

## The Part Time School and the Community

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The three major groups of people served by the vocational agriculture department are:

1. The all day students.
2. The adult farmers.
3. The part time group.

The part time group, which is the object of this study, consists largely of the out of school youth between the ages of 18 and 27 years. Since they are primarily concerned with actual farm work, yet attend school part of the time, they are called the part time group.

The need for an adequate part time program is demonstrated by a comparison of the potential part time students with those actually so enrolled. In United States it is estimated that the possible part time students number about 1,200,000. However, in 1929 there were only 337 part time schools with a total enrollment of but 5,128 students. Dr. Harl R. Douglass, in discussing the problem, "Our American Youth: Their Plight and Program," recommends that in order to provide for this group of out of school youth we raise our compulsory school attendance age to 18 years or completion of high school, with concomitant work and school experience between the ages of 16 and 20 years.

Granting the need for instruction of our out of school youth, what advantages are likely to accrue to the community which accepts this responsibility and conducts such a program? Schmidt and Ross list the following community advantages of a part time school:

- (1) Part time teaching tends to equalize educational opportunity.
- (2) It helps to cut the per capita cost of education.
- (3) It assists in creating a more favorable attitude toward all education.
- (4) It turns economic waste into an economic asset.

The application of the principles of the part time school will now be made with reference to a specific part time school; namely, that conducted during the past year in the Savanna Township High School. To determine the need for such a school, a brief survey was made of the graduating classes of the high school for the ten-year period 1927 to 1937. It was found that of 248 boys graduating in this period only 37, or 14.9%, enrolled in a college or university offering a regular four-year course. With the exception of a few who entered business or trade schools, the majority of the remainder of this group of boys still resided in the community. The next step was to check over this list of boys and pick out all those who might be potential students in an agricultural part time school. It was found that, whereas there were only 23 boys enrolled in the all day classes in agriculture, the potential part time boys numbered 64. Cards were then mailed to all prospective students relative to the proposed school, articles were written describing tentative plans and personal interviews were held with as many prospective students as possible.

The first meeting of the part time school was then called and the general plan of the course was developed by the students themselves. By referring to "Types of Farming in Illinois, Area 2", it was found that in Carroll County (1) 37% of the total land area was pasture land; (2) that 48.3% of the county was subject to serious erosion, and (3) that 84.3% of all farm income was from livestock or livestock products.

In line with these findings, the group then voted Animal Husbandry as the topic for their ten weeks' study. They next elected to start their meetings at 7:30 p. m., hold them for one hour, go to the gym for the second hour and adjourn at 9:30 p. m. Material for class discussion was mimeographed, handed out at each meeting, collected at the close of the meeting and finally bound in booklet form for the permanent reference of the student. Recreation consisted chiefly of basketball games, two of which



A PART TIME SCHOOL

were played with the neighboring part-time class from DeWitt, Iowa. The scheduling of several games added interest to the sport and gave incentive for practice periods prior to the games.

At the completion of the course an agriculture banquet was held, with the F.F.A., 4-H Club and part time school all co-operating. The completed lesson booklets were also distributed at this meeting. Completion results of the school showed that of our 64 potential students, 36 actually enrolled and attended one or more meetings of the course, the average attendance for the ten meetings was 27.3 and 21 the average age of all students enrolled.

From the standpoint of the community, the following factors may be attributed directly or indirectly to the work of the part time school:

- (1) A greater interest in education, particularly vocational education, among the business and professional men in the community.
- (2) The creation of a more favorable attitude on the part of farmers toward the schools and the services which they are rendering in the community.
- (3) A new sense of value as to the worthwhileness of farming as a vocation.
- (4) It definitely encourages the process of continuous learning.