

C. J. Swendsen, Chairman, State Board of Control: I do not need to say that we are happy to be here today as the guests of Doctor and Mrs. Fulton.

You will recall that at our last meeting we decided to have the quarterly conference at Owatonna. However, we changed our plans. Instead of going to Owatonna we decided to come to Red Wing for the reason that Mr. Merrill is having a short vacation and it was rather inconvenient for him to come home for this particular purpose.

The quarterly conference has been held at this institution a good many times. I think it has been about six years since we were last here. We have always enjoyed coming to Red Wing. The scenery here is most picturesque. The location of this institution is perhaps more beautiful than that of any other of the institutions of this state or a good many other states.

It is rather a gloomy day. We all wish we might have had some sunshine, but I hope that we have sunshine in our hearts.

We are going to have a good meeting, I am sure. Most of the superintendents and our friends are here, and we are going to make the best of it.

I am sorry to state that Mr. Flynn, the director of elementary schools, could not be here today. He had a very legitimate excuse for not coming.

We are very happy to have a gentleman to take Mr. Flynn's place. Dr. Julius Boraas, professor of education at St. Olaf College, who is to speak to us, is a member of the State Board of Education. I am sure he knows Red Wing and Goodhue county very well because once upon a time he was county superintendent of schools here. We are glad to ask Dr. Boraas to speak to us now.

MODERN TRENDS IN EDUCATION OF INTEREST TO INSTITUTION SCHOOLS

Dr. Julius Boraas

St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota

We in Minnesota have prided ourselves on the fact that the educational system is arranged like a highway, open from the kindergarten on through the elementary schools, through high school, and through the University. We have prided ourselves on the fact that it is an open highway for all the boys and girls of the state, without price and without any particular difficulties. As one examines this highway he discovers many chances for drifting away from it.

Poverty makes a good many youngsters get off the highway. They start getting off at the sixth, seventh and eighth grades, all along the way. Only about eighty per cent of those who enter the city schools finish the eighth grade. Only sixty per cent of those who enter the rural schools finish the eighth grade. And then through the high school, the college, the university and professional schools, a great many get off the educational highway.

I have sometimes thought we ought to celebrate a bit where somebody has parked along the way. We have thought it so desirable for everybody to continue all along to the end of the various parts of the highway that we have rejoiced with them only. At the end of the eighth grade, we celebrate. At the end of the twelfth grade, we celebrate. At the end of the sixteenth grade we celebrate. Those who leave the highway between those stations do not receive any glory. They ought to have a little testimonial, a luncheon or something like that.

There are other reasons for leaving the highway. Some of the children become orphans, and are entirely without subsistence. They go to Owatonna. So there is one of the stages along the road where those who are too poor, who have nobody to look after them, leave the highway.

Then there are some who do not seem to be able to steer their course. We give them mental tests, and they go to the School for Feeble-Minded. Of course we have classes for the near feeble-minded in some of the larger city schools, and try to keep them along with other pupils.

Some children have other ailments. Some do not want to behave themselves. So the boys come down here and the girls go elsewhere in the state, and are taken care of in that way.

Some are crippled. They are sent to special institutions.

One of the things we have taken up is the re-education of disabled persons. They are adults. If anybody breaks an arm or a leg or receives some other injury, we look after them a little bit.

As I was county superintendent for eleven years, I have been very much interested in country children. At that time there were many schools in Goodhue county where the children did not have a chance to finish the eighth grade.

I recall one school which was outstandingly different. At that time, more than twenty years ago, practically every child who entered this school finished the eighth grade and many went to high school in Zumbrot or in Red Wing, and continued there until they had finished the course.

When I think of the opportunity which some of the children had of finishing at least the first eight years of school, and then think of others who had no opportunity to do so, I see that there was a highway of a sort, but it was not accessible to all the children on anything like equal terms.

Now we have improved conditions for the children in rural schools. About sixty per cent finish the eighth grade, about the same number that finished in the city schools when I was county superintendent. A little better than eighty per cent finish the eighth grade in the city schools. Of course back of this lies the fact that the country children do not go to school as much as the city children. There is more than a month's difference in actual attendance. When one takes away a month of schooling from a child year after year he does not expect that child to make the progress that could be made if he were not deprived of that time. It is a wonder to me that the rural children have made as much progress as they have.

Another thing about which we think a good deal is the training of the rural teachers, which is not what it is for the city teachers. The typical country teacher in Minnesota has had one year of training beyond the high school, a very good year of training; but the typical teacher of the elementary grade in the city has had two years in Teachers' College beyond the high school.

Now, considering these two things, the teacher of the country school with one year's less training than the city teacher has, and the country child with five weeks' less training every year than the city child has, does the country child have an equal opportunity with the city child? It would not seem that the country child has an equal opportunity with the city child unless the country child learns a great deal out of school that the city child does not. I am willing to admit that maybe he does. There is a statement in Green Pastures, as you who have read it know, to the effect that the Lord expects us to figure out some things for ourselves. I believe country children learn to figure out certain things for themselves. If a country boy is given a team of horses and is sent out into the field where there is nobody to direct or supervise him, he must figure out a number of things for himself.

I was county superintendent here for eleven years, and I met many fine school board members. They were nearly all men. I do not believe there were more than half-a-dozen women on the 160 school boards. That was not the way it should have been, but I could not do anything about it, and the women did not do anything about it, although they could have if they had wanted to, for they had the right to vote at school elections.

There are some schools in this state today that pay not one mill of special school tax; some that pay over 100 mills. That is an enormous difference.

When I was county superintendent, there was a school district about seven miles from here. The land was very poor, nothing but hills. We who were brought up on the prairies could not see how they could farm on such land. That district had a first-grade teacher at that time, paid the maximum tax, and had eight months of school.

In another part of the county there was a wealthy district, which had only five or six months of school. I talked with the people, tried to get them interested, and called their attention to the other districts which maintained first-class schools eight months in the year in spite of the fact that they were situated on poor land. That district could have paid a teacher \$3,000 a year, and could have maintained a school that would have drawn the attention of the whole state of Minnesota to it, just as the attention of the entire Country was turned to the school conducted by Miss Dunn and Miss Everett. But

they did not care about that. Their argument was that the school was as good as the one which they had attended. Look at the farms and the orchards and the places which they had! If a schoolmaster came along and urged a better school, they would say, "Show us your place." But he did not have any place to show. They themselves could show tangible things which they had been able to get without going to school.

I think that this is one of the troubles today. There are so many men and women in the state of Minnesota who know so little about the problems of the public school, who care so little, that things go on just as they do. What is the use of talking about being a democratic country when one district pays one hundred times as much as another?

There are two other things I want to talk about.

The curriculum that we have bothers us a little bit—I will say that frankly—and now, with the economic depression upon us, it bothers us more. We are advised to throw away all frills and keep to the three R's. If the three R's were so very important, it would be all right, but I have come to the conclusion that they can be over-estimated. Of course, everybody should know how to read; that is essential. It is nice, too, if they know how to write somewhat.

People do not need to write so very much these days. The telephone is so handy, you never write to your neighbor. And when you write to friends, you spend most of the time apologizing for not having written before. So, really, what we send back and forth is not of much significance.

Much of what we read is not very important. When I look at the things on the news stands in drug stores, I ask frequently: "Do you sell very much of this?" The answer is always, "Yes." Then I look for a magazine that should be on the stand, but learn that there is no demand for it; it is not there. Then I wonder whether it is necessary for the citizens of Minnesota to be able to read.

Arithmetic does not seem necessary at all. They do not use it in banks. They do not use it in stores. Recently I was in a grocery store and bought one pound of Primost and a pound of cheese. There were two items. What do you suppose that nice looking little girl who waited on me did? Instead of adding it in her head, as she should have done, she stepped over to a little machine, pressed down two or three keys, worked a lever, and in a moment brought me a little slip showing the cost of those two articles. Nobody needs arithmetic any more.

The three R's did not save us from this economic depression—but keep them and throw away the frills!

Almost everybody needs a little music these days. One should at least be able to whistle to keep up his courage. And it would not be so bad to be able to sing a little bit if one sings the right songs. Everybody should know a little about art. We shall not be able to buy many pictures and paintings, but little homes should be cozy inside, and somebody should know how to make them cozy, livable, attractive, and ought to learn it somewhere. Yet people in Minnesota say we must throw away these things and keep the fundamentals.

I read an article a few weeks ago entitled, "What Shall We Do With Our Nell?" It seems she was not very bright. Still she was bright enough so that she did not need to go to a school for feeble-minded. When we talk about brightness in school we mean brightness in arithmetic, algebra, geometry. Nell was not bright in those ways, so they said: "What shall we do with our Nell?" Nell never will be valedictorian or salutatorian: she may not be able

to graduate the way the school is doing things, but she is a fine girl and will make a lovely wife.

What does she need as a wife? She needs charm. Can the school give her that? When she goes to school, does she come home more charming than when she went away in the morning? Can she learn to adapt herself to people so that when she sees Prince Charming and looks at him the second time he comes right along? She must have ability to select the right man and to make him a nice home. When she comes to the door, will the guest feel welcome at once? Can she cook a nice dinner? When you sit at her table, do you get wonderfully simulated and cheered? Homes like that we need.

When I think of some of the girls that I have seen as valedictorians and salutatorians in schools, who could not make a good wife for anybody, I should not want to be invited to dinner in the homes over which they may preside.

In one town I saw a girl carrying a big load of heavy books. Her parents were very anxious that she should be valedictorian or salutatorian. That is a great ambition when people have it. She never got to be either. She died before she got that far. She was not getting the right kind of training to fit her for living anywhere.

How much algebra and geometry would you ladies say a girl would need in order to be a good housewife, neighbor, and member of church organizations like the Ladies' Aid, the League of Women Voters, and other organizations?

And you men, if you were going to advise a young man looking for a helpmate for life, would you advise him to select the girl who had at least ninety-five in algebra or geometry?

We want to have schools that fit the boys and girls for living. We talk about that very eloquently in our educational conventions. When I see men and women living the kind of lives which many of them do, I get a little worried about our schools. We can argue with people today and they say: "Keep out the frills and keep the other things." If we are going to keep only "the other things," we might as well throw out most of the youngsters from school, the way it looks to me.

Shall I say something about our methods? I will read to you something which I have had mimeographed for my classes. It is a formula for producing gangsters. It just makes me worry. I think you will be interested in hearing it.

"Given a child who is handicapped mentally, physically, educationally, or socially. Neglect to provide proper adjustment and remedial treatment. Assign him tasks that are beyond his ability to accomplish. Reward his best efforts with failure and retardation in school, with scolding, reproaches, and ridicule by teachers and parents, and with the taunts of his associates. Compare him unfavorably with younger and brighter or less handicapped children to his shame and humiliation. When he tries to escape by running away, send a truant officer to his home to threaten his parents with court action unless they teach him a lesson. When forced to attend school, call Mm a 'bad boy' before the class and treat him like a 'baby' (remembering that he is older than the other children). When he rebels by showing anger or talking back, send him to the principal who may deprive him of participation in school activities, the only school work in which he can win the respect of his fellows. For repeated offenses, sullenness, or truancy, transfer him to another school or require a whipping blank, or send him to a disci-

plinary or 'bad boys?' school' to mix with other outcasts. Deny him simple luxuries and pleasures that others enjoy, while fixing a stigma upon him that makes his fellows shun him. Let him feel that he hasn't a friend in the world—at school or at home—that every man's hand is against him, and that he has done nothing to really deserve such treatment. Then offer him the companionship of kindred spirits in illegal pursuits of pleasure or adventure. Let him be caught and detained with hardened criminals. Let him regard the representatives of the law as enemies who are persecuting him and his fellow men as despising him. And finally deny him a legitimate means of earning the luxuries that all men crave, or even the bare necessities of existence. The result is a gangster and a criminal. The natural result—a sure formula even with normal children."

I think of what I did myself when I taught country school. I think of what I saw done when I was county superintendent. I think of what is done now in many places in Minnesota with the methods that we are using when we make it possible for those who have an academic type of mind to succeed, to come back day after day and get the praises of the teacher, and to go home at the end of every six weeks' period with fine marks.

And then I think of what we do to those who do not have academic minds but the kind of mind which Nell had. They fail in school: the teacher never compliments them on their success; they go home with poor marks on their report cards at the end of the first six weeks, at the end of the second six weeks; and so on all the way through.

All of us want to build up within ourselves confidence that we are to be counted, that we amount to something in spite of our failures, that people admire us for something that we do, that they look to us for accomplishment along some line. Arrange things so that these children can not accomplish anything along any line, be sarcastic, put them through eight years of that, and they will drop out as soon as their sixteenth birthday arrives. I see that done today. Much of it is being done. It worries me and it worries us all.

We find a peculiar rift in our school methods today. We are a divided camp. One says: "Study the children. Find out what their talents are. Fix it so every child can do something and do it well, whether whittling or playing ball. Give him a chance to succeed. Let the children look up to him as a leader in that particular field, and he begins to grow in self-confidence." That group calls itself the progressive group in education today.

Another group believes in a fixed course of study. Teach that thing. If the pupils cannot master it, they have no brains and it is too bad. But it is fine for those who can master it.

Those two views we have in Minnesota. It is a very peculiar situation.

We have a system of examinations in Minnesota which is both a blessing and a curse, to my notion. We have had it as far back as I can remember. Every spring examinations are fixed up by very fine men and women, and are sent out to the schools.

During the last few years we have hit upon a new type of examination. Someone said, "If you will ask many long questions to which there can be short answers, you can check those answers 'right' or 'wrong' easily." That is the "new" type of examination. It happens to be the oldest.

I happened to be in Madison at a time when they were having state examinations, and I said: "May I see those questions?" They said, "Surely;" and handed me a big folder with several pages of questions, which I looked over. My land! I couldn't have passed that examination if you had threat-

ened to shoot me. I was dumbfounded. Here were the names of people I had never heard of. These questions were asked of children in high schools. I, an old man, who had lived in the United States all these years, did not know there were any such people. I could have said, as did an old gentleman in our town who had retired: "Strange how much I have forgotten of what I learned when I went to school. But there is one date in history that I never forget, and that is the year 355. I remember the date, but I cannot remember what happened then." The trouble with me was that I didn't even recognize the dates that were asked in some of the questions.

It does not seem right to give examinations of that sort, but some of the children learn a surprising number of facts. If you or I were teaching, I know what we would do. We would get the questions in September and drill the children on those questions and answers. We would have the children memorize and memorize, and when spring came they would pass the examination. That would be well. How long would they remember it? Until they passed the examination. The Lord has fixed it so that we forget the things we do not need.

Suppose you should come along and ask those children, "What are your convictions about wars? Are they worth while? What results come from wars? Do we go up or down when we have wars? What is your conviction about such things?" Maybe they could answer them. Maybe not. The thing we are concerned about is that the children should get some understanding from what they read. They ought to get some wisdom from what we teach. Are our present methods going to leave time enough for the teacher to develop such understanding?

Many people have a wonderful understanding of life without having gone through some of the subjects that we have in our school. When I was county superintendent I used to stop at farm homes to feed my horse and for another reason; I was hungry myself. Often I was surprised at the understanding which some of these fine farmers' wives had; surprised, because they had not gone to school as much as I had. I had come out of the university and had an academic type of mind.

I wonder if we are wise enough to give our children and young people the understanding they should have? L. P. Jacks, in his book "Education of the Whole Man," speaks of the "disguised imperatives," and states that every time a child reads a book, every time he listens to a lecture, he will find commands hidden back of declarative sentences provided he knows how to look for them. "Don't be this kind of a man. Don't do things that way." Our young people today drive on our highways. They try this and they try that. Why do they? Because there have been no disguised imperatives that became imperatives to them. They feel that they must go out and try many things for themselves. How are we to help our young people find the disguised imperatives so that their lives may be lived as we in Minnesota should like to have them lived?

You have been very patient and very kind. I thank you.

Mr. Swendsen: We want to thank you, Dr. Boraas, for your very interesting speech. It was full of practical suggestions and I think it was founded on common sense. You gave us something to think about. Thank you very much.

We have with us today Mr. Nilson, who is director of the work for handicapped children in the public schools, also assistant director in the department of re-education of the State Board of Education. We are pleased to have Mr. Nilson with us. He will now speak on "Special Educational Facilities for Handicapped Children."

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES FOR HANDICAPPED CHILDREN IN MINNESOTA

Kenneth Nilson

Assistant Director of Re-education and Director of Special Classes,
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Mr. Chairman, Friends: Several times I have revised my plans of presenting certain facts to you this morning, and the last time I revised them was within the last fifteen minutes.

The work which I represent has two phases; the one is vocational rehabilitation of the adult disabled, and the other is special work for the handicapped in the public schools of the state. Both have a point of common interest with the work represented by members of this audience. The two are very closely related; the one is concerned with adults; the other, with children.

Special classes in the public schools of Minnesota are so called because they attempt to give an opportunity for special training to children who are handicapped mentally or physically.

There are five types which the state of Minnesota aids in the public schools. They are the physically handicapped, the deaf and the partially deaf, the blind and the partially blind, the crippled, the mentally subnormal, and, finally, the speech defectives.

This work was begun in 1915. Acts were passed by the legislature at that time which indicated that four types—the deaf, the blind, the mentally Subnormal, and speech defectives—could be organized specially in the public schools so as to receive state aid for the instruction given. In 1921 the legislature passed an act providing certain instruction for crippled children in public schools provided definite classes were organized in their behalf.

There are less than 300 such special class teachers in the state: Teachers for the deaf, the blind, the crippled, speech defectives, and mental defectives. There were 293 of them in the year 1931-32, of which Minneapolis public schools had 102, St. Paul had 52, Duluth had 29, and other public schools in towns and smaller cities had 110 teachers.

In the discussion which follows, particular mention of the city schools is made as against those out in the state. That may not be fair from some standpoints, but there is a purpose in showing it. It is well to show that the well organized school systems take more frequent advantage of such opportunities. Whether desirable or not, the fact remains that they do so. It will be observed that the teachers of special classes in school systems other than St. Paul, Minneapolis and Duluth, number 110 out of approximately 300 such teachers, or slightly more than a third.

The pupil enrollment in the three cities and out in the state is approximately as follows: Of the 7,800 pupils of all the types of pupils throughout the state, 3,400 or more are in Minneapolis; 1,300 or more, in St. Paul; more than 600 in Duluth; and about 2,500 in other cities and villages. The number 2,500 represents about 30 per cent of the entire enrollment.

It might be interesting to learn the counties which are represented in this program. There are 33 of them, as follows: Beltrami, Blue Earth, Brown, Chippewa, Clay, Crow Wing, Dakota, Douglas, Freeborn, Goodhue,