

Faculty meeting February 3 1914

At our last meeting the question was raised "Who is to blame that our teachers are liable to grow away from the real problems of the public schools." I made the statement that a teacher's real fitness for work of this kind is dependent upon his keeping in touch with the problems of the public schools. One of the great benefits, and there are many others, this school receives from Mr. Ragsdale, is constant light upon the daily problems of the country school. His advice is always helpful if we are willing to accept it.

I have thought of this question, (light upon the needs of the public schools) more than any member of the faculty dreams, and I have reached the conclusion that, Keeping in touch with the present condition and seeing clearly the present needs of the schools we are preparing teachers to teach is an essential part of the equipment of every teacher in this school. It is of more vital importance than keeping up with the advanced thought in our several departments. Unless your product ~~fits~~ fits into the needs of the state's system as these needs now exist your work is a failure. I care not how much scholarship you may make if it is not a usable product it is a failure. It is not the mission of this school to turn out scholars, but to give to the public schools teachers.

I have never failed to encourage any one of you to visit country schools, when you have expressed a desire to visit them. But under existing conditions I can not require it. The responsibility for this preparation for your daily work must of necessity rest where the responsibility for any other preparation for the teacher's fitness rests, viz: upon the individual teacher. I promise you I will do all in my power to assist you in keeping yourselves in touch with the needs of the country

schools. But I want to assure you it will mean you must make a sacrifice of some of your time now given on Mondays to other things.

Repeatedly I have felt that when members of our faculty who have been out in the field return to us and tell us some of the things they have observed, that some of us who ~~stay~~ "shut in here with our own problems" think they are advocating lowering our standard and therefore detracting from the dignity of our institution. Our motto is To Serve. No person ignorant of conditions can really serve.

A knowledge of one's ignorance is the first step to his enlightenment.

When we see the needs of the public school, then and not until then will we get a real revision of our course of study; for revision on paper is worth nothing. It is a revision of point of view of the individual teacher that is needed.

One of the main purposes of this winter's work has been to help us to see what to do.

I want each teacher daily to ask himself this question: "In what way will this work I am planning for to-morrow help these young women to become more efficient teachers in the schools they are going to teach?" And if you do not see how it is going to help them you had as well omit the lesson. This is a vocational school. If your lesson on sawing does not help the student to handle the saw you are a failure as a teacher of carpentering (to use an illustration from a subject not in our course of study). Every man has his wood to saw. In this wood we have to saw you are the experts here to help the apprentices. And they will follow the way you saw even more than the

way you say saw. If you are constantly sawing big timbers with them they will not be apt to saw little timber with their pupils; for the problem is different.

What we teach these young women they are going to attempt to teach in their schools, and the way we teach, is the way they are going to try to teach. If all our work is high school work with high school methods they (our product) will attempt to put high school work with high school methods down in the grades when they become grade teachers.