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Moorhead State Teachers College

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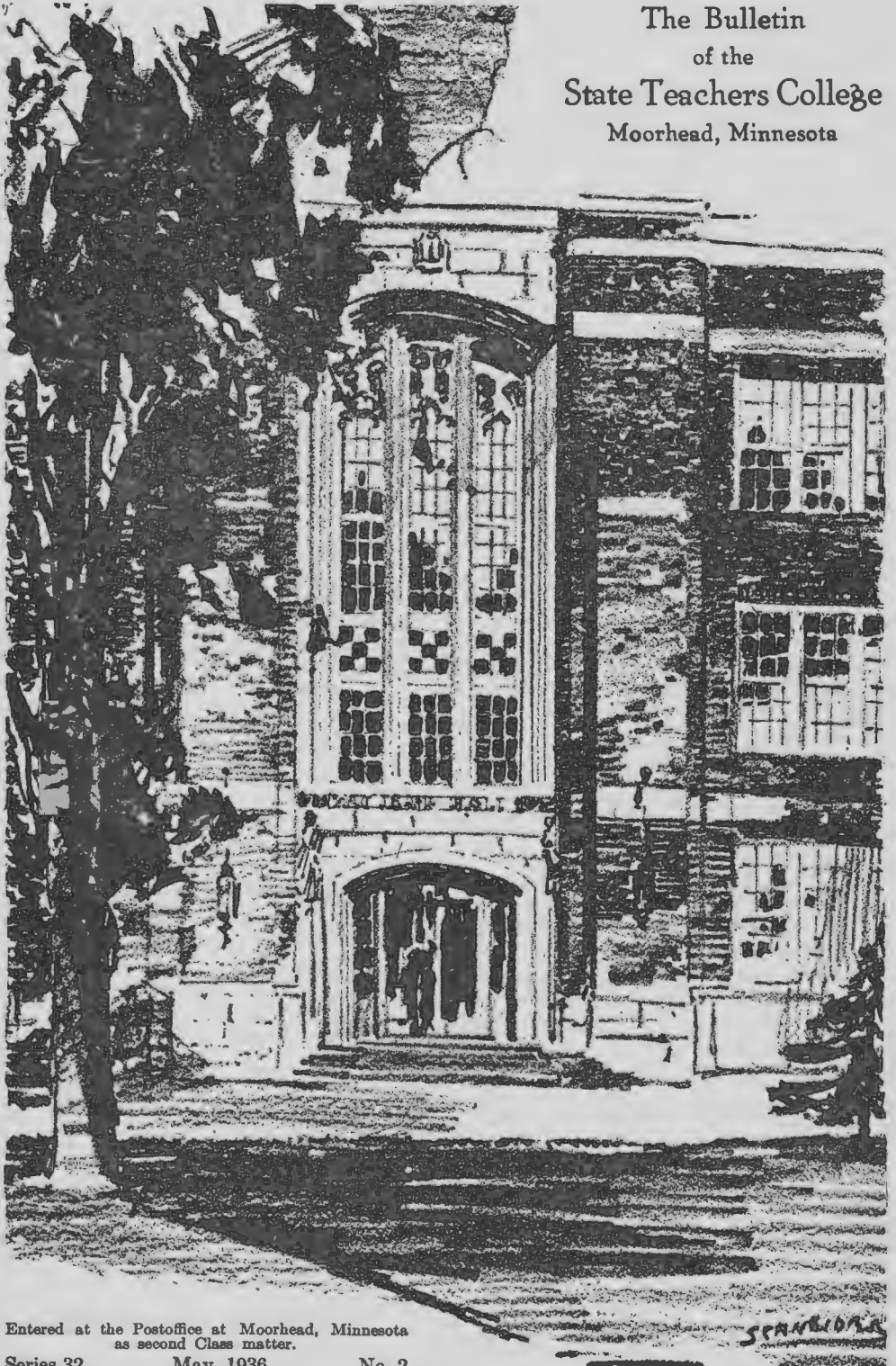
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of the  
State Teachers College  
Moorhead, Minnesota



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Series 32

May, 1936

No. 2

## ONE FRIDAY AFTERNOON

THE principal of the high school was seated in his office. Gathered about him were six students, three boys and three girls—a likely looking group. The principal was speaking.

"I suppose you are wondering why I called you in. Do you remember the talk I made the other day in assembly about going to college? You recall that I asked each of the Seniors to come in to discuss his plans for the future. Then I got to thinking of several in the class to whom I could talk in a group, because I would say about the same thing to each of them individually.

"You—" the principal paused, looking around the group and smiling—"are all high-ranking students in the Senior class. It so happens, however, that each of you has at least one other claim to recognition—Bill there, for earning three letters in athletics; Mary, for her work as Glee Club accompanist for two years; Arthur for being on two district championship debate teams; Helen for her fine work in dramatics; Barbara for winning the good citizenship medal this year; and Rudolph, medalist last year and editor of the paper his senior year."

He paused again to look at a card file beside his desk. "You are all planning to go to college, aren't you?" He caught nods of assent.

"Well, there are a number of good schools from which to choose, dependent somewhat of course on how much money you will have. Any college is relatively expensive if you have to travel a considerable distance from home. However, we are fortunate in having, within a comparatively short distance, several institutions which allow you a great deal of choice in the work which they offer. All of them are good, maintaining high standards and being recognized by their respective national accrediting associations. I feel sure that you would make good at any one of them.

"WHAT I have on my mind today, however, is the thought that young people like you, in choosing a future occupation, should give serious thought to the teaching profession. Maybe you haven't thought much about it, but there are some of us who feel that it is about the finest—or at least one of the finest—of all professions. It is one that needs leaders. And by leaders I don't mean only leaders in scholarship, though that is desirable. I mean real, live men and women—those who like people and know how to work with them, those who have character, those whom we like to point out as examples in the community.

"Now, don't mistake me. Teaching is a fine profession, but I don't recommend it because you will get rich in it. There are other things, though, that count. You will earn a comfortable living; you will have many friends—friends of the right kind. You will be looked up to, if you are the right sort of teacher, by everyone in the community. Some of your students will try to imitate you, which is a real tribute that you may not recognize just now. Some of them will not appear to think much about you at the time; and then, perhaps years afterward, they will come back to see you or write you a letter and let you know how they appreciate the special pains you may have taken in helping them solve a knotty problem, pass a quiz, or make the basketball team. Then you will forget all the unpleasant things that are connected with the profession—for every calling has its disagreeable features.

"But I've made a pretty long speech—too long, probably.... Bill—" the principal suddenly began, while Bill looked startled—"you think you are interested in engineering, don't you?"

"Why, yes-s—"

"Well, that's all right. I haven't anything against any profession or any calling. It takes brains to be a good engineer. But Bill, I noticed you out on that vacant lot across from my home the other day. You were showing a group of interested sixth grade boys how to repair a kite. Another time I saw you taking time off in the gym to show the Freshmen boys how to pivot around a guard. Am I right?"

"Y-yes, sir, I guess so."

"Well, I remember thinking on both occasions—why wouldn't such a fellow make an ideal coach and teacher?... When did you first get interested in engineering as a career?"

"Oh!... I think—well, I think it must have been in your class in physics."

"And you did good work in that class... Had you ever thought, Bill, that possibly what you'd like to do best is to teach science—physics and chemistry, which are the fundamentals of engineering—and coach athletics?"

"No—but—"

"Now, I don't want you to decide anything at this time. Deciding on a life job is too important, and I don't want you to change your mind as a result of my enthusiasm for the teaching profession. But I do want you to think of it as one interesting possibility."

HERE the principal turned his attention to the other side of the circle. "Barbara, something of the same idea may apply to you. One of the reasons why Miss Starr recommended you for the good citizenship award was that you gave up a trip to the Cities with the orchestra in order to help her out in playground activities when she sprained her ankle. You did a good job of it. I don't think you'd make any mistake by going into teaching.

"Arthur—"

"Well, Prof, you see my dad thinks I ought to go into law."

"Very well. The law is a good profession... And what do you think?"

"Oh, I'm not sure, but I think I'd

like it. Dad says a lawyer has to be able to think on his feet and put up a good argument."

"Yes, he does... Hm-m—sometimes a school superintendent or principal needs to know how to think on his feet too—a good many times... And so does any teacher, as a matter of fact, when his students are asking questions."

"I hadn't thought of that. I—I guess you're right. Dad says you're one of the best speakers he knows."

"Oh, nonsense, Arthur, I'm afraid you're flattering—"

"Well, that's what he said. Anyway, I'm going to think that over... But I was just wondering. What if I were to go to the Teachers College and then find out after a year or two that I wasn't cut out for a teacher. Wouldn't I have lost all that time?"

"Yes, I was wondering about that, too," Bill spoke up.

"No, boys, that isn't true—not any more. The first two years of the Teachers College are now organized so that what you get is standard college work. The special courses you need for teaching come in the last two years. If you should find that you want to go into some other field, you could transfer at the end of a year or two years and get full credit at any other institution."

"What about me, Mr. Thomas?" It was Mary, the pianist, who now spoke for the first time.

"Mary, I don't know about you, frankly. Perhaps you ought to go on to a conservatory and study to be a concert musician. I'd want to talk to your music teacher before advising you."

"Is there much opportunity for a teacher of piano in schools?"

"I'll answer that question by asking you one. Have you ever heard of the Oxford method of piano instruction?"

"No, I don't think I have."

"Well, it's a very interesting system that's been worked out and found to be quite successful for giving the rudiments of piano to a dozen or more youngsters at the same time. The teacher may

have only one piano in the classroom, but by means of imitation keyboards placed on an ordinary school desk, several pupils can follow what the teacher says. The pupils practice mostly at home, using the principles they are taught at school. So you see, when schools come to know more about the advantages of this method, and more capable teachers are trained in it, there will probably be a good opportunity for piano teachers in the schools."

"Oh, I think that's interesting!"

"Some day you'll have to go with me to the Teachers College, where music students learn this method by teaching pupils in the Training School."

"The Training School—what's that?"

"THE Training School is a complete school system, something like ours, which runs from the kindergarten up through the senior high school. It is located on the campus in a building by itself. There all upperclassmen of the Teachers College have a chance to observe and teach classes for a whole year under expert supervision. It isn't like in the old days. Teachers College students learn by doing. They have a chance to practice in whatever their special fields are. Some work with the tiny tots in the kindergarten—there, Helen, is something in which you'd be interested—some teach in the primary, in the intermediate, in the upper grades

or junior high school, and in the senior high school. Some of them, both men and women, direct the work in physical education from the first grade on; some teach the children how to swim in the college pool. Others help coach plays and train the high school debaters. Still others help in the publishing of the high school paper."

Rudolph interrupted. "I was wondering where I came in, Mr. Thomas," he said.

"Well, I'm not sure that you do, Rudolph. It depends on just how much interested you are in writing and newspaper work. This country needs more good journalists; in fact it needs better leaders in every profession and occupation. But there is a real need, too, for teachers who can supervise school publications in such a way as to inspire better writing and understanding among a larger number of students. The Teachers College gives courses which train you to do that kind of work."

"Mr. Thomas," interrupted the secretary, coming into the room, "Mrs. Brown just called to inquire whether you are going to meet with the P. T. A. committee about the program next Monday."

"Yes, I'll talk to her now." Then turning to the group, he added, "I'm sorry I have to go, but I wish you would think over what we've said today and come in to talk to me later if I can be of any help. If you'll excuse me—"



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