

# Duluth's Real Melting Pot.



*Pupils in Prof. Sund's Classes, Who Instruct in Studies Equal to the Work in the Seventh and Eighth Grades Rooms, Are Given Combined Lessons in English and Writing by Means of the Blackboard—The Foreigners Take Unusual Interest in the Chalk Work, More So Than in Pen and Ink Drilling.*

*The First Five Months of Night School Work Has Just Ended and Has Been Such a Success That Its Continuance as a Link in the City's Educational System Is Assured—There Was An Enrollment of 290 Pupils When Term Ended—Many of the More Intelligent Students Have Already Benefited by This Schooling and Have Been Promoted in Their Field of Daily Labor—Hardships are Encountered and Sacrifices Made Willingly to Gain the Power of Wisdom.*

FOR the first time in its history Duluth is supplying a need for education on the part of the foreigner who through circumstances has been robbed of an opportunity for education in the old country. The board of education, taking into consideration the large number of immigrants who arrive here to make this their home, has arrived at the proper conclusion—that every step of advancement the new arrivals make, every profit they make and every bit of success which they attain is increasing the possibilities of a greater and better community. For that reason the night school, one session at the Central high school and one at the Irving school has been maintained for the past five months, the semester closing for the year at the Easter holidays.

This was the first complete session of night school ever held in Duluth under the supervision of the board of education. The place it filled and the opportunity it offered—in general, its success—has made it a certainty that the after-supper schools are here to stay as a part of the city's complete scheme of education.

With an enrollment of 100 pupils the first night of this school the attendance jumped to 290 at the close, showing a steady increase in the number of students despite the fact that a certain per cent of the beginners did not develop into steady pupils. The attendance at the Irving school averaged about 40. In order to instruct the classes in the best way the pupils were divided into two groups. One section held two-hour sessions on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and the other nights were filled by the second group.

## V. B. Ging and His Assistants Handle Work.

V. B. Ging and instructors at the Central high school were in charge of the work at Central with W. A. Nonnamaker in charge at the Irving. Mr. Ging was assisted in his work by the following teachers: Miss Leslie Gage, Miss Helwig, J. H. Sund, Miss Lindquist and E. P. Gibson.

The only charge connected with the night school was a small enrollment fee and text books. The remainder of the expense is stood by the board of education. The present school is the outgrowth of a series of night sessions held at the high school last winter by the Finnish people. By reason of their start in the work the Finnish people predominated in numbers on the original enrollment this year, and throughout the term the pupils of this nationality were more numerous. Besides there were Swedes, Norwegians, Germans, Greeks, Russian Jews and one Turk. There were no Frenchmen, Spaniards, Irishmen, Polish, Italians, negroes or Bulgarians, and very few English-speaking people.

The session opened on Oct. 14 with 100 enrolled. At the end of the first month there were 154, and of this number 138 were Finns, 92 men and 62 women. Naturally the attendance was not regular. Most of those enrolled were working during the day and oftentimes had to work at night so that the percentage of attendance was nothing exceptional. When a pupil was absent three

sessions he was dropped from the roll. With this method the attendance was as follows: First month, 76 per cent; third month, 81 per cent; fourth month, 68 per cent; fifth month, 70 per cent.

All ages, as well as all nationalities took advantage of the night school. There were boys with horny hands of toil who struggled bravely to master enough English to improve their position; there were young girls of foreign birth from whose cheeks the light of health had been driven by a 12-hour day of toil as scrub woman, or an all too long spell at general housework; rough but sincere laborers, tired and worn from a day of grimy toil in the bowels of a coal boat; mothers bearing imprint of a wearing session of household duties, and for the most part all foreigners handicapped by complete ignorance and inferior physiques, and yet these simple people translated every possible penny and nickel into text books, devoting hours of sleep to hours of study that they might be somebody and do something.

## Patriarchs Attend to Better Their Conditions.

The patriarch was there, men of the half century mark, and although they learned but slowly they were diligent, punctual, persevering and finally successful in gaining a smattering of general knowledge to aid them in bettering their condition. One man of 45 years, after taking the five months course, was able to hold a better job at an increase of \$5 a week. Another youngster of 16 years learned so rapidly that within the short session he was promoted twice.

One of the Finnish pupils after the second month was able to obtain his second naturalization papers. Many of the young Swedish girls in attendance worked in hotels and cafes, and often they would have to be very late in arriving, but all of these drawbacks did not seem to hinder and they only worked the harder the more progress to make in their studies.

Strange as it may seem, there were two married couples that took the complete course and they were among the most regular in attendance. Not only that but they seemed to make unusual progress because they were able to aid one another in studying.

One of the more brilliant students, a Nor-

wegian, attended during the full five months with only a scant four hours of sleep between the school session and his time to go to work again.

Nothing difficult is attempted in the night school work. All of the subjects are strictly elementary, aiming toward the simple fitting

## A Finnish Pupil Learning to Write After Three Months' Work in Taking English. He Makes Progress Slowly, But Hopefully.



out of the student to use the English language and gain a fair idea of mathematics and spelling. Some of the more advanced pupils took studies that compared with the sixth and seventh grade school work.

## Everyday Speech Is Important Part of Course.

Special attention was given to conversation, and a greater portion of the time was given to memorizing and everyday speech. The most successful instructors used the very simplest methods. The teacher would say "close the door," and repeat this several times, suiting the expression by the action until the pupils, Jews, Finns and Swedes alike, could understand and enunciate the words fairly well. Naturally a great deal of reviewing was

done so as to impress the words. Articles were used in demonstration of nouns and action used to denote verbs. Blackboard demonstrations were also used in the process of instruction.

Some writing was taken up in the third or fourth month of the term, and in the more advanced classes writing was taken extensively, while literature, civil government and current events were also added.

## Different Attributes to Various Nationalities.

From observations made during the session just ended it was demonstrated that the Hebrew students were poor at spelling, but took readily to English and figures. On the other hand the Swedish people were developed into good spellers. One peculiar fact was established during the session, and that is that a large portion of the students were proficient in mathematics. However hard the English was for them the addition, subtraction and division problems, what few were taught were accepted readily. This is true especially of

is one predominating characteristic and that is that they are invariably timid, extremely so. It takes several sessions to wear this off. Along this same line we have experienced another difficulty. When it comes time for the pupils to advance to another grade and to another teacher, they usually object. Their inborn timidity asserts itself and they do not like the idea of taking up new surroundings. This changing of classes and teachers is in itself a benefit, relieving this lack of self-reliance. They have different associations and learn by contact.

## Foreigners Take An Interest in Adopted Country.

"These foreigners take a great amount of pride in their adopted country. Oftentimes they display a sentiment for the fatherland, but for the most part they seemed to be so entirely pleased with the brighter conditions offered in America, that they are unlimited in their praise of the United States. All of them memorized the verses of 'America,' and on occasions when we opened school with a song, the Finnish, Jews, Swedish and Norwegian people, all of them, joined heartily and soulfully into singing the song of their adopted country."

Truly it is a great and needful work that the night schools have started for Duluth. That the institution will be maintained as it has been this winter and enlarged upon is made certain by its success.

Next year a larger course, more teachers and advanced studies will be introduced, so that the work of this great melting pot of nationalities, this machinery for the production of American citizenship can be more effectual in its task of maintaining a normal balance in the life of the republic, the state and the city by supplying the educated and efficient American from this crucible, wherein the caldron of a score of nationalities seethes and boils.

*One local pupil who worked as a laborer during the day was promoted to a position on a desk after a term at the night school.*

