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The Schools and Teachers of Sherman County

by Professor L. H. Currier
County Superintendent

Appreciating the fact that the educational question is probably the most inresting and absorbing to all persons who have children of school, age The Norhwestern deems it fitting to publish all possible relating to the same. With this in mind, we requested Professor L. H. Currier to prepare the article which follows:

In reply to your request, I am submitting to the readers of your paper at this time a brief report of the state of the schools of the county and mentioning some phase or phases of our education needs. I will make a report which will be as far as possible unstatistical and which I trust all school friends will read.

I wish to extend greetings to teachers, pupils, and parents of Sherman county schools, and to congratulate them on the success of their past efforts along educational lines.

While the school conditions in the county are far from being perfect, yet our schools are good, and the tendency is toward improvement, and with the active earnest, co-operation of all we know that progress toward ideal conditions will be continuous. Reforms and efficiency can be brought about only through carefully planned and long-sustained effort and hearty co-operation.

We are all factors in the educational movement, so let us realize our opportunities as well as our responsibilities and in a spirit of true helpfulness lend a willing hand to aid in the work. Improvement in the educational system is not the work of any one person or group of persons. It is the outgrowth of experience and of the needs of the people, based on successes and failures of the past. We who are now directing the educational work of the county have laid upon us a grave resposibility, in that we are training for citizenship. The education of the people is the largest business item connected with the management of the state. The schools assist in solving the fiscal and social problems of the home and of the state by increasing the productive capacity of the people, by developing a citizenship whose good behavior will reduce the expense of criminal prosecution and make additions to jails and penitentiaries unnecessary, by making every person a productive, honest citizen who will put public interest above private gain. Ignorance is a tax, and school is an investment that pays two dividends, one in less taxes and one in more property.

There are in Sherman county this year seventy-six schools with only two with less than eight months of school while there are forty-seven with a nine-month term. During the past few years the schools have increased steadily in length of term so that at the present time the average term is a fraction less than nine months. With more months of school each year, the child and the teacher will both feel a greater interest in school work, and the pupils will be able to complete the eight years' course of study before they are seventeen or eighteen years of age as has been the case with some in the past. More pupils would be able to complete the course of study instead of dropping out to work after the fifth or sixth grade and the standard of education would be materially improved. This would also go a long ways towards solving the problem of keeping efficient teachers in the profession.

From time to time I have made adverse comments upon the small salaries paid teachers of this county as compared with the salaries in other counties. I am now pleased to state that the salaries compare quite favorably with those of other counties. The average is still only slightly above $50, but the minimum is $40, while the maximum is $65. While it is remembered that teachers are employed for only eight or nine months each year it may readily be seen that these salaries are still inadequate to attract and keep the best teachers in the work.

Wherever it has been possible to secure them, Sherman county teachers have been urged for our schools as home teachers understand the conditions and needs better than would some outsider. Every qualified teacher but two, in the county is teaching and we still have twenty-four schools taught by non-resident teachers. I have visited every rural and town teacher in the county since school opened last fall and am therefore in close touch with the work of the schools. Teachers have been informed of the lines of work to be emphasized during the coming school year. Hygiene has been in the foreground for the past three years; and we hope to make great advancement along the lines of practical sanitation this year. Reading, spelling, arithmetic and writing are to receive special attention. Never in the history of the county did we have a higher grade of teachers than at the present time. Never did we have better qualified, earnest and devoted workers in our schools. I am very grateful to them for the professional interest shown, for the spirit of harmony and co-operation that exists and for the [illegible] effort to promote our schools to [illegible] standard of efficiency. A fe[illegible] ago there were not many teac[illegible] Sherman county holding certificates above a second grade. Today we have six teachers holding life certificate, seven holding state certificate, forty-six holding first grade certificates, forty-four holding second grade certificates and one holding a third grade certificate. Every teacher teaching in the county has had at least eight weeks of normal training or at least one year successful experience.

Realizing the fact that success of our public schools depend upon the teachers who do the actual work of instruction. I have always stood for a high standard for teachers. Some one has said, "The state that has the men has the present; the state that has the schools has the future, the state that has the teachers has the schools." The school is largely in the spirit of the teacher. Teachers are employed to help children to be strong and better and there are few teachers who can succeed in doing this without devoting their entire time and energy during the school year to the task of preparing and keeping themselves prepared for the work.

Teachers who keep late hours on school-day nights seldom do good work the following day. Such teachers are irritable, listless, and weak physically, and mentally. Our best teachers are careful of their health. They take proper sleep and exercise. They consider that their time and strength belong to the children whom they have contracted to teach.

Four years ago there was not a modern school building in the county; now they are five. Three of these were built within the last year. "Modern" as applied to rural schoolhouses means that the building is heated by a furnace or by a system which distributes the heat equally to all parts of the room. In a modern school house fresh air is warmed as it enters the building, and the foul carbonic acid laden air near the floor is removed. No school room can be well ventilated by windows. It is granted that cold air can be brought in and warm air let out by this means, but some of the pupils are subject to draft, and the foul air which is always near the floor is not disturebd. Thirty-five of our rural schools are equipped with modern heating and ventilating systems and it seems that the time is not far distant when every school will be properly equipped in this respect. In a "modern" school house the light is from the left and rear of the pupils. Cross light and shadows with their attendant eye-strain, are thus avoided.

There are five schools in the county that may be classed as "standard schools." That is, they meet the twelve minimum requirements of the state department of Public Instruction. Rural districts number 2, 38 and 25, are teaching the ninth grade work this year and receiving full credit from the state department for one year high school work and is listed as a "One year High School of the Second Class." All of these schools are doing good work. Excellent work is being done in the two-room rural school in District No. 25. With two teachers is made possible better grading, more enthusiasm, and consequently better teaching. The school spirit in this district is excellent and Sherman county has made a good start in having one real rural high school for rural children. There are five pupils in the ninth grade in this district.

The record of attendance in Sherman county has almost doubled in the past four years and is far better this year than it has ever been before. This is due in a great part, nodoubt, to the special efforts of the teachers and parents along this line. I wish to urge upon the parents the necessity of encouraging regular attendance. The money received from the state this year is based on the average attendance of the child.

Our town and city schools have shown marked progress. Within the past two years every town school in this county, with one exception, has added another teacher this year. Ashton, Rockville and Hazard have each four teachers and Litchfield has five.

The people of Ashton certainly show a good public school spirit. At the annual school meeting this year they voted to erect a new school building and voted a levy for that purpose. The object is to employ more teachers and to add the full high school course or at least the eleventh grade. The schools at Ashton are in excellent working order.

The Rockville schools are in excellent condition this year. Rockville is certainly a good school town. The people take a great deal of pride in their schools and have always shown the right spirit toward school work. There is some talk of a new school building at this place.

The school at Hazard is on the upward road. There has been a steady improvement in the school for the past two years until now the conditions are very satisfactory. The school spirit is fine and the people are always ready to help in making conditions better.

Every room in the Litchfield school has been crowded during the past two years, but in spite of the crowded condition the teachers have been doing excellent work. This crowded condition was relieved this year by the addition of another teacher. This gives all teachers an opportunity to do the best of school work. At a special election held November 17th, bonds for a new school house for Litchfield carried, by 96 to 12.

The records of the Loup City schools show a large attendance. The school spirit is fine and good work is being done. We have a normal training class of twenty-nine pupils this year. Last year's class furnished the county with fifteen teachers who have had four year's work above the common school course and also a review of the common branches and the normal training required by the state department of Public Instruction. This normal training in the high schools of the state is an excellent method of preparing better teachers for rural schools. The high school pupils are making good. I am well pleased with the record they are making.

The school spirit in Loup City was never better than it has been the past year. The bonds for a new school building carried by a large majority. Our new school home is well started and if all goes well the building will be completed by the first of next August.

By constant efforts for improvements by the friends of schools in this county we should easily make the schools of Sherman county the best in the state.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank the school officers of the county for their very hearty co-operation with the county superintendent in his efforts during the past four years. I also wish to thank the various newspapers for having from week to week published the school news from this office.

Very truly yours,
L. H. CURRIER,
County Superintendent.

TALKS 4,600 MILES BY WIRELESS TELEPHONE.

Bell Officials Send Message from Atlantic Coast to Hawaii.

Wireless telephony from the Atlantic coast to Hawaii, 4,600 miles, a distance greater than from Seattle to Tokio, Japan, is an accomplished fact, By the special wireless telephone developments which have been made by the engineers of the Bell Telephone system, speech was transmitted last Wednesday night from Washington, D. C. to a wireless station near Honolulu. This last triumph came but a few hours after Theodore N. Vail, the president of the Bell company, had talked by wireless from New York to John J. Carty, its chief engineer, who was at Mare Island near San Francisco.

This wonderful wireless telephone message from Washington to Hawaii had to pass over the whole of the United States before it encountered the more simple wireless conditions which exist when sending over large bodies of water. For the purpose of this test the sending was done from a wireless station at Arlington, just outside of Washington. The receiving was done on a small wireless station specially erected for the purpose by the engineers of the Bell company at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

The results obtained in talking by wireless telephone from New York and Washington to San Francisco and Hawaii, were a culmination of long and very important investigations and discoveries which have been made by engineers of the Bell Telephone system. These investigations have extended over a considerable period. During the early spring of this year, as a result of the work already done, the engineers of the telephone company talked over a distance of 250 miles, using for the purpose an experimental tower which they had erected near Montauk Point, L. I., and a small tower borrowed for the purpose at St. Simon's Island, Georgia.

The results of these tests so conclusively demonstrated the correctness of their work and its possibilities that steps were immediately taken to try distances comparable with those involved in trans-Atlantic telephony, and, indeed, even looking to trans-Atlantic telephony. What the results of these further tests have been is shown by the talks to San Francisco and Hawaii.

Another interesting feature of the tests was the connecting of the wireless telephone apparatus with a wire telephone line. Mr. Vail in his talk used a wire from New York to Washington. At Washington, by special means invented and developed by the engineers of the Bell company, the wires were connected to special wireless apparatus where the message went wirelessly to its destination.

The Bell Telephone officials believe that wireless telephony has an important place in the general scheme of communication. They expect that it will form a most important adjunct and extension to their existing means of communication, simplifying and supplementing but not substituting the wire service. It will enable communication with moving trains, ships at sea, and other places where it is impractical to extend wires. Telephone officials say that wireless telephony can never take the place of wire systems because wireless telephony systems are subject to serious interference from numerous conditions, atmospheric and others, and that the fact that anyone suitably equipped could listen in on a wireless telephone talk would be a serious limitation to its use.

THE ANTI TREAT.

Dear old London, owing to the exigencies of war times, has abolished treating in the pubs. For the benefit of those who may have to obey a similar order in this country if certain reforms are inaugurated, we make the following suggestions: Patrons of a public house must observe the forty foot rule— that is, they must not approach within less than forty feet from one another. Persons recognizing friends at this safe distance may shout through a megaphone: "Hello, old codger, what'll I have?" Old Codger in return may answer "Thanks, I don't care if I do." Then the first may say, "I'm drinking hearty, old chap;" to which Old Chap may reply: "Here's looking at me." After which the first may observe: "Well, will I have another?" and the second will respond: "Thanks; make it the same." This ceremony will be known as an anti-treat.