

# Managing Nebraska's State University

Conducting a great educational institution, having an enrollment of over 2,000 students and expending annually nearly \$200,000, is not as easy a task as would appear to the uninitiated. The rapid strides made by the University of Nebraska during the last ten or fifteen years have made necessary the adoption of a never-failing system of conducting its business affairs and the employment in the executive and administrative department, as well as in the educational departments, of persons specially trained and fitted for that particular line of work.

The man who propels the machinery of the State university, or, in other words, directs the movements of its 270 employes and discharges the other duties incumbent upon him as chancellor of the institution, holds one of the most important and responsible positions in the state. He is the court of last resort and before his tribunal come daily for settlement the thousand and one problems arising in the management of the university and its various departments and his word is law, for rarely, if ever, has a chancellor of the University of Nebraska been overruled by the Board of Regents. Once during the last five years an appeal was taken to that governing board, but the chancellor was upheld and his decision ordered to be carried out. The chancellor of the University of Nebraska is expected to and does know every employe, every member of the faculty and nearly every student. He must be a man of rare executive ability, quick decision and practically infallible judgment. Until very recently if a professor or an instructor wanted a few additional chairs for his department it was necessary for him to consult with the chancellor before he could get them. The transaction of such business required much of his time that should have been devoted to the consideration of more important matters.

Acting Chancellor Bessey is at his desk every morning sharply at 8 o'clock. He spends the first two hours of the day preparing reports, answering written inquiries and attending to other business. At 10 o'clock he goes into the chapel room, almost immediately above his office, and returns to his desk at 10:15. The next hour is spent with the stenographer, sometimes as many as thirty letters being dictated in the short period of sixty minutes. All university mail is opened in another office and only letters of the utmost importance are permitted to reach the chancellor's desk. After the siege with the correspondence a short period is devoted to the finance of the institution, probably not more than ten or fifteen minutes. Chancellor Bessey, as auditor of the institution, is required by law to approve every claim before it is finally allowed. Bills against the university are payable when presented, that is warrants are drawn as soon as the claims are approved and presented to the auditor of state.

As with the correspondence all bills and claims are subjected to the scrutiny of an expert accountant before they are sent to the chancellor. If an error is detected or a bill found to be not according to contract



NEBRASKA STATE UNIVERSITY—ACTING CHANCELLOR BESSEY AT HIS DESK—Photo by U. G. Cornell.

or agreement it is promptly returned for adjustment. Purchases are made by the university in nearly every state in the union and many of the foreign countries, and bills roll in from every direction with almost every mail. Every department in the university is given a certain portion of the biennial lump appropriation, and if it is found that a department is overdrawing or about to overdraw its fund, the fact is made known. Claims are first presented to the heads of the departments for which services were performed or supplies furnished, and after being approved are sent to the accountant's office. There they are examined again and if found to be all right are marked "Correct" and referred to the chancellor. They then go to the secretary of the Board of Regents, who issues and signs orders on the auditor of state for the amounts called for. These orders must, however, be signed by the president of the Board of Regents before the auditor will take any official notice of them. After all this red tape has been gone through with estate warrants are issued and the claims are filed away with the thousands of vouchers in the state house vaults. By this process it would be practically impossible for anyone to secure the payment of a fraudulent claim.

After the finance clerks retire the office of

the chancellor is accessible to visitors until 12 o'clock. The program in the afternoon is much the same. The office is opened at 2 o'clock and after an hour of undisturbed work the stenographer is again called in. From 4 until 5 the public has another audience and the day closes with a conference

the regents, makes all notifications and prepares the records of the board meetings. He is also custodian of all papers and records pertaining to that board. Another very important office is that of the university registrar. Here every student that enrolls in the university must



NEBRASKA STATE UNIVERSITY—REGISTRAR'S OFFICE—MISS SMITH, A FAMILIAR FIGURE TO STUDENTS SINCE THE INSTITUTION WAS FOUNDED—Photo by U. G. Cornell.

fill out cards giving a number of personal details, what courses of study they propose to pursue and the number of studies, etc. It has been under the charge of Miss Ellen Smith for twenty-five years. The credits and qualifications of new students are looked after by Dr. Lees, who holds the position of university examiner. At the present time there are seventy-two professors and instructors in the institution, fifty-nine fellows, scholars and assistants that are paid by the month and sixty readers and assistants that are paid by the hour, making an instructional force of 191. There are seventy-nine other employes, including stenographers, janitors, firemen and the experient station attaches, making a total pay roll of 270. Salaries and wages amount each year to approximately \$145,000, and the current expenses to a little over \$50,000, of which about \$22,000 is received as an annual income from various sources, including matriculation fees and law college tuition. By January 1, 1901, about \$80,000 will have been spent in two years for permanent improvements.

H. G. S. "Mamma, can me and Tommy have some cake?" asked little Bessie. "Not unless you can ask grammatically," replied her mother. "Well, then," said Bessie, "may I have a piece of cake?"



UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA—READING ROOM IN LIBRARY—Photo by U. G. Cornell.

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