He next wrote to Representative Erickson: "I hope and have confidence to believe that the legislature cannot be stampeded into such reactionary enactments as has been suggested by Senators Orr and Schweitzer."<sup>33</sup>

But Orr continued his attack and brought five of the presidents of the Minnesota liberal arts colleges to St. Paul to testify before the finance committee, at which time the presidents indicated that under the circumstances, their colleges could not compete with the state

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<sup>31</sup>Orr's proposal was met by anguishing cries in the Bemidji newspapers; the Sentinel called it "unthinkable" and the Pioneer "a grave error." Before this Deputy had been working on his own economy program and had written his fellow presidents, January 19, 1933: "Should we not seriously consider doing away with the awarding of sweaters, blankets, trophies, etc.?"

<sup>32</sup>Letter from Deputy to Bridgeman, January 24, 1933.

<sup>33</sup>Letter from Deputy to Erickson, February 6, 1933. Both representatives assured Deputy that they believed the legislature would not act precipitously on Orr's proposed resolutions.



teachers colleges and might have to close their doors. The arguments of the presidents, as indicated in the newspapers, might be summarized: privately endowed colleges and the university are amply equipped to prepare teachers for high schools, a function that the teachers colleges had usurped; private colleges cannot compete with teachers colleges with their low tuition rates; teachers colleges should limit their training to teachers in the elementary grades; it would save the taxpayers much money if teachers colleges were turned back into normal schools; ideals in education "must be safe-guarded--there is too much tendency to develop colleges, we even have some 'barber colleges.'"<sup>34</sup>

The presidents of the teachers colleges went in turn to the legislature to testify against the Orr proposals. Deputy came armed with support ranging from student-body-signed petitions to comparative figures of teachers college costs in neighboring states and supporting brochures put out by alumni (See Appendix VIII). Bemidji had especial cause to feel endangered judging by the high costs per student, as Table 21 (next page) indicates. The smallest of the teachers colleges, Bemidji did not have, consistently, enrollments high enough to match the high fixed costs of operating a school at optimum efficiency. For example, Deputy received the same salary to run a school of 350 as the St. Cloud president who had a school of 1000 in 1932.

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<sup>34</sup>Minneapolis Journal, January 26, 1933, p. 8. Hearings on the Orr proposals were held between January 25 and March 8 of that year. The records of the Senate Finance Committee to which the proposals were referred make no reference to committee action. The chairman, A. J. Rockne, however, spoke disparagingly of "putting tax money in competition with privately endowed institutions," while Orr, incidentally a member of the board of trustees of one of the church-related colleges, was quoted in the Journal as saying: "We should cut out three of our six teachers colleges--we should make a start and eliminate one anyway."



TABLE 21

APPROPRIATION PER STUDENT  
(Based on maximum enrollment)

	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937
Bemidji	472	469	359	296	326	404	456	503	631
Duluth	349	274	234	199	281	278	330	312	355
Mankato	311	306	256	228	266	225	289	264	295
Moorhead	293	277	227	223	238	270	323	280	302
St. Cloud	240	248	228	207	218	260	292	286	316
Winona	343	372	304	316	276	320	371	347	417

Source: Information from President's Office Files, Bemidji State College.

Deputy even sent Bridgeman the deed that ceded the land for the college and noted that "the deed states that the land was granted for 'normal school' purposes. We hope that the issue will not come to the point where we will have to use this argument."<sup>35</sup>

They did not have to use it. By the end of March, 1933, Deputy felt that the teachers colleges were saved and safe. He wrote to a faculty member on the staff at George Peabody College: "There has been quite a fight on in this state, as well as other states, but now it seems that the teachers colleges will not be disturbed in their present

<sup>35</sup>Letter from Deputy to Bridgeman, February 6, 1933. As if legislative problems were not enough, Deputy on the same day received an anonymous letter from a student reminding him that "college dances are supposed to be for college students . . . not for outsiders from high school across the tracks, or from behind the gashouse," and would he, President Deputy, please keep these outsiders out.



status as four-year training institutions. I am sure the fight is practically over. . . ." <sup>36</sup> Deputy was correct, and at the end of April he wrote again: "Our legislature is just closed and I am informed that we are still intact as a four-year degree granting college, but that our budget along with all others has been slashed." <sup>37</sup>

About all that was accomplished by the opponents of the teachers colleges in the 1933 session was to reduce the budget and to require that all the colleges had to charge tuition. This latter decision reversed a practice that had stood since the founding of the schools of allowing free tuition for all who intended to teach. <sup>38</sup>

Perhaps the most important loss suffered in 1933 by the teachers colleges occurred with the death of Commissioner of Education James McConnell in April. McConnell had served as commissioner since 1919 and had been a most able friend of the teachers colleges. Those who followed him found the State Teachers College Board unfortunately

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<sup>36</sup> Letter from Deputy to R. L. Goulding, March 18, 1933. Amid this legislative struggle, problems in and out of school continued for Deputy. For example, in early March, 1933, Deputy became most alarmed over some alleged misbehavior of two Bemidji women graduates teaching in Cass Lake. The superintendent of schools there wrote Deputy that his Cass Lake townspeople were very disgusted with Bemidji College because of these two women who "went so far as for them to spend weekends with traveling men. . . ." With Deputy's firm approval, both were fired.

<sup>37</sup> Letter from Deputy to Dr. Thomas H. Briggs, April 20, 1933. The records of the House committee to which the proposals had been referred indicate a hearing on March 1, when three teachers college presidents spoke against the bill. One week later the record indicates the passage of a recommendation for indefinite postponement of the bill. On file in the State Archives. These records are not verbatim accounts of the hearings; some hearings apparently were not reported, and those that were are in summary form, the amount depending on the diligence of the committee clerk.

<sup>38</sup> Minnesota, Session Laws (1933), c. 294.



getting deeply involved in partisan politics, and political situations became a factor in Board decisions, something not present when McConnell was commissioner.<sup>39</sup>

More bad news in 1933 for Bemidji came in a report of the American Association of Teachers Colleges which said in effect that Bemidji's library was terrible, and if it were not soon improved, Bemidji College would lose its accreditation. Moreover, the report read, the Association Committee "somewhat reluctantly approved the educational qualifications of your faculty this year. Next year it hardly seems likely that the Committee will do this under the standards as they were interpreted at the last meeting." To meet these situations, the College newspaper led a drive for getting more book donations to the library and for students to return those books which they had "borrowed." Also Deputy was able to hire two new faculty members with Ph. D. degrees for the next year. The upshot of this found Bemidji College keeping its accreditation.<sup>40</sup>

It did not seem strange that Deputy would write in his quarterly report to the Board on June 5, 1933, that the past school year had seen "difficult conditions." Nevertheless, he concluded, "there has been a

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<sup>39</sup>The Grand Rapids, Minnesota, Superintendent of Schools, C. C. Baker, wrote to Deputy on February 10, 1933, and quoted from a letter he had received from the Mayo Clinic: "Mr. J. M. McConnell was operated upon here this morning. . . . During the exploration it was found that his liver was full of cancer. Of course the prognosis is poor." The State Board Minutes of May 1, 1933, record a lengthy tribute to McConnell.

<sup>40</sup>Letter from Charles W. Hunt, secretary-treasurer of the American Association of Teachers Colleges, to Deputy, May 24, 1933. This possibility of the College losing its accreditation proved a constant threat to Deputy throughout his tenure. His correspondence reflected the fears preceding the time for reaccreditation and the sighs of relief that followed the announcement that the College was accredited for the immediate future.



good spirit and a conscientious effort shown by both faculty and students in the face of these discouraging conditions and we pledge ourselves to carry on with renewed hope for the coming of better times when our conditions can be alleviated."

But times were hard for the college, and its frozen assets of \$811.46 in the local bank did not help matters. Deputy wrote to the United States comptroller of the currency on August 28, 1933, regarding the closing of the Northern National Bank of Bemidji in March and which had not yet been reopened: "We urge that you authorize the local bank to pay the above amount which is due the State Teachers College immediately." He went on to rebuke mildly the government for its action: "It [the bank] has always been a leading institution of the community, and undoubtedly would have continued to do business in a most satisfactory way had the closing act been rescinded." Though the cause and effect relationship of the letter would be highly questionable, the local bank soon reopened.

When the fall session opened in 1933, the enrollment dropped about 25 per cent (346 to 284) from the previous year. In his report to the Board, Deputy wrote that "this was to be expected because of the financial handicap which many students are under to pay tuition and the cost of living while attending college; also because of the disappearance of the one-year course under the provision of the recent Board regulation [May 10, 1933] the announcement of which, no doubt, has caused a number of one-year students not to apply." He added that the large enrollment the previous year had brought in many students who were unable to do college work and had been advised not to continue.



Hence, he wrote, the quality of the students had improved that fall although the total number of students was less. His closing line in his report offered the enigmatic statement: "The outlook for the year is auspicious."<sup>41</sup>

When the fall quarter ended in 1933, Deputy wrote to the Board regarding the difficult times for students financially: "More than in any previous year, the students are under the handicap of limited means which makes it necessary for them to curtail their expenses, and in some cases live below their actual needs for wholesome food and clothing." He added that the College had tried to do everything possible to aid worthy students within the limited means available, but that many more students had applied for government work-relief jobs than could be selected.<sup>42</sup>

Deputy saw the way to raise more state taxes in 1933 in the same way that the 1967 legislature did: pass a sales tax. "This, as you know, is in operation in two or three states," he wrote to Senator Bridgeman, and "I see no reason why it is not equitable and fair."

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<sup>41</sup>Quarterly Report of Deputy to the State Teachers College Board, September 8, 1933. Deputy's interpretation regarding the many students who allegedly could not do college work is not born out in the Statistical Report of the College for the 1932-1933 school year, on file in the President's office, Bemidji State College. The overall grade point average was 1.28 on a 3 point basis. In percentages of 4,870 grades given, 7.7 were A's, 27.3 were B's, 53.2 were C's, 8.8 were D's, and only 2.8 were E's.

<sup>42</sup>Quarterly Report of Deputy to the State Teachers College Board, December 7, 1933. The enrollment for the second quarter was 284, with 92 men and 192 women enrolled. Deputy also made reference to a common topic of conversation in Bemidji in the winter, the weather. In view of the fuel costs, he hoped that the approaching winter would not be as cold as the previous one. The average temperatures for January and February in 1933 were 13 and 4 degrees, respectively, Information from the Department of Conservation office, Bemidji.



Certainly, he continued, there should be no additional tax on real estate or personal property, "both of which are now staggering under too heavy a load." Neither did he believe that there should be an additional tax on gasoline, as he said he found on a recent trip that there "was considerable reaction against high taxes on gasoline, resulting in the curtailment of the use of motor vehicles because of it."<sup>43</sup>

The legislature of 1933 had required that the state colleges add an extra \$5.00 per term for non-residents, and Deputy wrote to the commissioner of education, E. M. Phillips (who succeeded McConnell and served only one year to 1934), seeking a clear explanation of a non-resident student. As indicated, Deputy often wrote for clarification of duties. The reply to Deputy was long and complicated, and ended by giving Deputy a loophole by stating that "about all that can be done is to apply the general principles in each case."<sup>44</sup> This explanation did not satisfy Deputy, and so Deputy asked the other presidents for their opinions and also for the opinions of the Board. Their replies, however, did not completely clarify Deputy's questions, and the problem continued to come up regularly at registration times.

The State Teachers College Board appeared sympathetic to all Deputy's problems whether they were rather minor, like definitions of

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<sup>43</sup>Letter from Deputy to Bridgeman, December 18, 1933.

<sup>44</sup>Letter from P. C. Toning, deputy commissioner of education, to Deputy, September 11, 1933. Three years later Deputy still wanted to know what a non-resident was, and in letters to the other presidents on September 10, 1936, he told what he got for his efforts when he asked the attorney general: "I wrote to the Attorney General and was mildly chastized because I wrote on my own initiative instead of presenting the matter through the College Board." College presidents too had to follow the pecking order and observe proper procedure.



a non-resident student or major, like adding more buildings. In the latter case, the Board continued to try to alleviate Deputy's crowded conditions by passing a resolution at its January 25, 1934, meeting, requesting funds for a building at Bemidji, the money to be taken from an emergency fund passed by the legislature for such contingencies. The resolution read that if the state would allow this money for Bemidji, "none of the other five teachers colleges in the state of Minnesota will present any requests for new buildings to be paid for out of such fund." This was a fine gesture, but to no avail; it turned out to be only a gesture, and Deputy continued to get along with the three buildings he had.

In Deputy's quarterly report to the Board dated March 12, 1934, he reported very satisfactory results from the government plans of work-relief for students. Thirty-three students during the winter term were assigned work, he wrote, which included repair of chairs, furniture, and library books; office, library, and laboratory work; redecoration of basement rooms in main building; campus and dormitory work. Though he did not give the amount of their wages, he did write that "eleven additional students at \$15.00 a month or equivalent had been allotted for spring term," so presumably the 33 received the approximate same figure. In choosing those students to work in the program, Deputy emphasized that "care is used in assigning this work to those most in need and with eligibility to do work as prospective teachers."

In this same March 12, 1934, report to the Board, Deputy said that he was happy to report that Bemidji College retained its accreditation in the American Association of Teachers Colleges despite



the library deficiency. The standard required 15,000 volumes and 150 magazines while Bemidji's attainment at the time of the survey was 10,500 volumes and 110 magazines. (Deputy's reporting of this to the Board gives the impression that he was as perplexed as anyone as why Bemidji was still accredited.) Near the end of the report, Deputy wrote about his recent attendance at a meeting in Cleveland, Ohio, of the American Association and Department of Superintendence [sic] and reminded the Board of the current national trend for curriculum revision which included "provision for more liberal culture than now obtains." Deputy implied that the Board's supposedly permanent four-year curriculum adopted in 1929 should be updated with the trend of the time.

In Deputy's last quarterly report for the school year, dated June 1, 1934, he included a special section headline "Handicaps." His first sentence was the terse announcement that Bemidji College "has again been compelled to raise the tent on the campus in order to take care of our late spring and summer conditions." And once more he asked, again underlining it, for more buildings. "We anticipate," he concluded, "that the Board will find it possible to assist us in vividly putting our situation before the forthcoming legislature with such effect that our conditions will be improved." Again the Board agreed to try. At its July 21, 1934, meeting, it approved in its legislative requests a sum for another building at Bemidji. The legislature, of course, rejected this in its 1935 session.

Deputy summed up the work of the 1934 summer school in his September 7 report to the Board. The school enrolled 37 men and 163 women; but of this small number, he noted with satisfaction, 82 were



in their third or fourth years, that is working for a degree. The trend toward declining summer enrollments he understandably placed in part on "the general economic conditions with doubtful outlook for those employed; in part to the elimination of all under high school graduate courses," as he phrased it, "and in part to the gradual readjustments in the curriculum and in state certificate requirements causing the summer session to be quite similar in numbers, purpose, and content of work to the regular year." In short, Deputy seemed to say that the times were bad, it was harder to get certified and harder yet to find a job, and that the college could offer little out of the ordinary.<sup>45</sup>

The difficult times and the pinch of money can be seen throughout the quarterly reports that Deputy filed with the State Board in the 1930's. On December 5, 1934, he wrote: "Many students find it difficult to continue in school because of lack of means. Federal and state relief funds in the amount of \$600 a month are of material aid to fifty-eight students who otherwise could not attend. Doubtless many others, including those who could not be admitted on work-relief, are unable to be in school."

That the pinch of money was real to the College might further be seen in Deputy's letter to the attorney general, January 11, 1935, asking him to collect from two sets of parents for failure of their

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<sup>45</sup>It might be noted that between the regular school years of 1928-1929 to 1933-1934, Winona showed a 112 student loss, Mankato a gain of 64, St. Cloud a loss of 27, Moorhead a gain of 97, Duluth a gain of 53, and Bemidji a gain of 15. Of the graduates of Bemidji in 1934, 54 per cent of the degree students and 57 per cent of the two-year graduates held teaching jobs as of October, 1934. Northern Student, October 23, 1934, p. 1.



children to pay college debts of \$49.00 and \$19.00. Four days later the reply came back from the attorney general's office that the parents had been notified, and that "unless settlement is made in the near future, we shall commence suit to recover same."

Much correspondence passed between Deputy and legislators in the 1935 legislature which lasted from January through April. Deputy first worried about an Associated Press story citing the state college maintenance budgets, and Bridgeman sent back a telegram to Deputy saying that indeed an error had been made but was corrected. Then Deputy wrote Bridgeman again: "We are all anxiously waiting with our thumbs crossed for favorable consideration concerning our much looked-for building."<sup>46</sup> The bill for the building came out of committee favorably but was stricken out on the floor of the Senate. After the session ended, Deputy wrote to the Department of Administration and Finance: "The legislature has closed and we know our budgets for the coming two years. We are distressed to have lost out on our building."<sup>47</sup> But to another person, he wrote characteristically: "While all of us were very greatly disappointed, we shall carry on and shall try to make the school even better, with the hope of getting results later."<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Letter from Deputy to Bridgeman, March 27, 1935. Interestingly the college student newspaper kept closer watch on the progress of the bill than the town newspapers.

<sup>47</sup> Letter, April 27, 1935. The Journal of the Minnesota senate showed that the amendment striking out the Bemidji building appropriation was supported by all the senators having teachers colleges in their districts with two exceptions. There was obviously a lack of unity of interest on the part of those whose constituency was in an immediate college area.

<sup>48</sup> Letter from Deputy to Daisy Brown, April 27, 1935. Deputy could probably find but thin solace personally for his efforts in articles like the one appearing in the February 4, 1935, issue of the



The only money outside of maintenance allowed Bemidji College by the 1935 legislature was \$4,000 to construct a tunnel to take care of underground water and steam mains, and gas and electric lines. Even the spending of this relatively small amount involved much red tape and correspondence before work began. Still in this limited project, Deputy saw hope for future structures, as he wrote to the architect and suggested having one of the tunnel walls from the power house run to a certain spot because "it might be very desirable to be used as a foundation for the possible building we have under consideration on the north side of the power house."<sup>49</sup>

Delay followed delay in the building of the tunnel. Contracts were not let until the third bid, and it was not completed until 1936. Some of the delay was caused by the question of who should be hired and the wage scale to be paid. Some indication of the wages paid in the middle of the 1930's can be seen in the commissioner of finance and administration's letter to the architect informing him of the local rates paid around Bemidji. On a per hour basis, he gave the following figures: common labor, 35 to 40¢; carpenters, 65 to 85¢; cement workers, 90¢; bricklayers and plasterers, \$1.00; expert electricians, \$1.00; journeyman plumbers, \$1.00.<sup>50</sup>

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Minnesota Journal of Education under the title of "Makers of Better Schools." In a short tribute to Deputy, the article concluded: "The State College at Bemidji is one of the recognized four-year institutions of the Northwest--and it is the lengthened shadow of this man."

<sup>49</sup>Letter from Deputy to Nairne W. Fisher, May 22, 1935.

<sup>50</sup>Letter from J. Earle Lawler to Nairne W. Fisher, May 27, 1935; copy sent to Deputy, on file in the Deputy papers, Special Collections Room, Library, Bemidji State College.



The addition of lights to illuminate the athletic field provided one of the few significant physical changes on the Bemidji campus in the early 1930's. There were forty lights mounted on eight sixty-foot poles. Deputy again took the lead in sponsoring this, and in the initial drive to raise funds, he was aided by local organizations, citizens of the community, and faculty members. The total cost of the construction, completed in 1935, was \$2,175. By the time Deputy retired two years later, only \$300 remained to be repaid.<sup>51</sup>

The colleges adopted a new four-year curriculum in 1935, replacing the one that had been in effect since 1929. The presidents had continued to work on curriculum revision after 1929, as directed by the Board, and the Board adopted the new program on January 25, 1935, to go into effect June 1 of that year. This program did not bring the matter to an end, of course, as discussion continued, and changes in the curriculum were made from time to time.

While it is the immediate and often flamboyant events that grab the headlines, such things as curriculum revision are more important in the long run. Such was the case with the adoption of the 1935 curriculum, a program which, though altered, has remained basically the same up to the present.<sup>52</sup> Essentially, the 1935 four-year curriculum was general education in the first two years and broad majors and minors in the last two years; it thus counteracted the old program of

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<sup>51</sup>Northern Student, Bulletin of the State Teachers College, Bemidji, Minnesota, January, 1938, Vol. XI, No. 2, p. 10.

<sup>52</sup>In 1939 the Board authorized the change from Bachelor of Education degree to Bachelor of Science. After 1935, the next extensive curriculum change came in 1945, and the next year the Board authorized granting the Bachelor of Arts or non-teaching degree.



scattering courses throughout the whole four years the work which belonged in the first two. Moreover the plan of requiring education courses every year of the four-year course was omitted.<sup>53</sup> The 1935 curriculum required 100 hours of constants while the former had required 96 (See Table 22 next three pages, for description of required courses or constants in the state colleges as they changed from 1929 to 1945). In addition to constants required in both the elementary and secondary fields, the elementary field required 40 hours of work from 5 fields; the secondary field was set up in terms of majors and minors. Every secondary student was required to complete either one major other than education and two minors or to complete two majors other than education. Majors consisted from 32 hours in mathematics or education to 48 hours in each of the special fields of industrial arts, physical education, music, or fine arts. A minor was to be not less than 20 quarter hours in one of the designated fields, including constants. This left about 52 hours of elective work for elementary majors and 24 hours for those in the secondary fields, all combining to make a total of 192 quarter hours of credit for graduation.<sup>54</sup> Soon after the Board adopted the new four-year curriculum, there followed an attempt to revise the two-year curriculum also, but for a variety of reasons, often political--two Board members who were not educators sat on the

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<sup>53</sup>After the Board approved the program, the college newspaper quoted Deputy as saying: "An outstanding feature of the new four-year program is the provision for a more general cultural education in the first two years . . . with professional training concentrated in the last two years." Northern Student, February 27, 1935, p. 1.

<sup>54</sup>The description of the new four-year course takes up six pages in the Minutes of the State Teachers College Board, January 25, 1935.



TABLE 22

## CONSTANTS REQUIRED IN THE FOUR-YEAR CURRICULUMS

Constants	Number of Quarter Hours Required								
	By the College Board			By the Colleges in 1945					
	1929	1935	1938	Winona	Mankato	St.Cloud	Moorhead	Duluth	Bemidji
Orientation	....	....	....	....	....	....	No Credit	....	No Credit
English:									
Comp. and Lit.	12	12	12	....	....	12	....	12	12
Composition	....	....	....	8	6	....	7-12	....	....
Literature	....	....	....	4	....	....	....	....	....
Speech	....	....	....	4	....	....	2-4	....	....
Types of Lit.	4	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....
World Lit.	4 <sup>a</sup>	....	....	....	6	....	....	....	....
Children's Lit.	4 <sup>a</sup>	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....
Library	....	....	....	....	....	....	No Credit	....	1
Total	20	12	12	16	12	12	9-16	12	13
Social Studies:								16 <sup>bc</sup>	
European Hist.	....	....	....	....	4	....	....	....	9
American Hist.	4	....	4	4	....	4	4	....	....
American Govt.	4	4	....	4	4	4	4	....	4
Economics	4 <sup>a</sup>	4	4	4	....	4	4	....	4
Sociology	4,4 <sup>a</sup>	4	4	4	4	4	4	....	4
History	....	8	....	....	....	....	....	....	....
Total	16	20	12	16	12	16	16	16	21
Geography	4	4	3-4	4	4	4	....	....	4



TABLE 22--Continued

	1929	1935	1938	Winona	Mankato	St.Cloud	Moorhead	Duluth	Bemidji
<b>Science:</b>								12 <sup>b</sup>	
Biology	8	12	....	4	4	8	12	....	12
Biol. and Phy. Sci.	....	....	8	....	....	....	....	....	....
Physical Science	....	....	....	4	4	4	8 <sup>c</sup>	....	....
<b>Mathematics:</b>									
Arithmetic	4	4	....	....	....	....	....	....	....
Cultural	....	....	....	....	....	4	4	....	....
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>11-12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Arts:</b>			8					8 <sup>b</sup>	
Music Appreciation	....	4	....	4 <sup>d</sup>	3	4	....	....	4
Art Appreciation	....	4	....	4 <sup>d</sup>	3	4	....	....	4
Industrial Arts	....	....	....	4 <sup>d</sup>	3	....	....	....	....
Humanities (inc.Lit.)	....	....	....	....	....	....	16	....	....
<b>Total</b>	<b>....</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Phy. Ed. and Hygiene:</b>			8				4		
Physical Education	4	4	....	4	4	4	....	4	6
Hygiene	4	4	....	4	4	4	....	4	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Psych. and Education:</b>									
Psychology	8	8	4	4	....	4	4	....	3
Ed. Psych.	....	....	....	4	12	8	8	3	6
Hist. of Education	4	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....
Prin. of Education	4	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....
Techniques (Gen. & Spec.) & Management	8	4	4	6	8	4	3	9	7



TABLE 22--Continued

	1929	1935	1938	Winona	Mankato	St.Cloud	Moorhead	Duluth	Bemidji
Curriculum	....	4	4	4	4	4	4	4 <sup>a</sup>	4
Tests & Statistics	....	4	....	4	....	4	3	5 <sup>a</sup>	2
Philosophy of Educ.	....	....	....	....	....	4	....	....	....
Org. & Adm. of Educ.	....	....	....	....	....	....	3	....	....
Guidance	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	2
Ed. Psych., Tests and Philosophy	....	....	8	....	....	....	....	....	....
Teaching	12	12	8	8	8	12	10	14	8
Total	36	32	28	30	32	40	35	30-31	32
Total	96	100	79-80	90	85	104	104-14	86-87	98

<sup>a</sup>Alternatives.

<sup>b</sup>Choice of several introductory courses in the broad field.

<sup>c</sup>Includes geography

<sup>d</sup>Choice of two out of three indicated.

<sup>e</sup>Applies only to secondary field.

Source: Table taken from Paul Heaton, Minnesota State Teachers Colleges in Transition, pp. 32-33.



committee to make the revisions--the two-year curriculum revision was delayed until after Deputy left office in December 1937.

President Deputy received a large number of questionnaires to be filled out and returned. He dutifully answered nearly all of them, and often added a personal letter. One such letter attached to a reply gave some insight into the pragmatic character of the man regarding what he called "the coming and going of educational slogans." He wrote to a doctoral candidate that he had watched for forty years the periodic enthusiasm about how to succeed in teaching centering around such words as correlation, motivation, problem solving, unit organization, and others, and allowed there might be some value in each. However, he admonished: "All pedagogical valuation does not exist in any one. Each is as old as good teaching, but when any one is singled out as an educational 'Eureka' it becomes wooden and often defeats its own value in becoming an end instead of means." He ended his letter with some advice: "If you are interested in working out a college thesis, I hope you can find a more profitable topic."<sup>55</sup>

Deputy also wrote personal letters of appreciation to all who donated to the student loan fund, regardless of the amount donated. Some of these replies give added information about the college. For example: "We have had more requests for loans than usual this year," wrote Deputy in 1936, "so many in fact that we have recently borrowed two hundred dollars to help along temporarily. This very greatly appreciated gift of fifty dollars will help out in a significant

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<sup>55</sup>Letter from Deputy to Marjorie Potter, January 30, 1936.



way."<sup>56</sup>

At the end of the regular school year, 1936, Deputy wrote a short and perfunctory quarterly report to the Board, and in it stated that things had not changed much during the year nor from the year previous, except that because of the "long, severe winter, the fuel bill of the college for the year has been nearly \$1000 more than usual, which fact handicaps our budget possibilities for the coming year." When unanticipated expenses came along, Deputy had to be extra cautious.<sup>57</sup>

Though the quarterly report omitted it, Deputy might have added that the college received a \$3,300 federal grant in biology to add mounted specimens and skeletons of fish, birds, small mammals, and reptiles to its collections. Certainly Deputy appeared most pleased with the grant: "This project is a great boon to this college, and I shall personally be interested in seeing it properly carried out."<sup>58</sup>

When school opened in the fall of 1936, the first issue of the College newspaper had a headline reading: "Four-Year Students Win

<sup>56</sup>Letter from Deputy to Mrs. DeWitt Garlock and the Bemidji Women's Study Club, March 18, 1936. See Table 11, p. 196, for record of the income to the loan fund throughout nearly all of the Deputy period.

<sup>57</sup>Quarterly Report, May 28, 1936. It had been a cold winter; the average temperatures for December, January and February were 12, -2.5, and -6.2, respectively.

<sup>58</sup>Letter from Deputy to G. W. Friedrich, chairman of the Minnesota Department of Conservation, August 14, 1936. The project was delayed because of the reluctance of the conservation authorities to issue collecting permits for game birds, fish, and other animals. A similar project, though much smaller, had been carried out the previous year under the heading of "historical project." About 50 specimens were collected and mounted at a cost of \$300, of which the College contributed \$75.00. Northern Student, October 31, 1936, p. 1.



Lead in Fall Enrollment." For the first time in the history of the school, the number of four-year students (116) exceeded those in the two-year course (98); of the total, 82 were men. This change was significant, for the school had slowly evolved from its normal school beginnings to a closer approximation of a college. And also important, at least for those involved, the newspaper said that all of the last year's graduating class in the two-year course had teaching positions. As to the four-year graduates: "Twenty-one of the 28 four-year graduates have schools, and the others are employed in various fields." Only 2 four-year graduates were teaching in rural schools while 46 out of the 64 two-year graduates were placed in rural communities. The news article concluded by giving the names and addresses of each of the 1936 graduates.<sup>59</sup>

To suggest that all was well with the state colleges by 1936, of course, would be misleading. For example, that summer the college presidents passed a resolution urging the National Youth Administration to provide additional funds to the colleges "because of increased requests for aid due to extreme drought conditions, forest fires, poor crop conditions, and other economic causes preventing students from entering or continuing in college."<sup>60</sup>

In Deputy's fall quarterly report to the Board, 1936, he dwelt mainly on his school's proposed budget for the next biennium. It would appear that he could have copied the same letters that he had

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<sup>59</sup>Northern Student, October 7, 1936, p. 1.

<sup>60</sup>Minutes of the Presidents' Meetings, Minnesota State Teachers Colleges, August 26, 1936.



written to the Board in the early 1920's, as the requests and the phrasing of the requests changed but little: "We strongly urge the approval of the building requests as proposed." Possibly anticipating the worst again, he concluded: "If it is necessary to consider curtailment of the building request, the elimination of the dormitory expansion could better be deferred than either of the other building items." These other building items were a gymnasium-auditorium, a classroom building, and appropriate laboratories.<sup>61</sup>

On this same topic of budgets, Deputy wrote a long letter to the State Department of Administration and Finance on September 22, 1936. He told them that Bemidji's proposed budget had "been prepared carefully . . . and has been unanimously approved by the College Board . . . September 14." The situation seemed identical to what had occurred on many occasions before: the budget was carefully prepared and the State Board approved it.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>61</sup>September 10, 1936. The laboratory facilities were sadly lacking. In a letter to a newly hired science teacher, dated December 3, 1934, Deputy wrote: "You probably know that the college is just a few years old and is just getting underway. Only last year did we begin to place science work on a college basis." At the end of the letter, in a line that was akin to Calvin Coolidge's remark on unemployment, Deputy added: "As a teachers college our main work is the preparation of teachers."

<sup>62</sup>Apparently Deputy's budgets were too carefully prepared, according to some faculty members who worked many years with him. In an interview with two of them, who did not wish to be quoted, they pointed out with some reluctance and some embarrassment that Deputy was too honest. By this left-handed compliment it was meant that Deputy never padded his budget but always asked for exactly what was needed. Subsequently the legislature assumed otherwise and cut his budget, leaving him to operate his school on a shoestring. A retired businessman in town, who said he knew Deputy well and liked him as a person but not as an administrator, put it this way in an interview: "He was no fighter; he was an educator." Exactly what this terminology implies makes interesting speculation.



Deputy went on in his letter to the State Department of Administration and Finance to justify his building requests. In its physical plant and equipment, he wrote, the College "was scarcely half-completed," and the inadequacy of buildings and operating space "was a most serious handicap" to the best work. Because of lack of space, he informed them, it had become necessary to cut off each end of the hallways on all three floors for office and storage space, and the hallways on the lower and upper floors were further partitioned off to provide temporary room for laboratories and library stacks. Moreover, he continued, the school never did have a gymnasium nor an auditorium, thus compelling the rental at high cost of the city armory building a mile away for physical education purposes. Unfortunately, he said, but true, it was almost impossible to have an assembly of the entire school at any time "except by use of a Chatauqua tent in summer or the rental of the high school auditorium in the winter." He concluded: "Notwithstanding the most favorable location of the new college in the extensive Northern area of the state, the handicap of building facilities naturally curtails enrollment and hinders the best development of the institution."<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>63</sup>Letter from Deputy to State Department of Administration and Finance, September 22, 1936. As indicated, such imploring letters, as well as any other approaches, were not successful for Deputy in getting money for building purposes at Bemidji after 1925. After considering the statements made in the interviews with people who knew him well and worked with him, there seems to be a consensus that as a person he was a virtuous and wonderful man, and in getting the College started he was equally wonderful and capable; but when it came to expansion and growth of the school, he did not measure up to what was needed. As one former faculty member remarked with a sigh of resignation: "He was so good, and did so well with what he had. But had he stayed on, this school would not have grown."



When Deputy filed his quarterly report to the State Board at the end of the fall quarter, 1936, he surprisingly saw the decline in enrollment (216 to 211) in a positive way. He reasoned that the decline was "due to the fact that all graduates of the past year and others unplaced in previous years have secured teaching positions or in a few cases other work positions, whereas in previous years a considerable number of the unplaced graduates returned for further work." Though some might question this rationale, Deputy went on to add: "We consider this condition wholesome, indicating a close correlation between graduation and service rendered to the state."<sup>64</sup>

#### Deputy's Last Year as President

Though unaware of the fact, in January, 1937, Deputy began his last calendar year as president. The decision for mandatory retirement came with a five-to-four decision of the State Board on May 4, 1937, "that the retirement age of 68 be set for all staff members and employees, administrative and otherwise, of the state teachers colleges," to become effective January 1, 1938. Deputy was seventy years of age. "News of retirement came rather as a surprise," the student newspaper quoted him as saying.<sup>65</sup> "Oh, but that was a dark day around the halls of the main building; it came as a real blow," said a former faculty member remembering the day the Board's decision was announced.

In view of the many things that motivated the State Teachers College Board that decade, the decision to make retirement mandatory

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<sup>64</sup> Quarterly Report, December 2, 1936.

<sup>65</sup> Northern Student, May 14, 1937, p. 1.



was not surprising. Political factors entered into the decisions of the Board after 1933. After the death of Commissioner of Education James McConnell that year, and then the one-year term of E. M. Phillips, John Gunderson Rockwell became the commissioner and held the post the rest of the decade. Rockwell was an ardent supporter of the Farmer-Labor Party which held the governor's chair from 1930 to 1939 when Republican Harold Stassen became governor. The Board went into executive session more frequently in this period than had been the custom for many years.<sup>66</sup> Sometimes the Board's Farmer-Labor members caucused in private and agreed upon decisions without consultation with the other members of the Board or the college presidents. And more and more the Board began to interfere in the internal administration and in the curriculum of the colleges to a degree considered improper by many educators. For instance, the Board ruled that emphasis should be given such subjects as cooperatives and the labor movement. And on May 4, 1937, the Board requested outlines of all courses offered in the social studies fields in the colleges; on June 8, 1937, the Board appointed two members to work with the presidents in reviewing the curriculum of the two-year graduates, an educational problem for which lay Board members had questionable qualifications. Moreover, that same year the Board appointed a committee on educational appointments to recommend candidates for election to the faculty, to the business

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<sup>66</sup>The presidents of the colleges normally met with the Board at its regular meetings. When Rockwell became commissioner, however, it was not uncommon that the presidents be sent out of the room, like miscreant schoolboys, when the Board wished to discuss something in private. Though perhaps letters regarding this rather irregular Board behavior may have been removed, there is nothing in the Deputy files to suggest that he looked upon the Board with any disfavor.



office, and even to the janitorial staffs.<sup>67</sup>

The Board decision to terminate employment at age sixty-eight, however, had been discussed off and on in Board meetings for two years before the decision was finally made in 1937. Presumably, the Board's decision was prompted by the desire to get younger staff members and improve the unemployment situation, but also it appears that it wished to find replacements with the correct point of view. The more radical of the Board members fought for a mandatory retirement age of sixty-five, but they lost out.<sup>68</sup>

Possibly the biggest solace that Deputy found that spring of 1937 was in the legislative act allowing \$220,000 for the construction of buildings on the Bemidji campus.<sup>69</sup> The College newspaper greeted the final passage of the bill with the headline of "Hope of Decade Realized." The legislature voted the money to "build a physical education building and wings for the main building and the dormitory,"

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<sup>67</sup> A year later, 1938, the Board established two more committees, a personnel committee to study and review the credentials of all candidates for appointment, and a business committee to do the same for the office staffs. In June 1938 the Board passed a resolution authorizing the faculties to organize a union if they so desired. The Farmer-Labor Party dominance on the Board came to an end with the appointments of resident directors by Governor Harold Stassen beginning in May 1939. Soon after the special committees dissolved, and the Board went back to its former policies. Dudley S. Brainard in his history of St. Cloud was highly critical of the Farmer-Labor dominated Board, but Jean Talbot in her history of Winona college avoids mentioning the issue.

<sup>68</sup> Though difficult to document, contemporaries of Deputy asserted in interviews that no one on the Board was out to "get" Deputy; rather, if the mandatory retirement was aimed at anyone, it was at the Duluth president, E. H. Bohannon, who had had some difficulties in his last years getting reappointed by the Board.

<sup>69</sup> Minnesota, Session Laws (1937), c. 385.



read the newspaper, although it did not turn out that way as all of the money was used up just on the physical education building. Even before construction started, it was realized that the amount granted was insufficient; the Board therefore formulated a request to the Public Works Administration for aid to complete all the buildings.<sup>70</sup> The request was not approved. The next course was to apply to the Works Progress Administration for aid, which was granted for the physical education building only. Hopes ran high that the Works Progress Administration would come through with more funds to finish the architect's plans for the entire gymnasium unit which included two gymnasiums, a swimming pool, an auditorium, and several classrooms. After simply a morass of red tape, work finally started on December 15, 1937, with plans to construct the main portion of the gymnasium building only. Yet the College newspaper wrote optimistically: "Before this unit is completed, plans will be arranged to complete the remainder when it becomes known what further grants will be possible. . . ."<sup>71</sup> No more grants came, and all the allotted funds--\$220,000 from the state and \$140,000 from the federal government--were used to construct only "Plan A" of the physical education unit. This included a main gymnasium (to serve also as an auditorium), locker and shower rooms, as one might expect, but out of necessity it came to include also a recreation room, a lunch and social room, a bookstore, student union, three industrial

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<sup>70</sup> Northern Student, April 30, 1937, p. 1. Four of the five pages of the May 4, 1937, Board Minutes are taken up by the results of a discussion with a P. W. A. official at the meeting who then spoke optimistically of easily getting federal monies for college projects.

<sup>71</sup> Northern Student, December 10, 1937, p. 1.



arts rooms, one classroom, a laundry room, offices, workrooms, and closets. Before workmen finally completed the building in 1939--which required another \$25,000 from the legislature--it was the largest W. P. A. project going on in the state, and it became a cause celebre for state politicians to successfully exploit. Such things as accusations and counter accusations on alleged mishandling of funds, false charges of having to knock out a newly constructed brick wall in order to remove a large cement mixer, along with reporters listening in at open transoms on secret sessions of the State College Board, and the like, were used effectively and to a degree aided the election victory of Harold Stassen as governor in 1938. Deputy, who saw only the groundbreaking for the building sixteen days before he retired, was not present to witness the alleged scandal.

When Deputy began his last term as president in the fall quarter of 1937, student enrollment was down. The enrollment figure, 193, was the lowest fall enrollment since 1921. Deputy also much regretted not being able to see the new gymnasium building rise. He could, however, take comfort in the fact that he had laid the plans and helped untangle the red tape to get construction going, and he was present with pick and shovel for opening ceremonies on December 15, 1937, the day work began on excavation.<sup>72</sup>

The State College Board began seeking Deputy's replacement soon after it announced the mandatory retirement age, May 4, 1937, and formed

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<sup>72</sup>Northern Student, January 14, 1938, p. 1. Another ceremony, this time with W. P. A. officials in attendance, occurred January 15, 1938, but Deputy was not present for it. The new building lay between the main building and Sanford Hall and adjoined the latter.



a committee to suggest candidates. On August 2, 1937, the committee presented the names of seven candidates to the Board; the Board by a six-to-one vote chose Charles R. Sattgast. At the time, Sattgast was at Columbia University completing his work for a Ph. D. degree, and for the seven years prior to his going to Columbia, he had been president of Sioux Falls College, Sioux Falls, South Dakota. His duties at Bemidji were to begin January 1, 1938, but because of a delay in completing his doctoral thesis, he received permission from the Board to begin February 1, 1938.<sup>73</sup>

During that last quarter of Deputy's presidency, recognition and tribute were shown to him in many ways. The school published a special bulletin of the Northern Student to honor him; the Northern Minnesota Educational Association set up a "Special Deputy Scholarship Fund"; the School Master's Club in the state gave him a gift in honor of his services; several banquets and teas, both on and off campus, were given. Deputy himself spoke more often than usual that fall at the student assembly programs, and he also gave the address at fall graduation exercises. Community and school newspaper editorials about the man reflected the warm regard held for Deputy and what he had done for Bemidji, the college, and the entire area. A phrase so oft-repeated as to become a cliché was the statement that Deputy "was the best-loved school man in Minnesota." The state college presidents held a dinner for him and Duluth president E. H. Bohannon "as an expression of the long-time cordial relations among the individual members of the

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<sup>73</sup>Dr. E. W. Beck of the Bemidji faculty served as acting president for the month of January, 1938, and he is sometimes counted as the school's second president.



group."<sup>74</sup> The State College Board added a resolution to its December 14, 1937, minutes in behalf of both presidents Deputy and Bohannon: "Realizing as we do that the services of these men are largely responsible for the gradual development and efficiency of the institutions named, we take this occasion to thank them for the wisdom, faithfulness, and efficiency with which they have governed and guided their respective institutions."

On December 31, 1937, Deputy affixed his signature on a state document for the last time as president of Bemidji State Teachers College; seven days later he and his wife left on a 9,000 mile tour of southern and eastern United States. They returned the next May, and after the summer in Bemidji, he and his wife moved to Florida where he accepted a teaching position at Southern College, Lakeland, Florida. He taught classes in the related fields of education until 1942, and after the death of his wife that year, he enrolled again as a graduate student at Indiana University. Deputy made very few trips back to Bemidji after his retirement; one of these was on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the college in 1944. Sporadic illnesses, including an operation at the Mayo Clinic, interfered with his doctoral studies. Just prior to his death on March 13, 1947, however he completed the last of his requirements and received his Ph. D. degree at the age of eighty, an achievement referred to by university officials as "notable and unique."

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<sup>74</sup>Minutes of the Presidents' Meetings, December 14, 1937. E. H. Bohannon retired at the same time as Deputy; his replacement was named at the same Board meeting that chose Sattgast to replace Deputy.



In the fall of 1967, prompted by minor student agitation, the words "State Normal School" over the entrance to the main building on campus were cemented over, and substituted instead in large steel letters were the words "Deputy Hall." Considering the man, his personality, and all the honorable things for which he stood, one can surmise that he would much have preferred the original name on the building.



## CHAPTER VI

### BEMIDJI COLLEGE SINCE 1938: A SUMMARY

Dr. Charles R. Sattgast, one of the younger college presidents at thirty-nine when he began on February 1, 1938, served as president of Bemidji College until his death on March 24, 1964. He interrupted his tenure of office when he went into the military service from 1943 to 1946; Dr. Archie C. Clark served as president during his absence.

Sattgast was born at Mount Vernon, Illinois, January 26, 1899, and received a diploma from Southern Illinois University, his bachelor's degree from the University of Illinois, his master's degree from Stanford, and his Ph.D. from Teacher's College, Columbia University. He worked in public school and college work all of his life except for one year, 1919-1920, when he was a dairy extension agent for the University of Illinois. He taught in rural schools of Illinois, was superintendent of schools at Richfield, Kansas, a member of the faculty at Colorado State College, Greeley, Colorado, from 1926 to 1930, and served as president of Sioux Falls College, South Dakota, from 1930 to 1937.<sup>1</sup>

Sattgast had many characteristics similar to those of his predecessor, Manfred W. Deputy. He, too, held strongly to strict Methodist mores; he also showed paternalism towards students and

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<sup>1</sup>Northern Student, April 9, 1964, p. 1.



faculty; and he was totally dedicated to serving and improving the college. Sattgast, a big man physically, was also a dynamic personality; he nearly always spoke with force and gusto. In his years as president, Sattgast led the school in some of the worst of times during World War II, and some of the best of times beginning in the late 1950's. His initial year, 1938, found the college with an enrollment of less than 200 and a faculty of 25; by his death in 1964, the enrollment had reached 2,500, the faculty 125, and the school was the fastest-growing college in Minnesota in terms of percentage growth. The physical plant grew from one classroom building, one dormitory, and a gymnasium on a twenty-acre campus in 1938 to twelve modern buildings on a seventy-four-acre campus by 1964.<sup>2</sup>

Sattgast's first significant change in the organizational structure of the school took place in 1939 with the decision to divide the faculty into five separate divisions with a chairman for each. This divisional structure is still in use in 1968, although there are now seven divisions, most of which have sub-divisions or departments; the seven major divisions are education, fine and applied arts, health and physical education, languages and literature, philosophy and psychology, science and mathematics, and social science.

In the first three years after Sattgast's appointment, the enrollment climbed about 100 students each year so that by the fall of 1940, 501 students were enrolled. This made an all-time high enrollment and augured well for the future. Then came World War II and an almost steady decline. In the fall of 1942, there was a 23 per cent

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid.



drop, and only 98 out of the 283 students were men. The following two years, the fall enrollments fell to 141 and 146 students, the lowest since 1920. In the second summer school session of 1942, only 13 students registered. In 1942, the school placed a service flag six feet by nine in the main entry of the gymnasium, now named Memorial Hall, for those students who were in service. It carried a star for each student and faculty member who had entered the service since 1940. There was a blue star for every serviceman (360 by October, 1944), and the blue star was replaced by a gold one for those killed in action. By the end of the war, 21 former members of the Bemidji student body had been killed in the war.<sup>3</sup>

Dr. Sattgast left Bemidji in the fall of 1943 to begin training at Fort Custer, Michigan. He served as a major in military government in England, France, Germany, Austria, and Italy. He returned as president to start the fall session in 1946.

The male population at Bemidji State kept dropping during World War II so that by the fall of 1944, only 18 men were on campus. Despite this fact, Bemidji became the only state college to continue football without interruption throughout the war years. Indeed, the 1944 team had an undefeated season, although reportedly the coach had to round up some townspeople to fill in occasionally on the days of the games.

With the war ended, the veterans began to pour back into school in the fall of 1946. That year the fall enrollment went up to 575, or

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<sup>3</sup>Bemidji Daily Pioneer, January 4, 1960, p. 1. This particular issue of the Pioneer was called a "souvenir edition" devoted to college news and published in connection with the dedication of the new Bemidji College physical education building.



391 more than the previous year, and men outnumbered the women almost three to one. Also in 1946, the State Teachers College Board authorized the granting of the Bachelor of Arts degree and approved a new curriculum appropriate to the B. A. degree. Very few, however, pursued the B. A. degree at Bemidji during the first decade it was available.<sup>4</sup>

In 1947 the Board authorized the Associate in Education degree to replace the old two-year diploma, and the Associate in Arts degree for graduates of the two-year general education program that attracted students mainly interested in secretarial work. In 1949, students interested in elementary school teaching could still finish a program in two years and become certified, but gradually throughout the next decade the state Department of Education raised standards for certification so that by the fall of 1961, all beginning teachers in elementary schools were required to have a bachelor's degree.

The College Board authorized Bemidji to offer the Master of Science in Education degree in 1953, and the first graduate classes began that summer. Enrollment in the program began slowly with nearly all of the graduate students in summer schools. By the 1967-68 school year, however, there were 42 full-time and 92 part-time graduate students enrolled during the regular school year. Bemidji awarded its first M. S. degree in 1955. The number of graduate degrees awarded increased each year so that in 1967, the college awarded 44 master's degrees.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>5</sup>Information from registrar's office, Bemidji State College.



Until well after World War II had ended, President Sattgast had the use of only one more building than his predecessor: the physical education building. Out of necessity, the building came to be used for a variety of purposes other than physical education. These ranged from a lunch bar and student union to an assembly hall to a post office to the holding of classes in the lobby. The first new structures after World War II were two wooden government-barracks units to be used for "temporary housing." Though no longer used for housing in 1968, these two eye-sores still grace the campus, are still in use, and are known affectionately as "the shacks." The first major building project on campus after the war came with the erection of a \$240,000 library building adjacent to the main building (Deputy Hall), and first used in 1947. The heating plant building was again enlarged in 1949. Next came a \$600,000 new Laboratory School building (campus elementary school) in 1950. Sanford Hall, the only residence hall in use since 1920, finally received some relief from its many years of cramped quarters when Birch Hall, providing living quarters for 200 students, was completed in 1952 at a cost of \$700,000. Birch Hall also included a food service building, a large reception lounge, and a recreation area. The erection of Birch Hall completed what could be labeled the first phase of the building program that followed the war. An interesting feature regarding these buildings was the fact that all were connected by underground tunnels for student use. Especially in the rugged Bemidji winters, students made use of these warm underground thoroughfares, and this use gave rise to apochryphal stories of some



students who never once went outside between January and April.<sup>6</sup>

Beginning again in the late 1950's, and continuing to the present, buildings began to spring up on campus like the proverbial mushrooms. Starting with another food service building in 1958, the school added two more dormitories in 1959 and 1960, and expanded the heating plant facilities once again. Also in 1959, workmen completed the first unit of a new physical education complex at a cost of \$1,000,000. This large building contained a gymnasium, a swimming pool, classrooms, and faculty offices. The college completed the second unit of the physical education complex in 1967; it houses a large indoor practice area for athletic teams, and in the winter it serves as an indoor hockey arena with seating for 3,000 spectators.

A legislative act of 1959 provided for a science laboratory and classroom building; it was completed in April 1962 at a cost of \$1,080,000. By action of the State College Board, the building was named the Charles R. Sattgast Hall of Science. The 1961 legislature provided \$630,000 for an industry and arts building, but its construction was delayed two years by another legislative act which stopped all state construction while awaiting a favorable referendum on the revision of the state constitution. The referendum passed, work began, and the new industry and arts building was completed in 1964 and named Harry A. Bridgeman Hall.<sup>7</sup> Construction of new dormitories, or wings to those dormitories, reached the point at which one has been underway every year since 1960. All dormitories have been named after

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<sup>6</sup>Bemidji Daily Pioneer, January 4, 1960, pp. 1, 12.

<sup>7</sup>Northern Student, February 27, 1964, p. 1.



trees and have such names as Birch, Pine, Oak, Walnut, and Linden. The major buildings most recently completed are the new A. C. Clark Library, a \$1,400,000 structure completed in 1966, and a \$1,000,000 student union, first occupied in January, 1968. Currently under construction is another dormitory wing. On the drawing boards at the moment are another food complex building, a high-rise (eight-story) dormitory, a new classroom building, a fine arts building, and a new administration building.<sup>8</sup>

In contrast with the almost total lack of building under President Deputy in the 1920's and 1930's, this dramatic building period in the last twenty years is the antithesis of the Deputy period. It has caused much wonderment, head-shaking, and speculation on when or if it will ever end. Understandably, it has brought with it not a few problems, notably with townspeople living in the area of the college who are finding their homes being taken by the college for necessary building expansion. While interested townspeople in the Deputy period worried about the college because it was too small, they are now worrying because the college is getting too big, and town-and-gown relationships have been strained because of it. Now almost half of the population of the community is made up of Bemidji State College students, and each year the number of students keeps increasing.

In 1937 students paid \$10.00 tuition charges per quarter (three quarters in the school year) and a \$5.00 activity fee which entitled the student to the use of free text books as well as free admission to

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<sup>8</sup>Information from John Glas, acting president, Bemidji State College, March 18, 1968.



all college-sponsored activities. By 1947 students paid \$20.00 tuition per quarter, and the activity fee went up to \$8.00, but students had to buy or rent their own books. In 1957 the College Board set tuition rates at \$35.00 per quarter and the student activity fee at \$10.00. In 1967, the tuition figure was set at \$5.00 per credit or approximately \$80.00 per quarter for an average class credit load of 16 quarter hours or credits; the student activity fee remained at \$10.00 although an extra \$5.00 was added for student union fees. According to the college catalogs' estimated costs for a student during the school year (tuition, fees, books, board and room for three quarters), it would take \$250.00 to go to school at Bemidji College in 1937; \$400.00 in 1947; \$700.00 in 1957; and \$1150.00 in 1967.

Rising costs of attending college did not deter enrollments. The size of the student body has continuously increased since World War II, with the exception of two years during the Korean conflict in the early 1950's. Beginning again with 1953 and a 471 enrollment, the number of students rose on the average of about 100 each year until 1958 when it jumped 25 per cent, from 847 to 1231 in one year. Between 1958 and 1962, enrollment rose nearly 200 a year; since 1962, with 2,222 students, the enrollment figures have gone up nearly 400 each year so that in the fall quarter of 1967, 4,554 students enrolled. The projected enrollment figure for 1970 is 5,200 and 7,000 by 1975.<sup>9</sup> (See Appendix III for all enrollment figures from 1919 to 1968.)

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<sup>9</sup>Information from E. J. Aalberts, registrar, Bemidji State College, March 19, 1968.



Faculty growth has been commensurate with student growth so that in the current 1967-1968 school year there are 203 on the instructional staff alone, and 252 on the entire faculty.<sup>10</sup> Of the 203, 29 hold the rank of professor, 21 are associate professors, 66 are assistant professors, and 70 hold the rank of instructor; there are also 17 others, mainly graduate students, having no designated rank. Fifty of the 203 (about 25 per cent of the faculty) hold an earned doctorate. The mean average salary for the academic year 1967-1968 according to professorial ranks are the following: professor, \$13,295.00; associate professor, \$11,264.00; assistant professor, \$9,662.00; instructor, \$7,886. Just eight years before this in the 1960-1961 school year, with a student enrollment of 1,724, Bemidji had only 85 on the instructional staff and 90 on the full faculty. Twenty-six of the 85, however, or 30 per cent of the staff held earned doctorates. The mean salary for the faculty of 1960-1961, according to rank, was the following: professor, \$8,950; associate professor, \$8,113; assistant professor \$7,335; and instructor, \$6,461. Financially, things had improved considerably for the faculty in those few years. The 1967 legislature proved to be most beneficent for state college faculty members, at least for those members who held the rank of professor or associate professor. For the years 1967-1968 and 1968-1969, it raised the salaries of professors 30 per cent from their 1966-1967 figures; for associate professors, salaries went up almost 20 per cent. Gone, it seemed, was the penury that marked the legislatures while Deputy was president; since World

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<sup>10</sup> Faculty members not on the instructional staff include such persons as those in the counseling center, financial aids directors, field services directors, and the like.



War II, money from the legislatures both for buildings and salaries has been forthcoming, and though the appetites for money are insatiable, the state of Minnesota has not been stingy in the recent past in building up the state college system. The system now has 33,000 students on six campuses; at present there are 1,100 faculty members in the system which has a biennial budget of \$100 million. By 1973, the system is expected to enroll 44,000 students.<sup>11</sup>

Three Bemidji resident directors on the State College Board who served with President Sattgast are still living. In interviews, each commented on what he regarded as the most important events at the college while each was resident director. Wilbur S. Lycan, owner of the Markham Hotel in Bemidji, resident director from 1939 to 1943, said: "In my estimation the most important event that happened was that the Bemidji State Teachers College became fully accredited as a degree-granting college in 1943 by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. By this action we gained full academic respectibility." Lycan also noted that in 1939 the legislature granted an original appropriation of \$160,000 for a library building, and although the library was not built until some years later due to the war, "this was an important appropriation" because any appropriation was hard to get in those days.

Clarence R. Smith, an attorney in Bemidji, served as resident director from 1944 to 1948. He stated: "Possibly the most important

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<sup>11</sup>Faculty Salaries In Central State Colleges and Universities, Fiscal Year 1967-1968, Cooperative Study No. 25 (confidential study for cooperating schools only), Bureau of Research and Examination Services, University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, Iowa, December 1, 1967, p. 35. (Mimeographed.)



development at Bemidji State Teachers College during my term as resident director was the authorization and approval for the granting of Bachelor of Arts degrees. Previously the only degree awarded was the Bachelor of Science degree." He added that "another very important development or possibly difficult task during this time was the maintaining of the college. At one time during those war years we had almost as many faculty members as students. Many attempts were made to close Bemidji State Teachers College and convert the buildings and premises to other state use. With the present enrollment and expansion at the college, it is now easily seen that all efforts on the part of college officials and the citizens of Bemidji in keeping the college at Bemidji were and are well justified."

Herbert E. Olson, also a Bemidji attorney, was resident director from 1955 to 1967 (Dexter Duggan, deceased, was resident director from 1948 to 1955). Olson emphasized three important developments. "First is enrollment," he said. In 1955, the number of full-time students was 601; in 1960 there were 1,724; in 1967 there were 4,554. Olson attributed much of physical growth and change on campus to the state's allowing the sale of revenue bonds to finance the building of new dormitories. This meant, he indicated, that the state did not have to dip into its own treasury but allowed building to continue, the bonds to be paid off by the students from the normal costs of living and eating in the dormitories. The third important development cited by Olson was the acquisition of more land. The college acquired a fifty-acre open tract of land adjoining the campus which was owned by the city and generally called "the city forest." This increased the size of the



campus to seventy-four acres. It was also during Olson's term as resident director that the college name was changed from Bemidji State Teachers College to the present name of Bemidji State College, the change of name coming by action of the 1957 legislature.

At present there are no resident directors on the State College Board. The 1963 legislature eliminated the provision for appointing members from the counties in which colleges are located; the only limitation currently in force is that no more than one member may be from the same county at the time of appointment. There are today eight Board members serving four-year terms, but by action of the 1963 legislature, the terms will be progressively changed to six years. The ninth member of the Board is the state commissioner of education who also serves as secretary to the Board. All Board members serve without compensation, although expenses of attending meetings are reimbursed. Regular meetings are held quarterly, although it is commonly found necessary to hold meetings more frequently. The Board maintains a central administrative office in St. Paul under the direction of the state colleges' chancellor who is appointed by the Board. The purpose of this office is to coordinate the activities of the state colleges, to provide certain accounting and budgeting services, to provide the Board with reports and statistical information, to serve a liaison function with other elements of state government, and to carry out the policies and directions of the State College Board.<sup>12</sup>

Since World War II, graduates of Bemidji College have found little difficulty in securing employment. In 1943, Dr. A. C. Clark,

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<sup>12</sup>Minnesota, Legislative Manual (1967-1968), pp. 190-191.



acting president of the College, was quoted as saying that there were so many teaching positions open that "students interviewed superintendents instead of superintendents interviewing the students." Clark added that year: "I can safely say there are ten positions or more for every individual we could possibly place." Although it is hardly that situation today, all the 1966-1967 graduates of Bemidji on the Bachelor of Science teaching curriculum easily found employment. There were 408 graduates--170 in elementary education and 238 in secondary education. The mean average salary for these beginning teachers was \$5,459, which does not include extra-curricular activities pay. This represented an increase of \$254 over the salaries of beginning teachers for the preceding year; and ten years before this, 1957, the average mean salary paid for Bemidji graduates was \$3,864. Beginning teachers from Bemidji in 1967 found employment in 53 of the 87 counties in the state. A total of 136 elementary and 157 high school teachers, or 80 per cent who accepted teaching positions, secured employment in Minnesota. In addition to placement in Minnesota, beginning teachers found positions in 17 states, and 2 accepted positions in Canada.<sup>13</sup>

The number of students seeking a B. A. degree at Bemidji has grown from a miniscule figure of less than 1 per cent in 1950 to about 15 per cent of the student body by 1968. The number of B. A. graduates in 1966-1967 increased from 75 in 1966 to 94 in 1967; of the latter figure, 10 per cent went on to graduate school. Excepting those in graduate school or in military service, the mean average salary for

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<sup>13</sup>Bemidji State College Placement Bureau, Annual Report, 1966-1967, pp. 1, 2, 9. (Mimeographed.)



B. A. graduates in 1967 was \$7,213.00 or nearly \$2,000.00 better than their B. S. degree counterparts in teaching. In any event, both B. S. and B. A. graduates of Bemidji have found it relatively easy to secure employment in the affluent times since World War II.<sup>14</sup>

After the death of Sattgast on March 24, 1964, the State College Board chose Dr. Harry F. Bangsberg to succeed him. Bangsberg began his duties September 1, 1964, although official inaugural ceremonies were not held until April 21, 1965.

Bangsberg, whose hometown was LaCrosse, Wisconsin, received his B. A. degree from Luther College in 1950, his M. A. from the University of Iowa in 1951, and his Ph. D., in history, from Iowa in 1957. His major area of study was the British Empire and the British Commonwealth of Nations. He taught history at Western Illinois University, Macomb, and Wisconsin State University, Eau Claire. In 1959, he resigned as associate professor of history at Eau Claire to become assistant director of the Wisconsin State University system at Madison. He left Madison in 1963 to become the first executive director of the Higher Education Coordinating Council of metropolitan St. Louis, Missouri; he left this position after one year to become the fifth president of Bemidji State College.<sup>15</sup>

Many at Bemidji compared Bangsberg's college presidency to the national presidency of John F. Kennedy. Bangsberg, a young college president at age thirty-six, was full of ideas, and he brought to the campus a freshness and vitality that were infectious in the college and

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>15</sup>Bemidji Daily Pioneer, March 24, 1967, p. 1.



community. Probably more important than specific reforms and innovations, he added to the atmosphere a spirit of enthusiasm and a feeling that the whole school was moving ahead in a useful, positive direction. At Bemidji he led in encouraging student participation in affairs of the administration of the college; he worked to establish the college as a cultural center for northern Minnesota and led in the revising of the cultural arts program to bring in nationally known speakers and artists for all citizens in the area to enjoy. He worked to establish a system of joint faculty appointments between the University of Minnesota Cooperative Extension Service and Bemidji. He also worked with the University in conducting seminars and workshops at both the college and in neighboring towns. One of these led to Bemidji College being the center, one of five in the nation, for Indian studies and the training of Community Action Program personnel. Bangsberg also worked successfully to bring federal funds to Bemidji State in order to cooperate with such programs as Upward Bound and Operation Headstart and the National Science Foundation. In his first year he helped bring in grants totaling \$61,000; the next year grants rose to \$232,000. Under his guidance the curriculum was strengthened in the direction of liberal arts, and he initiated the work that led to the recent 1967 legislative decision to allow Bemidji State to offer a Master of Arts degree. His particular academic interest was in Asian studies, and he inaugurated the present Asian studies minor in the division of social studies.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid.



President Bangsberg believed firmly that the college faculty should be involved in projects off-campus as well as on, and in that light he accepted an assignment to Viet Nam which ended in tragedy. Bangsberg became a member of a team of nine United States educators sponsored by the United States Department of State through the Agency for International Development. The group went to Viet Nam to advise the government of Viet Nam in the development of a system of public higher education. Bangsberg left Bemidji on January 1, 1967; he never returned. He and six others of his group were killed in a plane crash in Viet Nam on March 23, 1967.

Since Bangsberg's untimely death, John Glas has served as acting president. Formerly he had held the title of assistant to the president under both Bangsberg and Sattgast. At this writing, March, 1968, Bemidji State College still waits for the State College Board to act on the appointment of a new president; it also waits for the appointment of the number two position at the college, that of academic dean. Moreover, the Minnesota state college system currently has an acting chancellor, and interested people throughout the state waited with some impatience for the Board to make a permanent appointment. The Board did act recently on the appointment; on March 13, 1968, the Board named G. Theodore Mitau, chairman of the political science department at Macalester College, to be the new chancellor. Mitau, 47, will assume his duties July 15; his full-time annual salary will be \$30,000.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Minneapolis Tribune, March 14, 1968, p. 1.



Essentially the current times are both a holding period and a watershed period for Bemidji State College. At the present the school carries on with an acting president, an acting academic dean, and an acting associate academic dean. From which direction the school moves from here is yet unforeseen; much of the direction will depend on the unnamed president and the unnamed deans.

Since the days of President Deputy, many changes have taken place at Bemidji College. The physical plant improvements are visible, but other changes undoubtedly have greater significance. The students have changed; the curriculum and the teaching have changed. Change has been imperative; without it the school would have deteriorated. However much some faculty and alumni might nostalgically long for the Bemidji College of 1927 or 1939 or 1955, or however much they would like the quiet serenity of a small homogenous student body, the fact is that such longing is fiction; for a college today cannot be that simple (and probably never was). The problems only shift to new areas, and the participants seem to have but little control over the shifts. There is no escape to an ivory tower fantasy, nor should there be. The college must live in the real world--although one would hasten to add that the real world in Bemidji affords far more isolation and insulation than is normal for most colleges and universities. This may be an advantage if the college makes use of the environment. The future will bring new problems, unforeseen challenges, and complex involvements that might frighten people if the crystal ball were illuminated. Fortunately, they see only in a mirror darkly and move forward with a quiet confidence that the school has the resources to enhance the



the traditions that it has inherited. But whatever the future, whatever the past, perhaps the closing lines of Bangsberg's inaugural address best offer the challenge for tomorrow's Bemidji State College: "Let us work together as faculty, students, administration and friends and supporters of this college, and we can accomplish so much. Let us do as Edwin Markahm urged in his poem:

I am done with the years that were, I am quits,  
I am done with the dead and the old;  
They are mines worked out, I delved in their pits,  
And I have saved their grains of gold--  
Now I turn to the future for wine and bread--  
I have bidden the past adieu--  
I laugh and lift hands to the year ahead,  
Come on! I'm ready for you.



*And Our Resident Directors*



MR. A. P. WHITE  
1915—1925



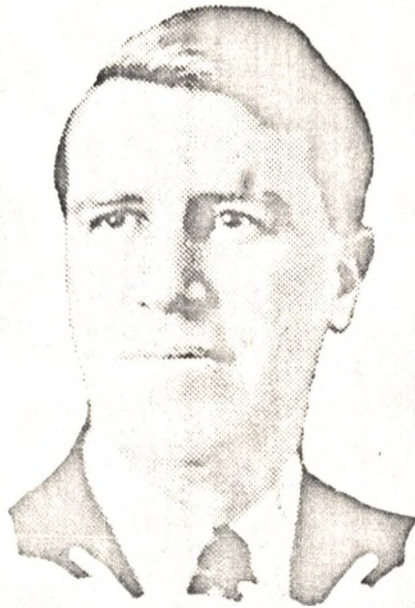
MR. R. H. SCHUMAKER  
1925—1929



MR. H. Z. MITCHELL  
1929—1931



# Resident Directors -- Continued



DR. D. H. GARLOCK  
1931—1939



MR. W. S. LYCAN  
1939—1943



MR. C. R. SMITH  
1943—1947



## APPENDIX II

STATE NORMAL SCHOOL  
Bemidji, Minnesota

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SUMMER SESSION, 1919  
June 23--August 1

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### THE NEW SCHOOL

The Sixth State Normal School of Minnesota will hold its first session during the six weeks summer term beginning June 23, and closing August 1.

The opening of the new school at this time is opportune because of the unusual demand for trained teachers. The shortage of teachers everywhere and the increase of salaries offer desirable opportunities to those who wish to teach.

Bemidji is a clean, attractive town of eight thousand and is ideally located on a beautiful lake and easily accessible by

three railroads and good automobile roads.

### PURPOSE

The summer school will be organized on the general plan of work offered in the other State Normal Schools. Provision will be made for those who desire (1) academic or professional work for teachers' state certificates; (2) credit for normal school diploma; (3) better preparation for principalships, normal training or work in special grades; (4) to improve general scholarship and teaching skill.

During the six weeks students will cover the work of a twelve weeks term in two subjects by arranging for classes to meet in double period sessions each day.



The satisfactory completion of any of these double period courses will give regular normal school credit and will be transferred to teachers' certificate where applicable.

Single period classes in Primary Methods, Rural School Methods and Reading Methods, may be formed if in sufficient demand by those desiring them for certificate purposes only.

The rule in all normal schools is that no student is permitted to take more than two full double period courses during the summer school for regular credit, except that in case of strong students one single non-credit course may be taken in addition.

#### ADMISSION

The general requirements for admission are good health, good character and general fitness to teach. For classification into regular courses students will be

expected to present such records or certificates as apply to the following described courses. All records or evidence of preparation for entrance must be presented on or before the opening day.

#### THE TWO-YEAR COURSE

High school graduates will be admitted without examination upon presentation of diploma and certified statements of courses completed in an approved high school.

#### THE FIVE-YEAR COURSE

Those holding first or second grade teachers' certificates may be admitted without examination; also those who have completed the work of the elementary school and hold the State High School Board certificate in arithmetic, geography, grammar and history may be admitted without examination.

Special students may be admitted by examination to be held at the



Normal School on Monday, June 23.

Examinations will begin at nine o'clock.

#### PROFESSIONAL COURSES REQUIRED

##### FOR CERTIFICATES

The laws of the state require as a condition for securing a first certificate not only academic standings in a specified list of subjects but also a certain amount of professional training which has been fixed at a minimum of twelve weeks. This training must be secured in a Normal School. A full professional course for a first class certificate will consist of six credits, four of which will be applied by the school toward the completion of the advanced course. Three of these credits (two for Normal School credit and one non-credit) may be earned in one summer session.

During the twelve weeks of required professional study the student must earn the six credits

within three subject groups, as follows: First, in Primary Methods, Reading Methods, and Rural School Methods, any two of these three subjects being carried in single daily recitation periods for six weeks but one to be a double daily recitation for six weeks; second, in any two of American History, Arithmetic, Composition, Grammar, and Geography, each given in double daily recitation periods for six weeks; and third, in any one of Drawing, Elementary Handwork, Domestic Science, Hygiene and Sanitation and Music, each in double daily recitations for six weeks.

High school graduates can secure a first grade certificate by completing the first year of the two year course. Subjects required for first grade certificates will be offered during the summer session.



## PROFESSIONAL COURSES

The Department of Education announces that beginning with the summer session of 1919 all professional courses for common school certificates will be offered only in the State Normal Schools.

It is understood that six professional credits in the Normal School are counted as the equivalent of eight professional credits earned in the university schools.

## PART CREDIT

A teacher who has all the required academic credits and who completes three professional credits in the Normal School may receive a first class certificate valid for one year. Its renewal or extension will require the completion of three additional professional credits.

An applicant for a first class certificate who has all required credits, academic and professional, except a half-credit in algebra,

geometry, physics, or professional training, may secure a certificate valid for one year. A half-credit in any one of these first class certificate subjects may be earned in one summer.

## ENROLLMENT

Registration will begin at eight o'clock Monday morning, June 23. Wednesday, June 25, will be the last day of registration in each of the normal schools. This is necessary in order that the student may complete the full work of the courses and receive credit.

## DAILY SESSIONS

Sessions will be held five days in the week, except that July 4 will be a holiday. Most of the classes will meet in the forenoon.

## COST

Tuition is free to those who pledge to teach for two years in Minnesota. Others will pay five dollars for the term.

All students will pay a term



fee of one dollar to help defray incidental expenses.

Arrangements will be made to provide texts at the Normal School either on the rental basis or actual cost purchase plan, but it will be desirable for each student to bring such books as will likely bear upon the work.

#### BOARD AND ROOM

Assurance has recently been given by the citizens of Bemidji that ample boarding and rooming facilities at reasonable rates will be provided during the summer school and during the next year until the new dormitory shall be completed.

A list of approved boarding and rooming places is being arranged and may be secured in advance of the opening.

#### SPECIAL COURSES

Courses of special interest to rural teachers will be arranged according to demands, including

Primary Methods (full credit or for certificate).

Rural School Methods and Management (full credit or for certificate).

Story Telling and Children's Literature.

Games and Playground Methods.

Hand Work for Lower Grades.

Physiology and Hygiene.

Review Methods in Common Branches.

Provision will be made for special programs of interest, including lectures, musicals, lake trips, hikes and other forms of entertainment. A visit to the large mills and lumber yards will be arranged also.

#### COURSES

In order that courses may be definitely arranged it is desirable that the enclosed blank be filled and mailed as soon as possible.

The following are tentative courses to be offered and subject to change according to conditions which may arise:

Geometry  
Primary Methods



U. S. History  
Civics  
Arithmetic  
Algebra  
Grammar and Composition  
Middle and Upper Grade Methods  
Elementary Handwork  
Hygiene and Sanitation  
Games and Playground Methods  
Rural Sociology  
Writing  
Textiles and Clothing  
Foods and Cookery  
Manual Training  
Physics  
Story Telling  
Rural School Methods and  
Management  
Reading  
Agriculture  
Drawing  
Geography  
Public School Music

For further information concerning the school or work desired, address

M. W. Deputy,  
President.

Bemidji, Minnesota.



APPENDIX III

BEMIDJI STATE COLLEGE  
Bemidji, Minnesota  
ENROLLMENTS

YEAR	FALL	WINTER	SPRING	1st SS	2nd SS	Reg. Year EXTENSION	Summer EXTENSION	
1919-20	38	41	38	130	-	-	-	
1920-21	97	94	97	292	-	-	-	
1921-22	157	164	158	428	-	-	-	
1922-23	201	186	185	476	-	-	-	
1923-24	223	238	224	531	-	-	-	
1924-25	223	244	242	537	-	-	-	
1925-26	245	241	222	469	-	-	30	
1926-27	254	248	219	336	-	-	18	
1927-28	207	193	194	340	-	-	16	
1928-29	194	193	184	298	-	-	32	
1929-30	208	204	181	334	-	-	38	
1930-31	208	210	193	269	-	-	23	
1931-32	293	288	259	301	-	-	22	
1932-33	346	355	335	318	-	-	-	
1933-34	284	287	254	262	-	-	-	
1934-35	233	273	217	200	-	-	12	
1935-36	228	234	216	253	-	-	11	
1936-37	211	213	190	241	-	-	28	
1937-38	193	189	182	255	49	-	21	
1938-39	301	304	286	281	84	-	24	
1939-40	410	421	400	272	112	-	36	
1940-41	501	452	423	253	63	-	-	
1941-42	397	369	341	167	13	15	12	
1942-43	283	259	194	106	25	3	65	
1943-44	141	135	133	65	128	111	33	
1944-45	146	134	123	61	30	89	44	
1945-46	184	241	279	127	44	70	22	
1946-47	575	580	555	116	45	10	37	
1947-48	598	591	563	140	67	23	207	
1948-49	573	579	544	139	97	10	195	
1949-50	604	611	572	140	97	-	195	
1950-51	575	530	451	85	68	-	153	
1951-52	462	463	420	308	216	22	124	
1952-53	471	445	423	279	204	27	94	
1953-54	513	473	476	398	308	33	186	
1954-55	601	549	601	426	371	30	198	
1955-56	706	651	692	402	336	160	301	
1956-57	847	834	793	416	301	403	439	II
1957-58	847	865	1134	943	573	759	415	196
1958-59	1231	1163	1240	913	664	600	302	216
1959-60	1558	1575	1506	917	698	835	257	187
1960-61	1724	1669	1721	824	602	714	0	0
1961-62	1917	1798	1800	824	628	696	0	30
1962-63	2222	2061	2001	1068	789	756	69	52
1963-64	2554	2337	2312	1197	945	843	63	62
1964-65	2920	2592	2730	1216	989	733	58	205
1965-66	3390	3134	3089	1424	987	589	236	76
1966-67	3866	3701	3658	1525	1331	1061	214	331
1967-68	4554	4154						

The above figures for total enrollment include extension and institute enrollments.

\*There have been no summer extension classes since the summer of 1960. The figures on the report are for workshops and institutes held at the college during the summers.

These are also included in the total enrollment figures.



#### APPENDIX IV

STATE NORMAL SCHOOL  
Bemidji, Minnesota

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First Regular Year Opening  
Tuesday, September 2, 1919

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Calendar for 1919-1920

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Fall Term

Enrollment

Tuesday, September 2, 1919

Term Ends

Wednesday, November 26, 1919

Winter Term

Enrollment

Tuesday, December 2, 1919

Christmas Vacation Begins

Friday, December 19, 1919

School Work Resumed

Tuesday, January 6, 1920

Term Ends

Friday, March 5, 1920

Spring Term

Enrollment

Tuesday, March 16, 1920

Term Ends

Thursday, June 3, 1920

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#### GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

##### Location and Buildings

The site of the new school is one of the most attractive to be found anywhere. Located on

beautiful Lake Bemidji, in a thirty-acre campus of natural forest trees, the opportunities for outdoor sports and recreation through lake, forest and natural scenery are unexcelled.

The main building, costing \$100,000, is modern in every respect and is a model in appearance, convenience and in sanitary features.

Plans for a Woman's Hall, providing rooms for nearly 100 students, have been completed. This building will be located on the campus near the Normal School and will be ready for use some time within the year.

##### Purpose of School

The Normal School at Bemidji is the sixth State Normal School in Minnesota. Its purpose is to



help meet the increasing demand for better trained teachers. Its need has been well demonstrated in the successful summer school which closed Aug. 1. In this term students were enrolled from sixteen counties and from three different states. There are many inquiries concerning the work for the regular year and the indications are that the attendance in September will be large. Increasing salaries, together with the great demand for well trained teachers, offer excellent inducements to those who desire to become teachers.

The school will direct its efforts mainly to training teachers for both rural and city elementary schools. A two-year course of 24 credits will be offered to those who are graduates from a standard high school and a five year course of 60

credits to those who have completed only the eighth grade of the elementary schools.

#### Observation School

A distinct feature in the organization of the school will be the establishment of an elementary school consisting of four or five grades, including the first grade and the kindergarten, illustrating the best ideas and practices in education and providing opportunities for student teaching under the most favorable conditions. The observation school will be held in rooms especially equipped on the first floor of the Normal School building and will be in charge of teachers who are expert in this field of work.

#### Entrance Requirements

The general requirements for admission into the Normal School are: good health, good character, and general fitness to become a teacher.



When entering the school, students should present all credits, diplomas, state high school certificates, teachers' certificates and all standings beyond the eighth year.

#### Two-Year Course

Graduates of approved high schools are admitted to this course without examination upon presentation of their diplomas and certified high school credits.

Students from high schools offering less than four years of work will be admitted to the five-year course with such advanced standing as may be justified.

High school graduates who have taken the High School Normal Training courses, as post graduate work (i. e., as a fifth high school year), may receive eight credits in the advanced course. In all cases the subjects for which credits may be substituted shall be determined by the President.

#### Five-Year Course

Students holding a second grade certificate or credits admitting them to an approved high school course or the equivalent, will be admitted to the five-year course. While graduates of the eighth grade may be admitted, such admission will be limited to those whose records and maturity indicate their ability to carry the work.

Applicants to the five-year course who do not have the necessary credentials will be required to pass examinations in Arithmetic, Grammar, Geography, and U. S. History.

A first grade certificate, valid at time of presentation, will give the holder twelve credits on the five-year course, provided the average of the certificate is not less than 75 per cent. Subjects below 75 per cent shall not be credited, the total number of credits allowed being proportionately reduced.



### Diplomas and Certificates

The diploma from either the two-year or the five-year course qualifies the holder to teach in the elementary department of state high schools. It also qualifies for the principalship of a graded school, provided that a six weeks' course additional shall be taken in the State School of Agriculture.

Diplomas issued to graduates of State Normal Schools are valid as first grade certificates for two years, and, after two years of successful teaching, shall become first grade certificates for life when endorsed by the President of the school granting them and by the Commissioner of Education.

Those who need to teach before completing the entire course may receive a temporary certificate as follows:

A second grade certificate may be obtained by completing two years of the five-year course. A

first grade certificate may be obtained by completing three years of the five-year course, or one year of the two-year course. In such cases the first grade certificate is issued for two years and will be renewed for a period to be fixed by the Commissioner of Education on condition that the holder shall have completed one term of additional work and shall be recommended for renewal by the Normal School in which the student shall have done this additional work.

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### EXPENSES

To those who live in Minnesota and pledge to teach two years within the state, tuition is free. To all others tuition will be charged at the rate of ten dollars per term of twelve weeks, payable in advance.

Most text books will be provided by the Normal School for which a



rental fee of \$2.00 per term will be paid by each student. Students will be expected to buy certain supplementary books in connection with English courses and all such supplies as pens, pencils and drawing materials.

#### ROOM AND BOARD

Until the Woman's Hall shall be completed students will secure rooms at reasonable rates in the homes of Bemidji. Prices for rooms will range from \$8 to \$12 a month with two in a room, \$4 to \$6 for each student. Those living out of town may secure board at the school in the cooking department at approximate cost, which probably will be not more than \$4 per week, payable in advance. Those who desire board at the school as above described should notify the President of the school in advance of the opening, making a deposit of \$4

for the first week's board.

Lists of rooming and boarding places in private homes may be secured upon arrival at the School from the Dean of Women.

In no cases will students be permitted to occupy rooms not on the approved list nor to change rooming places without the knowledge and consent of the Dean of Women.

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#### RURAL SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

The Normal School will at all times give due attention to the needs and interests of rural schools. One or more members of the faculty will give special courses in rural education and will devote as much time as possible to institute work and school visitation.

The following special courses in rural education will be offered:

- (a) All subjects, academic and professional, necessary to securing a first or second grade certificate.



(b) Course in common branches, rural school methods, rural school curriculum.

(c) Courses in rural school management and community work.

(d) Courses in rural sociology and economics.

(e) Courses preparing for work in Consolidated Schools, including Agriculture, Home Economics, and Manual Training.

FIVE-YEAR CURRICULUM

(For Students not high school graduates)

First Year

Algebra . . . . .	3	Terms
Grammar . . . . .	2	Terms
Composition . . . . .	2	Terms
Geography . . . . .	2	Terms
Music . . . . .	1	Term
Reading . . . . .	2	Terms

Second Year

General History . . . . .	3	Terms
Drawing . . . . .	2	Terms
Music . . . . .	1	Term
Geometry . . . . .	3	Terms
Rhetoric . . . . .	1	Term
General Science . . . . .	1	Term
Physiology . . . . .	1	Term

Third Year

Arithmetic . . . . .	2	Terms
Biology . . . . .	2	Terms
English History . . . . .	1	Term
Literature . . . . .	2	Terms
Physics . . . . .	3	Terms
U. S. History . . . . .	2	Terms

Fourth Year

Chemistry . . . . .	3	Terms
Manual Training . . . . .	2	Terms
Literature . . . . .	2	Terms
Hygiene . . . . .	1	Term
Psychology . . . . .	1	Term
Sewing . . . . .	1	Term
Theory and Observation . . . . .	2	Terms

Fifth Year

Children's Literature . . . . .	1	Term
Civics . . . . .	1	Term
Cooking . . . . .	1	Term
History of Education . . . . .	1	Term
Penmanship . . . . .	1	Term
Psychology or Methods . . . . .	1	Term
School Management . . . . .	1	Term
Sociology . . . . .	1	Term
Teaching . . . . .	2	Terms
Electives . . . . .	2	Terms

TWO-YEAR COURSE

(For students who are graduates of a four-year high school)

Junior Year

Arithmetic . . . . .	1	Term
Grammar . . . . .	2	Terms
Drawing . . . . .	1	Term
Geography . . . . .	2	Terms
Music . . . . .	1	Term
Psychology . . . . .	1	Term
U. S. History . . . . .	2	Terms
Theory of Education . . . . .	1	Term
Sociology . . . . .	1	Term
Literature . . . . .	1	Term

Senior Year

Civics . . . . .	1	Term
Hygiene and Sanitation . . . . .	1	Term
Children's Literature . . . . .	1	Term
Upper or Lower Grade		
Methods . . . . .	1	Term
Reading . . . . .	1	Term
Literature and Themes of		
Story Telling and Pub-		
lic Speaking . . . . .	1	Term
Rural Sociology . . . . .	1	Term
Educational Psychology . . . . .	1	Term



Observation and Teaching . 2 Terms  
Electives . . . . . 2 Terms

The above courses are subject to modification according to conditions which may arise. During the first year classes will be formed according to the needs and advancement of the students who enroll.

For further information concerning courses or general plans, address

M. W. DEPUTY

President.



APPENDIX V

**BEMIDJI STATE TEACHERS COLLEGE**

**DAILY PROGRAM—FALL TERM, 1921**

Assembly—Wednesday 9:00 and Friday 11:00.

Chorus—Tuesday 2:30 and Thursday 10:00.

8:00 W., Th., F. and S.

French 1	5-1 & 5-2	Miss Schuster
or General Science	5-1 & 5-2	Miss Morse
Arithmetic 3 or	5-5 & J. G.	Miss Robinson
Psychology 1	J. G. & 5-5	Miss Bonsall
Geography 1	5-3	Miss Schattuck
College History	C. S.	Mr. Wirth

9:00 T., Th., F. and S.

Assembly—Wednesday		
Grammar 2	5-2	Miss Edson
Algebra 1	5-1	Miss Bonsall
History 1	5-3	Mr. Wirth
Literature 2	5-4	Miss Kelly
Sociology	C. S.	.....

10:00 T., W., F. and S.

Chorus—Thursday		
Music 1	5-1	Mrs. MacMillan
Foods and Dietetics	5-4, 5-5 & J. G.	Mrs. Thacker
College French	C. S.	Miss Schuster
General History	5-3	Mr. Wirth
Drawing 3	J. G.	Miss Morse

11:00 T., W., Th. and S.

Assembly—Friday		
Composition 1	5-1	Miss Schuster
Penmanship and Spelling	J. G. & 5-4 & 5-5	Miss Dunigan
Literature 5 (College English)	S. G. & C. S.	Miss Kelly

1:30 T., W., Th. and F.

History 2	5-4	Mr. Wirth
Music 3	J. G.	Mrs. MacMillan
Children's Literature	5-5 & S. G.	Miss Kelly
Drawing 1	5-2	Miss Morse
College Mathematics	C. S.	Miss Bonsall

2:30 W., Th., F. and S.

Chorus—Tuesday		
Literature 1	5-3	Miss Kelly
Elementary Methods	5-5 & S. G.	Miss Robinson
French 2		Miss Schuster
Geometry 1	5-2	Miss Bonsall
Gymnasium (T. Th. & S.)	J. G.	Miss Morse

3:30

Critic Hour	(T. W. & Th.) (Friday)	Training Teachers
Gymnasium, T. & Th.	5-1 & 5-2	Miss Robinson
Gymnasium, W. & F.	5-3 & 5-4	Miss Morse
		Miss Morse



APPENDIX VI

STATE TEACHERS COLLEGE  
Bemidji, Minn.

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The Third Regular Year Opens Tuesday, September 6, 1921

CALENDAR FOR 1921-1922

Fall Term

Enrollment--Tuesday, September 6, 1921  
Term Ends--Wednesday, November 23, 1921

Winter Term

Enrollment--Monday, November 28, 1921  
Christmas Vacation Begins Thursday, December 22, 1921  
School Work Resumes Tuesday, January 3, 1922  
Term Ends--Friday, March 3, 1922

Spring Term

Enrollment--Monday, March 6, 1922  
Easter Vacation of One Week  
Term Ends--June 2, 1922

STATE TEACHERS COLLEGE  
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James M. McConnell . . St. Paul  
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Normal School; B. S., Miami University.
- 
- P. L. Hines . Custodian and Engineer



State Teachers College

Bemidji, Minnesota

Commencement Season 1926

*Children's Pageant*

"Pied Piper of Health Land"  
Three-thirty o'clock, Thursday afternoon,  
May twentieth,  
COLLEGE CAMPUS

*Junior Party to Seniors*

Eight o'clock, Saturday evening,  
May twenty-second,  
HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM

*Reception to Faculty and Seniors*

President and Mrs. Deputy  
Four to six o'clock, Monday afternoon,  
May twenty-fourth,  
1121 BEMIDJI AVENUE

*Eighth Grade Play and Graduation*

Three-thirty o'clock, Friday afternoon,  
May twenty-eighth,  
COLLEGE ASSEMBLY

*Baccalaureate Address*

Dr. Roy L. Smith, Minneapolis  
Four o'clock, Saturday afternoon,  
May twenty-ninth,  
COLLEGE CAMPUS

*Senior Class Play,*

*"Midsummer Night's Dream"*

Eight-fifteen o'clock, Monday evening,  
May thirty-first,  
HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM

*Faculty Reception to Seniors and  
Alumni*

Eight o'clock, Tuesday evening,  
June first,  
MARIA SANFORD HALL

*Senior Class Day and Tree Planting*

Eleven o'clock, Wednesday morning,  
June second,  
COLLEGE ASSEMBLY

*Annual Commencement*

Dr. J. S. Young, University of Minnesota,  
Ten o'clock, Thursday morning,  
June third,  
COLLEGE CAMPUS

*Alumni Luncheon*

Twelve-fifteen o'clock, Thursday noon,  
June third,  
MARIA SANFORD HALL



# Facts and Comments in Support of The State Teachers Colleges by a Committee of State Teachers College Alumni

## Real Issue Not Economy, But Whether State Shall Retain Right to Provide and Control Teacher-Training Agencies

The arguments which follow are offered by a Joint Committee of the six alumni associations of the Minnesota Teachers Colleges, in opposition to the proposals of the Orr-Sweitzer Resolution recently introduced in the Senate and the House of the Legislature, in order to remind the Legislature and to inform the public of the bad results which would follow its adoption.

The state teachers colleges recognize the financial crisis. They clearly see and accept the simple fact that, until relief comes, they must operate with reduced expenditures. This policy they willingly accept, but with the earnest desire that such reduced income shall not jeopardize the fine gains heretofore made in these institutions, or the vital service which, even in hard times, they must continue to render to the public schools.

1. There would be no economy in demoting the state teachers colleges from four-year to two-year institutions.
2. They are exclusively teacher-preparing colleges, not liberal arts colleges. Their job is the preparation of teachers for the public schools of Minnesota; the training of high-school teachers is incidental.
3. There is no right inhering in liberal arts colleges to prepare teachers. Their aim is cultural, not vocational.
4. Education is a function and duty of the state. The state must continue to control its own schools.

### Economy

The Resolution purports to find its basis in a greater economy for the state, by having fourteen private colleges and the College of Education exclusively prepare junior-and-senior-high school teachers.

To demote the teachers colleges to two-year work would mean a very small cash saving to the state, say five per cent, because the four-year work requires little in the way of added equipment, library, instructors, or overhead. The four-year work was begun and is now carried on without any additional appropriations. It has meant a change of program, not an increase of funds.

No tax dollar is so well-invested as the teacher-preparation dollar. Up to the time of the depression, 98 per cent of the graduates of teachers colleges entered the school-room. At present 98 per cent of the 4,273 students enrolled in the teachers colleges have signed the pledge to teach in the public schools of the state.

All expenses to parents and to the state combined average for the six state teachers colleges around \$500 per year per student as against a cost of from \$750 to \$1,000 in private or denominational colleges, living included. One father writes: "I am interested as a plain, common, lower-middle-finance man, with three children who are by nature peculiarly fitted for educational work. Without the teachers college, they would absolutely and unequivocally have to go without any higher edu-

cation. The poor man is entitled to have his tax money used where it will benefit him, just as much as is the wealthier man."

Should the Resolution pass, no student who could not afford a yearly outlay of approximately \$1,000 could hope to qualify for and obtain a high-school position. The high schools would be manned almost exclusively by teachers from families of wealth or near wealth.

Even if the Resolution were defensible, which it is not, it would not go far enough. The private colleges could, from their point of view, make a better argument for economy by proposing that the University abandon its College of Science, Literature, and Arts (3,306 enrolled), leaving to the arts colleges all cultural education. Or, on the contrary, it would be more consistent for the private colleges to ask to replace the University College of Education (1,077 enrolled), because that college prepares high school teachers, rather than to displace the teachers colleges (4,273 enrolled), whose work is primarily for "rural-and-grade-school teachers. The teachers colleges highly appreciate both these Colleges at the University and of course would not for a moment think of such a form of false economy.

### Sphere of Teachers Colleges

Says the Resolution: "Whereas, the so-called State Teachers Colleges, now six in number, located at

Winona, St. Cloud, Duluth, Moorhead, and Bemidji, originally created to train teachers for the rural and elementary schools under a two-year curriculum, are now authorized by law to train not only such elementary teachers, but also high-school teachers, and that in both these fields the supply greatly exceeds the demand." The words in heavy type give two false notions.

First, the original law of 1856 created the normal school as an "institution to educate and prepare teachers for teaching in the common schools of this State." There were no high schools at that time. The expression "common schools" meant "public schools," and the courts have so held. There is therefore no authority in law or in custom whereby to declare that they were originally "created to train teachers for the rural and elementary schools" only.

Second, the original act empowered the Normal Board "to prescribe the course of study and the prerequisites for admission." There has never been any limit set by law respecting the length of the curriculum. It has run in length from one year to five years. Its growth through seventy years is shown in the following graph, wherein "X" means a year of study, each series (or line) of "X's" leading to a teacher's certificate:

Periods	Years Beyond Eighth Grade	Years Beyond High School
1860-77	X X	
1877-95	X X X X X X X	
1895-1912	X X X X X X X	X X X X
1912-26		X X X X X
1926-		X X X X X X

The fact that students who enter the teachers colleges from high schools pursue now four times as much work as did their fellows seventy years ago, measures the steady progress of the art and science of teaching, and the insistence by the people of this state that the teachers colleges keep pace with the growing demands of public education. A similar rise in standards in public schools and like progress in teacher-preparation took place throughout the nation. To call a halt now, or what is worse, actually to retreat, as is proposed, would be an educational calamity. It would set Minnesota behind every surrounding state and would send our students to Wisconsin, Iowa, and the Dakotas to secure degrees for teaching in public schools.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Manuscripts and Records

The office files of President Manfred W. Deputy, all dumped somewhat helter-skelter into wooden crates and cardboard boxes and "deposited" in an unused basement vault, provide the best primary source material on Bemidji College during Deputy's last years as president in the 1930's. Although the collection--letters, reports, personal notes, memos, charts, and the like--is rather thin for Deputy's early years, and hence the early years of the college, these materials grew in quantity by 1930 and thereafter offer a unique over-the-shoulder look at the problems of a state college president trying to run a small school during the depression years. These Deputy papers, about a dozen cubic feet, lay hidden for many years and eluded attempts by members of the Bemidji State College history department to find them. A former faculty member who taught under Deputy, however, professor emeritus Mabel Parker, recalled in an interview, April, 1967, that she had personally supervised the boxing of Deputy's office files and remembered where they had been placed. The papers of Deputy are now located in the Special Collections Room, A. C. Clark Library, Bemidji State College. If one accepts the premise that a small school takes on the character and reflects the attitudes and personality of the president, then the papers of President Manfred W. Deputy become the most important documents in the early history of Bemidji State College.



Unpublished Materials and Reports

Among the better unpublished materials available that offer important information on the growth and progress of Bemidji State College are the Quarterly Reports of the President, filed at the request of the State College Board. Unfortunately, however, neither the Board office nor the State Archives has a complete set of the Quarterly Reports, and thus one has to rely on random reports found among the Deputy papers. Although official minutes were not kept until 1927, another important source is the Minutes of the Presidents Meetings, Minnesota State Teachers Colleges. For an over-all view of the Minnesota state college system in the period between World Wars I and II, the doctoral dissertation by Archie C. Clark, "The Status, Policies, and Objectives of Minnesota State Teachers Colleges," (unpublished Ed. D. dissertation, University of Southern California, 1941) is very helpful. Other useful sources include the following:

General Accounting Record. Bemidji Normal School, Bemidji State Teachers College, 1919-1936.

Jenson, Raymond. "Some Legislative Problems Faced by Bemidji State College, 1919-1923." Seminar Report, Department of History, Bemidji State College, 1961.

Journal. Unpublished record of early student activity fee disbursements and record of student enrollments at Bemidji State Teachers College, 1922-1939.

Minutes of the Meetings of the Alumnae Association of Bemidji State Teachers College, 1922-1937.

Preliminary Report of Requirements, Bemidji State Teachers College, 1932. Report for the Commissioner of Administration and Finance, State of Minnesota. Prepared by Nairne W. Fisher, state architect, November 4, 1932. (Typewritten.)

Raddatz, Betty Lou. "The Bemidji State College Curriculum, 1919-1924." Seminar Report, Department of History, Bemidji State College, 1961.



Report to the Interim Committee on Administration. "Bemidji State Teachers College, 1933-1943." Bemidji, 1944. (Mimeographed.)

Public Documents and Proceedings of Public Meetings

What stands out in this category as the most relevant material are the Minutes of the Meetings of the board that supervised the state colleges. Until 1921, it was called the State Normal School Board; from 1921 to 1957, it became the State Teachers College Board, and since that date it has been simply the State College Board. Though the prose of the secretary to the Board is too often scanty in recording what happened, nevertheless the Board minutes offer an excellent source for following the shifting patterns, policies, and procedures in the long record of the Minnesota state college system. Largely for statistical information and comparative data, the official biennial reports of the state Commissioner of Education present information full of meaning. Among the other several pertinent public reports and documents cited in the text are the following:

Minnesota. Economic Analysis of the State of Minnesota. Report to the Minnesota Resources Commission by the J. G. White Engineering Corporation, 1945.

Minnesota. Superintendent of Public Instruction. 1907-1908. Fifteenth Annual Report.

Minnesota. First Report of the State Board of Education. Twenty-first Report of the Department of Education. 1919-1920.

Minnesota. Journal of the House. 1913

Minnesota. Legislative Manual. 1893, 1903, 1913, 1915, 1921, 1923, 1925.

Minnesota. Session Laws. 1858, 1905, 1913, 1917, 1921, 1925, 1937.

U. S. Bureau of the Census. Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1957.

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Bulletins and Articles

Bemidji College published a small fifteen-page bulletin in January, 1938 (Vol. XI, No. 2), in honor of the retirement of President Manfred W. Deputy. The bulletin, entitled the Northern Student, as any and every Bemidji College publication was then called, devotes most of its material to information on the establishment and development of the college. Because Deputy personally supervised the contents of the bulletin, as to both relevant material included and the accuracy of the information, it becomes a highly important source of information today.

For the study of Minnesota state colleges in general, Paul Heaton's Minnesota State Teachers Colleges in Transition (Bulletin of the State Teachers College, Moorhead, Minnesota, Series 42, No. 2, August, 1946) is excellent, notably for the charts and graphs that are available in it. Yet a third significant bulletin was written by Otto Welton Snarr, then president of Moorhead State Teachers College; it is entitled The State Teachers Colleges in Minnesota's Program of Higher Education (Moorhead College, Series 46, No. 2, August 1950). Snarr's bulletin also has some statistical information shown via tables and charts along with a discussion on the role of the state colleges as he saw it to be.

Minnesota state historical journals offer scanty information on the history of its state colleges, and what is mentioned is very thin in substance. One of the few and one of the better articles on the topic, however, is by Oliver C. Carmichael, "The Roots of Higher Education in Minnesota," Minnesota History, XXXIV (Autumn, 1954), pp. 90-95.



Newspapers

The old Bemidji newspapers and the other community newspapers in the Bemidji area provide by far the best available source material on the location and the initial starting of the college at Bemidji. These many papers chronicle quite carefully the earliest attempts to stir up interest in a normal school for northern Minnesota in 1907, and they follow the subject through until the doors of the building open in 1919. It would be euphemistic to say only that the style of journalism used by the early editors in this period was "agressive," for in their pages the fiercely partisan editors battled and brawled over which town would get the school, and the editors acquiesced to the legislative decision but slowly once the legislature made the selection of the site. These early newspapers catch well both the emotional fervor stirred up in the dispute over the location as well as following carefully the early legislative problems in getting initial funds to start the school. The single most useful paper for a relatively complete story of the history of the college is the Bemidji Daily Pioneer (all of the early Pioneers are on file in the Newspaper Room at Bemidji College library). After the school had been operating a decade, the college began a student newspaper, the Northern Student, and by 1930 the college newspaper provides a better source of information. Some of the other newspapers referred to in the text are:

Bemidji Sentinel. 1910-1938.

Bemidji Weekly Pioneer. 1907-1938.

Cass Lake Times. 1907-1915.

Duluth Tribune. 1909-1915.



Minneapolis Journal. 1913, 1933.

Thief River Falls News-Press. 1907-1913. (Microfilm.)

### Interviews

Because Bemidji State College is not, comparatively, an old school (it celebrates its fiftieth anniversary in 1969), there are still persons living who can remember its start and many more who can recall its early years. Interviews with Bemidji townspeople, some of the older "old timers," proved useful mainly in touching on the feelings of the times and these people's attitudes towards the college; but what seemed to be remembered, however, was largely anecdotal in nature. Though interesting, the stories that were often told with great delight tended to be tangential to the goal of finding out what really happened. Faculty members and students who served under the school's first president, however, proved most beneficial in offering a clearer picture and record of the college in its first two decades. Of importance were interviews with professors emeriti Mabel Parker, Ruth Brune Mangelsdorf, and the late Archie C. Clark, all of whom joined the faculty in 1924. Still the best source on Bemidji College, however, is Dr. Harold T. Hagg, chairman of the social studies division at Bemidji. Since he joined the faculty in 1936, Hagg has pursued the records of the college and regularly gathered materials on the subject, all of which were turned over to the writer. Professor Hagg can relate both the documented and the undocumented history of the school; possessing a wealth of information on the topic, he can offer the history from almost any angle, and augment all angles with the "inside stuff" that is not documented. By all criteria, Professor Hagg is the source to interview on the history of Bemidji State College.



Books

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## VITA

Arthur O. Lee was born August 20, 1931, in Scandinavia, Wisconsin. He attended both elementary school and high school at Scandinavia, graduating from high school in 1949. He attended Luther College, Decorah, Iowa, for four years, graduating with a B. A. degree in June of 1953 with a major in social studies. From 1953 until 1959 he was a public school teacher at Osseo senior high school, Osseo, Wisconsin. He attended each summer school at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, from 1954 through 1960. In 1958 he received his M. S. degree from Wisconsin in the field of history. From 1959 until 1962, he was the social studies supervising teacher in the junior high school of the Bemidji State College Laboratory School. After attending summer school at the University of North Dakota in 1961, he resigned at Bemidji to accept a teaching assistantship in history at the University of North Dakota for the 1962-1963 school year and continued work on his doctorate. He returned to Bemidji State College in the fall of 1963 and has remained there to date as an assistant professor of history in the division of social studies. Lee is married and the father of three children.