

QUARTERLY CONFERENCE  
OF  
Executive Officers of State Institutions  
WITH THE  
STATE BOARD OF CONTROL

FEBRUARY 3, 1914

SOME SUGGESTIONS CONCERNING CO-OPERATION BETWEEN THE  
SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURE AND THE STATE  
INSTITUTIONS' FARMING INDUSTRIES.

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The industrial operations, of a productive and constructive nature of a state institution are unique in regard to the essential requirements for successful management. The qualifications most desirable for governing similar operations elsewhere are equally desirable here, namely: Knowledge of the business, technical skill and efficiency in operation; but, in addition, there must be temperamental qualifications. The fundamental purpose of the farm and its adjuncts, for instance, is to afford suitable occupation for the inmates of the institution. If the farmer, gardener or dairyman fails in securing the good will and co-operation of the inmates, however capable he may be otherwise, he is an unsuitable person for the position.

The chief executive officer has three sources from which to select managers for this department, namely: (a) experienced men who have operated their own or rented farms; (b) young men who have either grown up on a farm or worked as hired men, but who have not been so far responsible for its entire management; and (c) young men who have taken an agricultural college course with or without previous experience.

To the most capable men of either class, the state institution position is not attractive. The successful farmer usually wants to possess and run his own farm. The most available candidates are usually renters, and the most successful of this class are usually looking ahead to early ownership, and would not throw much enthusiasm into a temporary position. The young, single hired man is not sufficiently settled in his purposes—either agricultural or matrimonial—to be depended upon.

The available graduate of a school is also an uncertain proposition. The most promising and brainy young men are either sought for some teaching position, or, if seeking a salaried position in farm management, they can usually secure same where the working conditions and character of help are more nearly normal than are found in our state institutions. The graduates of ordinary ability expect a better wage than the best hired man, and should be able to earn it, but to know well the theory of the subject without experience broader than that afforded by the limitations of the school demonstrations, would not justify any higher salary than that paid the experienced but non-school-trained farmer. In fact, the latter is really a safer person to employ because he has a record, and his ability and limitations can be ascertained, and anyone whose record would be acceptable would be a fair success—adaptability to new conditions being the principal factor of uncertainty. The former is yet to be tested, both as to the practical application of his technical knowledge and as to his ability to manage and to adjust himself to new conditions. Naturally there is no intermediate position connected with our institutions that would serve in trying out these qualifications. Therefore, to employ a young school graduate is like placing a recent graduate of a business school in charge of a large bank or store. There is also, in both cases, a sophomoric attitude that must be tempered by actual contact with working conditions. Then, again, there is the special relation of the department to the institution of which it is a part, the consideration of the particular things to be produced, and the adaptation of the methods to be employed to the character of the inmates and their effect upon the welfare of the same. These things can only be appreciated in full by actual experience with them.

What is true of the farmer is also true of the gardener and the dairyman, and to a large extent to the heads of other departments or industry in an institution.

In my own experience I have been disappointed in the help obtained from the agricultural college for our gardening, though the reason is obvious. We have not been able to make an appeal to the most capable graduates, as already explained. For the dairy department I have never been able to secure anyone, as the demand is always greater than the supply. For the gardening we have had five different men, two of whom were perfect failures. The most capable of the number, who was industrious, technically qualified and enthusiastic was in trouble with the inmates almost continually during the first year, and though he learned to get along fairly satisfactorily with them during the second year, his temperament was always a handicap. Our most successful gardeners have been young men who have learned by working at home or for commercial gardeners, and have exercised common sense, tact and patience, in their relations with the inmate help.

In the operation of the farm and dairy, there has been so much progress made in recent years that it is necessary to have both a high degree of technical information and skill in order to produce the best results. The institutional departments of this kind in Minnesota ought to do more than produce average results. Now, it seems to me that to these departments the agricultural college could bring much valuable assistance by

supplying just the technical skill needed, and there seems to be no reason why these departments, on the other hand, cannot be useful to the college as demonstration stations, subject to some obvious limitations.

The most important duty of the superintendent of the Institution is to develop and maintain an organization that carries out the primary purpose of the institution; that meets, as wisely as the available data and financial support permit, the problems which give rise to its existence. The various departments are only contributing factors in helping to meet the general problem. The farming, gardening, dairy and poultry industries, have become established features of the village community and its colonies for the feeble-minded and epileptic, for the double reason that they afford especially suitable occupations for the inmates and the products are consumed at home. The architect must plan the important structures; the consulting engineers, pass upon the heating, plumbing, lighting, sewerage and water systems. As the departments under consideration grow, and specialization in their operation becomes more imperative, the need of technical counsel for them becomes obvious. Naturally we should expect to secure the required advice from the highest authority in the state—namely, the school of agriculture—and, if a proper arrangement for co-operation could be devised, it would solve the difficulty as to trained workers.

It was with this idea in mind that I asked Dean Woods, in October, 1912, for a capable man to look over our farming and dairy plants as a preliminary to possible recommendations to be brought before the State Board of Control later for carrying out some such arrangement. Dean Woods referred the matter to Professor Andrew Boss, who visited the school with Mr. Cornica, a graduate of the agricultural school, and the matter was there more fully discussed, with the result that Mr. Cornica was detailed to make a survey of the situation, plat the farm, study the character of the soil, note the products desired, observe the conditions under which the departments operate, and, finally, devise a scheme for crop rotation intended to bring the best results, and to make such suggestions for other improvements in methods employed as might appeal to him as advisable.

I am very frank to say that while the first purpose of our colony farms is being well met, I feel that greater efficiency can and should be developed. This means, as already indicated, that better technical knowledge should be possessed by the men employed in these departments, and the best practical way to secure it, as already indicated, is to have it imparted right at the place of operation. The mountain must come to Mahomet! It means that the larger and more expensive problems of drainage, the selection of the grades of stock, and the introduction of mechanical appliances and other outlays which are in so many cases vital to best economic results in the end, but are expensive at first, can be considered in the light of the best and broadest experience available, so that recommendations resulting will have authoritative weight.

At the school for feeble-minded I feel that we should in time furnish all of our table and stock food vegetables, all forage crops, all milk and butter, and make a good contribution to the fruit supply from our own orchards and gardens. If we meet the problem of segregating mentally deficient people in this state, we must necessarily have always large land areas

for developing colonies. These land areas are valuable, and there is every reason why outdoor occupation, so well adapted to the middle and high grade feeble-minded, under proper supervision, should be made as efficient a business proposition as the labor conditions will permit; and the inefficient labor proposition can be largely compensated for by highly efficient methods applied to these departments.

I have found our department heads eager for technical knowledge and willing to adopt any reasonable suggestions for improving the service, and yet they have not been able always to justify their recommendations by results. They are too easily distracted and diverted for the working out of the essential problems of their department, either by lack of a thoroughly grounded technical knowledge, or by lack of the proper grasping of the relative values of their activities.

For instance, I feel that we are not getting the proper results from our stock feeding, especially in the dairy, though the latter is above the average in the community as to both quantity and quality of product. By proper feeding and the elimination of the inferior animals, we ought to at least double the output; not necessarily from the same outlay, but without any very great increase in the latter. The adoption of an approved system of records and reports, their frequent inspection by an expert in dairying, and a study of individual animals in relation to feed and milk products, under the tutorage of an expert, ought to readily determine the proper method to pursue in each case; namely, extermination or cultivation.

Finally, therefore, the need in general, it seems to me, is the introduction of both technical instruction and professional enthusiasm; the latter as a stimulator of interest, and the former to secure effectively directed effort.

The working out of a detailed plan of co-operation can safely be left for further consideration. The following, in a general way, seems to me feasible and desirable:

1. The services of a competent representative of the agricultural college, to complete or extend the survey already made by Mr. Corniea, until a detailed cropping scheme is devised for the whole farm.
2. Resident service of the representative, for at least two weeks of each quarter, for checking up methods, study of reports, and giving such instruction as may be indicated in crop and land treatment, seed selection, feeding, care and breeding of stock, and methods of handling products, etc.
3. An arrangement by which any problem of the farm, dairy, garden, poultry department, or live stock interest, can be referred to the proper department of the farm school, and expert counsel obtained. This, of course, could be handled through the representative of that school. I see no objection to having these departments open for the use of the agricultural school for a demonstration to students, and it might possibly be to the interest of both institutions to have students reside for a time on the place, to assist in conducting certain defined operations.

Executive control of all operations should not obviously be changed, and it should always be borne in mind that our problems are definite and clear,

and it would be in bad taste and against public policy to exploit the institution in any sensational manner.

Whether there would be any particular necessity for similar supervision at the other state institutions, the discussion to follow this and Mr. Corniea's more complete and elaborate report will doubtless disclose.

#### ORGANIZATION OF STATE FARMS.

##### F. A. Corniea, University Farm.

Before presenting any plan for the organization of state institution farms, an attempt will be made to show where the present system is at fault. As a thorough investigation was made of the Faribault farm only, the report will necessarily deal largely with that farm and its present system of management. The discussion will center about those projects or enterprises in which the most improvement can be made. Any statement concerning the present management of the farm should not be taken as a personal criticism of anyone connected with the institution, because those in charge of the farm are doing the work to the best of their ability under the present system.

The investigation was started at the request of Dr. Rogers, and he and his helpers have co-operated in every way to make the investigation and its results a success. Much credit is due Dr. Rogers for the stand he has taken, because it shows that he has the welfare of the inmates of the institution and of the state at heart, and that he is doing all in his power to make conditions better.

The facts and figures given in the following discussion were nearly all gathered first-hand. Wherever they were not, note will be made to that effect. The discussion will come under the following heads:

1. Cropping System.'
2. Feeding.
3. Records.
4. Location of Farmsteads and Buildings.
5. Supervision of the Farm.

##### 1. Cropping System.

No definite cropping system is followed on either farm, and consequently there is no systematic rotation. On the north farm it has been necessary to grow the same crops continuously on some of the fields. For example, it is practically necessary to grow silage corn in the field in front of the dairy. Any other field would necessitate too long a haul in filling the silos. Likewise, under present conditions, the garden must be kept in the same place year after year. This is not conducive to high yields or to maintenance of soil fertility.

The crops grown, likewise, are not always the best. For example, the corn for silage has always been a large variety of southern corn, which does not mature and in many cases does not produce ears. A better grade of silage could be had by growing corn adapted to Minnesota conditions; for example, Minnesota No. 13. This corn would mature under ordinary conditions and produce silage that would be higher in feeding value, con-