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NEWS AND NOTES

ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION

It has been the custom of the Illinois Association of Teachers of English to base its programs largely upon investigations carried on by its committees. This year practically the whole program consisted of the presentation of results of such committee work.

A report, "Outside Reading Interests of Boys and Girls," was given by Essie Chamberlain, Oak Park High School, based on reactions from 225 teachers and librarians from 23 states, and 1,040 students from Oak Park High School. Three-quarters of the books recommended by teachers are fiction. Non-fiction material shows need for wider distribution and grading. Travel, history, poetry, is meager. Clemens, Stevenson, Dickens, London, Churchill, Jackson, Wister, lead, while some teachers recommend H. B. Wright, the Porters, and Zane Gray. Students named *one* book read *voluntarily*, and *one* book read for *book reports*, most enjoyed in the last year. The tables show development of taste from the "series" books, and titles unknown to reading lists, mentioned by Freshmen, to the many reputable books on Senior lists. Half of the titles on the students' voluntary lists are on the teachers' reading lists. The study reveals need for a graded list, with no "dead" titles.

Miss Bertha M. Smith, of the Oak Park High School, gave a chatty and suggestive account of the way the teachers in that school manage home reading. Professor C. B. Woolbert, of the University of Illinois, spoke upon speech. He declared that the teacher must not only stimulate the natural talent of the pupils, insist upon clear thinking, and see that so far as possible the pupils listen to good speech and read good writing, but must also analyze and criticize pupils' efforts. He mentioned as elements of effectiveness in speaking: (1) thinking, (2) use of language, (3) use of vocal mechanism, (4) bodily activity.

The afternoon session was occupied by the Committee on Objectives in Literature. Miss Eva Mitchell, of Englewood High School, Chicago, gave a spicy summary of the returns from a questionnaire on the desirable objectives in literature. Two hundred business men, engaged in all varieties of business and scattered from coast to coast, were almost

unanimous in the opinion that in the first two years of high school children should be encouraged to read omnivorously in order to learn to read and to acquire the reading habit. In the third and fourth years they should study the classics. Teachers of English, on the other hand, were hopelessly divided in their choice of objectives. Miss Clara N. Hawkes, chairman of the committee, announced that so far they had only found the problems—not the solutions. Someone should formulate a single definite aim for each year of the high school. There is need, also, of a well-considered list of recent works available for classroom use. A minimum list of classics proposed by the committee as the core of the literature course, to which each high school would add selections suited to its particular needs, should be—not adopted—tried out.

NEBRASKA

The English Section of the Nebraska State Teachers Association, Miss Sara T. Muir, of Lincoln High School, president, gathered 300 strong, on Thursday afternoon, November 10, in Omaha. Professor Louise Pound of the University of Nebraska, in her paper on "Pronunciation in the Schools," warned teachers against three faults: relying on British instead of American dictionaries, deferring to any American dictionary except a late one, and taking too rigid a position on words the pronunciation of which seems not to have settled down. She cautioned her hearers against affectation or unnatural precision in pronunciation and urged them to encourage students to avoid the slipshod without going too far in the direction of undue precision of speech.

Miss Louise Miller, of Lincoln High School, speaking of "Teaching the Individual" explained the great advantage which her school has found in segregating pupils according to their ability, either upon recommendation of previous teachers or by test. This has been applied chiefly to composition, but ought to be applied to literature also. It needs to be supplemented by individual conferences and flexible assignments, whereby the ablest of any class may do more than the mere minimum required of all.

John Dennis Mahoney, of West Philadelphia High School for Boys, explained ways of making literature interesting to boys. It is necessary to eliminate the pupil's fear that he will not satisfy the teacher. Efforts to create interest by criticism and analysis or by having the students "tell it in their own words" are a mistake. Composition and literature should be entirely separated. Since composition is learned largely

through imitation, the reading of good books will do more to improve composition than all the lessons that can be given.

Dr. Mulfinger, of Nebraska Wesleyan University, in his talk upon "Oral Composition" declared that the pupil must be made to realize that his first object is the audience, not the composition. Pupils may work out and write on the board plans and then give oral compositions on parts of them. Informal debate is good, but not so good as set speeches on school events.

WISCONSIN ORGANIZES AND AFFILIATES

The English Section of the Wisconsin Teachers Association met on Thursday, November 3, in Milwaukee, under the leadership of Miss Anna Mashek, of LaCrosse. Dallas Lore Sharp, of Boston University, addressed the gathering on "The Magical Chance" and S. A. Leonard of the University of Wisconsin, spoke briefly on "Tests in English." Miss Mary Hargrave, of the Madison High School, explained a memory-work contest recently carried on and Miss Florence Harkness, of the Waukesha High School, made a vigorous plea for the use of the daily paper in the classroom. At the business meeting it was unanimously decided to adopt the Report of the Committee on Minimum Essentials in Grammar. The motion that the Wisconsin group affiliate with the National Council of Teachers of English was unanimously adopted. A constitution was drafted by a committee and adopted. A committee was appointed to consider the publication of an English leaflet: Miss Skinner, Mr. Moe, and Mr. Leonard. The meeting closed with a very happy get-together luncheon.

NEW JERSEY

The regular fall meeting of the New Jersey Association of Teachers of English was held at Rutgers College, New Brunswick, Saturday, October 29, as a part of the State High School Conference. A large and enthusiastic audience attended both sessions. The speakers and their topics were as follows: S. Marian Tucker, president of the New York Drama League, "The Theater and Our Young People"; Dean A. W. Bouton, New York University, "The Function of Literature"; Professor T. H. Briggs, Columbia University, "Appreciation."