

ATTITUDES OF TEACHERS IN COMMUNITIES
TOWARD HEALTH WORK

I.

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SEMINAR

Physical health of the children in schools where special work has been carried on as compared to schools with no special work.

General Outline!

Type of school -- cleanliness and etc.

One, two and more rooms in school.

Type of teacher employed.

Type of pupils with general description as to the district and economic status of the families.

Type of homes with general idea as to the cleanliness and health habits observed in the homes.

General health projects carried on in different groups -- if any.

Present practice of health rules.

General physical health of each group with type of illnesses in school for past year.

Special health problems if any with general average of attendance in each school.

General summary of improvements and conditions with comparisons as to location, type of school and etc.

SEMINAR

The types of schools used in this report are those which I have visited during my past year of work doing county nursing. Some of these schools are in rather remote parts of the county, that is possibly not so far from Portland but due to the inability of many of the people to get into town very often, I have classified them as remote.

Of the one room schools I have taken two to make a comparison of the many things relating to health. We will take first a school located in the hills north-west of Portland. There are a few scattered homes from which the twelve children of this school are recruited. Sheep herding, dairying and lumbering are the main occupations, I believe, of the group as a whole. None of the people are flushed with money but they all seem to be making a living peaceably.

The school is a typical one room school with a large stove in the center of the room. There are windows on two sides of the room and blackboards on the other two sides. As to the desks and seats, they are the regular ones as used in any school room, but as they are moveable they seem to add to the variety which is always shown in this room. There are six grades represented in this group and upon entering the room one may find several little groups, by themselves, working very industriously.

The teacher is a young woman with some experience here in Oregon before going to Hawaii where she taught for two years. Since returning she has been four years in this little school. This teacher has fixed up a little three room

shack very attractively and lives there with her father, thus being very handy to her work, and with a beautiful view of the Columbia and Tualatin valleys close at hand.

The children range in ages from six to seventeen and are represented by all shapes and sizes, tall and short, fat and thin. Many of the children come from stock of the early settlers of that territory and the school is named in honor of the grandfather of several of the children now in the school. Generally the physical health of the group is excellent and with the exception of a few colds, this past year has been spent in good health. Cleanliness is another thing which is taken care of very well, as the youngsters are always neat and clean. Lunches as a whole are very good with milk, sandwiches, fruit and some kind of desert in all the lunches. The mother of four of the children in the school puts up an average of seven lunches a day but always she has the best things tucked away in their lunches.

Variety is always present in this clean little school room and there is a sense of love and devotion always present as regards the teacher and the pupils. Regarding the health work of the year, there has been no special program put on in their own group, but physical examinations were offered to those wishing them. A physician from Portland was taken to the school for the examinations. Immunization was offered for smallpox and diphtheria with the county doctor and nurse making the rounds of the eight schools in this district, once a week for three weeks. Most of this group in this school accepted this work and as it is offered at such a nominal fee many are

immunized who could not otherwise afford to have it done. A child is never refused this service of immunization even though he is unable to pay.

The other one room school is located about seven miles from Portland in the west hills. The homes in this district are more closely situated to each other and from them we find about twenty-five attending this school. Many of the people from this district make a living by gardening and a few work in Portland. Then too we find some who are receiving aid from the different welfare associations.

The school building resembles the other one room which I have already described but to me this room with its stationary desks and seats is not as attractive and the smaller one room school is by far the neater and cleaner. All eight grades are represented in this school and of course with the greater number of pupils some of the older ones help the young beginners in their work.

The teacher in this school differs very much in appearance, dress and in every way including disposition. She is located in Portland and goes back and forth to work daily. Much of her teaching experience has been in this school and all things point to her being there for the next two years also as she has a contract for that period of time.

Pupils of this school differ greatly from the one described as personal cleanliness and good health habits do not prevail as in the smaller group. Many of these children are from transit families and do not seem to be of the type as before described. Skin conditions seem to break out very easily which I believe is partly due to the difficulty which they have

in obtaining a good water supply. Also I think it is possibly due to the ability of more of the families to get into Portland frequently. With this exception the general health of the pupils is about the same as the smaller group. Cleanliness is a problem especially in two of the larger families where conditions are crowded and health is little thought of.

The general program of immunization was carried on in this school but with very few of the children paying for it. Physical exams were given and many of the children availed themselves of this service. Posture was stressed in the program of this school, but with the children seeming not to put ^{it} into practice daily. In many of the schools posture correction is the greatest need, especially among the younger children. Attendance was fairly good for the year with sickness not always the cause for an absence.

Both of these one room schools are old type buildings of wood, but both have been slightly remodeled during the C W A work. The grounds around the latter school are quite spacious and wooded, but the other school has a much smaller place for play and it is not as level as the other grounds. Neither of the schools have any up-to-date play apparatus on the grounds but balls seem quite plentiful.

Of the two room schools I have chosen one in either end of the county, about diagonally across from each other. Attendance at both schools is about the same with one an old building and the other a new one this past year. The average daily attendance was about fifty this past year.

The new building has two rooms and a very nice auditorium with a stage, also a big basement where it is

possible to serve a meal. In the room where the first four grades are one may see many things such as plants, posters, pictures, samples of different things which they are taking up in school and many more interesting things. There are some seats and desks and also several small tables which are used by the first two grades. The room its self is usually quite neat and clean and shows that it is kept much more neatly than the room where the other four grades are. The general appearance of the other room is more one of just an ordinary school room which lacks the touch^e_x that make the other room attractive.

The teacher who has the lower division is a young woman who seems quite interested in children, seems to enjoy flowers and also the opportunity of doing what she can to make the room more than just a room. She lives very near to the school in which she teaches and I believe she tries to put across to the children those things which make for good citizens, even though she has a difficult group to work with.

The teacher of the other group seems to be very much interested ⁱⁿ ~~with~~ her work but does not seem to put into it what the other teacher does. Her pupils always seem very much interested in what they are doing and discipline does not seem to be a problem. Her home is quite near to the school.

Many of the children come from homes where it seems to be quite difficult for the parents to make a living, as dairying and gardening seem to be the main occupations. Their homes are widely separated and many times none too clean. There is a bus which goes around and brings in the children every morn-

ing and takes them home again at night. The building is usually neat and clean and situated as it is the children have a marvelous play yard. This has been enclosed during the C W A work project at the school and to my thinking it is almost ideally situated and I believe it is the largest school grounds in the county for the size of the school.

School health in general this year has been very good. One siege of skin trouble and a case of measles, with a few colds were all that lowered the school attendance record. The school has accepted immunization practically one hundred percent and when the physical exams were given there were about ninety percent of the children examined ⁱⁿ. Though we found many defects none were of an alarming nature.

One interesting experience as to the distance one family has to travel in coming to school happened when I made a home call regarding our one case of measles. Usually the family is rowed over the Willamette to where the school bus picks the children up, but during high water they must take the children to school by the way of St. Johns. I received a phone call of this possible case of contagion in the school, and as we try to follow-up such reports I set out for the school. After ferrying across to the school I found that there were apparently no other cases in school so I obtained directions as to where I was going and started out on my trip to the home. After ferrying back to the Columbia highway I started for St. Johns, where I was to obtain a key at a certain barber shop for the gate to this home. The third and last barber shop proved the right one and from there I headed for Terminal #4, which is on the extreme

north end of St. Johns. From there I was to find a certain road which runs along on the bottom land of the river. A sand road with more sand to the right of me, in front of me and all around me, and with many roads branching off in many directions. I was to follow this until I came to the gate where I was to use the key which I had obtained in the barber shop. It proved to be about three miles to the gate and then about two miles winding in and out of the low hanging brush, until I thought of all places and to where was I going? I had tried to keep to the main road but I had no way of knowing just where I was. As there were no houses to inquire as to where I was, I just continued on and on until in the distance I saw a barn. Soon I found myself as far as I could go and parked in a barn yard. From here I walked to the house, saw the little girl who was quite ill, gave what advice I could then started that long trek homeward. During high water last December the family lived in a barn back of the house as the water surrounded the house, for a period of six weeks. Such a God forsaken place, the only people for miles, and these people making a living by dairying. This has been my hardest place to find and I am sure it was the loneliest ride I have taken since starting this work.

The other two room school is an old school building in which the teachers do their own janitor work. They really do very nicely as it is usually quite neat and clean. The windows have sash curtains to them and these are neat in appearance as well as the little things of interest which appear throughout the room. The basement of the school is ~~there~~ auditorium of the school, but it is not very light as I feel it should be.

The two teachers do not live in the community in which they teach but rather go back and forth by car daily. The younger children are made to feel that school is a game and a very nice attitude and atmosphere prevails in this room. To the older children school is a little more serious but as a whole a fine atmosphere prevails in the whole school.

The children come from homes of a farming district and as a whole they seem of a fair type, but many are unable to make a go of it without help from the welfare. Health habits are not as well established among this group and cleanliness is not the rule for a few of these children. No hot lunches are served in this school as a great many of the children go home for their lunches. Immunization was not so generally accepted by this group as there seems to be a much different element in this district. Also only a small percentage availed themselves of the opportunity of the free physical examination. Of these two, two room schools we find an entirely different element of parent in these two districts, as a result there was more contagion in the latter school with I believe a lower rate of attendance for the year. This latter school also has no modern conveniences in the school and this may in a way account for the laxity of health rules and their observance among this group of pupils.

Of the three or more room schools we find a great variety in the type of school, the type of pupil and in the communities represented. In one four room school we find a group of children who are of the transit family and who seem not to place too much faith in health as a whole. Many of these

families this time of the year begin to pick up their things and away they go regardless of whether school is out or not. In this school of which I am thinking we find some of this type of family, and also a number of Japanese. One of the rooms of the school is off by its self in a portable and it is here that we find the first two grades. The teacher is a young woman who seems to keep a fairly neat room but from all appearances I feel that health may not be of great interest to her.

In the room where the third and four graders are many corrections were made, such as getting glasses fitted to a fairly large percentage of the ones who were in great need of this service. The teacher in this room is quite a young girl who is greatly interested in her pupils and in their welfare. With her help much good was done to those in actual need. A child may bring a drink or a dish to be warmed up for his noon-day meal if he cares to as the material is warmed following the morning recess. This is done on the stoves in the different ~~stoves**in**the**different~~ rooms.

In the other two rooms the teachers are quite health minded and I feel a great deal of good has come to the different pupils in general through the help of the teachers and with the help that I was able to give in many instances.

The school as a whole is an old type schoolhouse with high ceilings and large windows on two sides of only one of the rooms, while the rest must obtain their light from but one side of the room. They have a janitor, but as the building has only running water in it and no lavatories, I feel that great improvement is needed to keep the building in good condition. Usually the building is fairly clean which is more

than I can say about some of the larger buildings which are in a good sized community.

Immunization was accepted by a large group of the pupils especially the Japanese, who are very much interested in this program of prevention. Of the whole school I think about fifty percent were given the physical examinations. It seems that posture, eye conditions and one or two cases of heart trouble with one rather bad condition of one of the pupils lungs was what the doctor found in his examinations of these youngsters. Scarlet fever caused some absence in this school district but otherwise things seemed to be just about normal with a high rate of attendance. This school is located in a great farming and berrying district, and as a means of recreation the children have a large grounds with a large playshed in connection when it, ^{for} ~~is~~ wet weather. Balls and bats seem to be the only store equipment available for the children.

In speaking of a three room school we find one which is situated on the main highway which leads to the coast. Some of the parents are in business along this road while others do most anything which they can get to do and still others have dairy farms back in and away from the highway. The school building is a frame structure but more modern than many. The rooms are quite large with high ceilings, but as there is a furnace in the building the temperature seems about normal no matter the time of the year.

The teachers are very nice and in this school we find a man as principal. With the exception of the one single teacher they have their families and live in the near vicinity of the school. Next year we would find a new teacher in the

principal's place as he was elected into the Portland school system this spring.

The teacher of the first three grades keeps a very attractive room as she is artistically inclined. Something clever is always in evidence whenever one enters her room. This past year she put on a project in her room which was interrelated with her subjects that she was teaching. It worked out very well and has since been available to other teachers. In the other two rooms we would not be attracted to them through their appearances, as they always made me think of just any ordinary school room.

Cleanliness is quite general throughout the school since our main health problem family moved from the district. Health in general of the group is usually very good but due to a siege of whooping cough this past term the attendance in the lower grades was not as high as in the higher grades. In the principal's room I have known the attendance to be perfect over quite a long period of time.

Immunization was offered here as it is in all of the other school and there was quite a large response. Many of the parents of the children took advantage of the program as a whole, so with this reaction we have just about a hundred percent immunized group in that district. Physicals were not given in this school this year.

The school ground is quite large and the children are always supervised in their play as one of the teachers is always present in their play periods. The principal is very nice in this way also as he always enters into the childrens games and they enjoy having him. There are a few swings on

the grounds as well as a large playshed for rainy weather.

In my many schools in the county I have but one five room school and this is a modern up-to-date building in every way. The rooms are light and airy and always very clean. The condition of the building I believe greatly depends on the type of janitor which is employed in these larger buildings. There is a large auditorium in the building and many times the children are found here doing exercises with their teachers.

The five teachers at this school are very nice and with the exception of two of them I feel that health is a thing of interest to them and they in turn try to make it a part of the childrens everyday life. Cleanliness is evident everywhere one may look, and as to the children, they too are quite clean most of the time. The homes where these children come from are of a higher type than most homes which we come in contact.

The children in this school are not overly health minded but as a whole the group have an idea of what it means to be healthy and the benefits which come from healthy living. There is one thing stressed here which has caused some difficulty in a way, and that is the desire on the part of the principal for perfect attendance. The children seem to not miss a day at school for fear of being called down and this has caused a few to lose time unnecessarily this term due to Scarlet Fever, as several children were in school when their sister or brother was sick at home with it. Some cases were found but I think possibly a few escaped us.

Immunization and physical examinations were given

in the school with a goodly number responding especially to the physical examinations. It is strange but in giving these examinations, some of the doctors look for minor things while others will look for something that is more serious. Our doctors donate their services for these examinations, while the immunization work is done by the county doctor.

The two larger schools which I have are both eight rooms or more and strange to say ~~they both~~ ^{neither} are ~~not~~ kept in a very clean condition by the janitors which are in these buildings. The buildings are both up-to-date with all modern conveniences and the larger of the two has been all re-decorated during this C W A work. Also they have been digging out the whole basement so as to have a play room as well as a cafeteria there. The rooms in both buildings are real roomy and airy, and a few of them are always very attractive, while the others are as I have said of some of the others in other buildings, just school rooms.

The teachers in the larger school are about the general run of teachers, with a few of them very much interested in their work and in promoting health work among the pupils. Most of them live in their school community as it is quite a large settlement ^a east of Portland, while a few of them live further away from their work. The teachers in the other district live very near their work and as a rule enter into the community activities. As for health work the teachers in the smaller community seem far more health minded than the other group. Also I feel that a great deal more health work is actually needed in this smaller school of the two.

The pupils in the larger school are of a transit group and some of them are of a foreign element as well as Japanese. I do not mean though that most of the children are of this group but as it is a very large school and in a farming and berrying community, we can expect to find this type of family. Cleanliness is not always a thing of the present with a great many of the children though as a whole they are a fairly clean and neat bunch. During this past year the Parent Teacher group fed about the largest group in any school as it amounted to about thirty dollars worth of food a month. In this way many of the group received something warm for their lunch and possibly with a few it amounted to more than they would receive at their own homes, as in this community a great many of the people are receiving aid.

Immunization was done in this school, as well as at the pre-school clinic which was held for children entering that school in the fall. Physicals were not given during the school year but of course were given at the pre-school clinic.

The smaller of these two schools is about ~~as~~ a third as large as the one described above, but many of the children come from permanently located homes, even though many of the families are not the type of the better families of the other school. A foreign element constitutes part of the district and many times trouble is encountered among this group as they do not seem to see the need for medical attention or for staying at home when sick. A great deal of trouble also has come about through impetigo and scabies this year in this group, as the principal did not always seem to want to send some of the children home when necessary, ^{but he} ~~He~~ seemed to delight in sending

home some of the children, especially those who might be a bit of a problem in school. Then too, whooping cough or a form of a bronchial cough caused some absence but as a whole the group got through the year without very much the matter otherwise.

A pre-school clinic was held with physicals and immunization offered to all who cared for it. Ten attended this clinic, the largest number to ever attend one of these clinics. Then too, immunization for Diphtheria and smallpox was offered the school children and a good response was given. Physicals were given in the first, third, and seventh grades and many of the children had them. Some defects were found but none were very serious. A few of the ones noted may in time change the status of some of the children if corrected, such as the correction of bad tonsils, teeth and posture. It was strageⁿ but many of the children in all of the schools need to correct their posture very badly. No special program has ever been carried on in the county for this one thing, but I think a definite program for next year along this line and carried out in specific schools would benefit both the pupils and their own physical health in later years.

Back again to a one room school, it is located nearly to the extreme end of the eastern side of the county in a farming community. The people are not of the type to mix very much with any one else, and many of them have peculiar ideas regarding health in general. The school is a frame dwelling of very old design, with nothing about it modern but running water from a spring in the school yard. The interior

is like all other one room schools and is not very tidy or neat much of the time.

The teacher is a young inexperienced teacher with a very timid personality but seems to be making some headway in this difficult community. She is a Portland girl but rooms with a family in the neighborhood and is home over the week-ends. She is not very health minded and did not put on any special health work this year, though it is strange that attendance was good among the small group. This I think is due to the fact that very few of the children ever get much past their door-yards. The children as a whole are fairly neat and clean at all times but as I stated before, the parents are rather queer in most cases. Immunization was offered the group and ~~but~~ five took advantage of it, even though there are about twenty-five in the school. Physical examinations were given to members of about three families and that number was very small also. No great health problems presented themselves with this group and if it had not been that we had that school on the schedule of our schools, I would hardly have known such a school existed.

In the county as a whole the health problems were few for this year, as whooping cough, scarlet fever and some skin conditions were all that came up during the whole year. None of the schools had any special health programs which they carried out, though I do feel that in some of the schools health conditions were improved, while in others there was little if any improvement. This of course is partly because the teachers in some instances did not interest themselves in improvement, and in other cases I feel that I could improve my own approach

of health subject to these teachers. All the teachers were given the same material for helping them in correlating health with their subjects which they teach, due to this fact I believe each teacher had the same opportunity to develop her health program.

It has proven that in the communities in which the people live in sparsely settled communities, the health problems are fewer, the general health of the pupils is apparently much better, and in general health seems better than in the communities where there are large gatherings, and larger groups in the schools. In the newer type school building we find the same conditions existing as in the smaller older schools, as the need for glasses and physical corrections are about the same in each group. In conclusion I feel that the greatest work is being done at the present time when immunization work is carried on to such ~~an~~ an extent as it is at present in the county schools. In this control of communicable disease and in the reduction of the number of cases, I feel a great step forward has been taken. Next I would like to see dental work offered to the families and children in the different communities where it is almost impossible for some of these corrections to be made. This I think is our next greatest need in the county schools.