

THE STATE HISTORICAL CONVENTION AT DULUTH

The holding of a state historical convention under the auspices of the Minnesota Historical Society in Duluth on July 28 and 29, 1922, was an unprecedented event, for no meeting outside Minneapolis or St. Paul had been called previously by the society in all the years since 1849, when the institution was founded. By the historical interest it aroused and the enthusiasm it evoked the summer meeting at Duluth proved that the policy of extending the activities of the society among the people in this fashion is productive of worth while results. It is safe to say that the Duluth meeting was the first in a series of state-wide annual historical conventions which will prove an important factor in the popular dissemination of information about Minnesota history. That local historical activity will be encouraged as the importance of state history becomes recognized more fully seems certain. This in turn should mean the more careful garnering of the records of Minnesota's past, and a general stimulus to historical thinking.

The convention at Duluth was held upon the invitation of the Duluth Chamber of Commerce and members of the society in that city. The chamber of commerce joined the Minnesota Historical Society in extending cordial invitations to Minnesotans to attend the convention, for the purpose of the meeting was to bring together as many people as possible who are interested in the history of Minnesota. Local historical societies and old settlers' associations throughout the state were asked, therefore, to send representatives to the convention, and members of the society and others interested were invited to attend.

A general committee of the society was appointed to have charge of the meeting, with Mr. Gideon S. Ives of St. Paul, ex-president of the society, as chairman, and Dr. Solon J. Buck, superintendent of the society, as secretary. The other members of this committee were Mr. Elmer E. Adams of Fergus Falls; Mr. Fred S. Bell of Winona; Captain Fred A. Bill, Mr. John M. Bradford, Mrs. Charles E. Furness, and Mr. James M. McConnell, of St. Paul; Judge William A. Cant, Mr. William E. Culkin, and Mr. William A. McGonagle, of Duluth; Mrs. Marshall H. Coolidge, Mr. Edward C. Gale, Dr. William E. Leonard, Mr. Levi Longfellow, Professor Andrew A. Stomberg, and Mr. Paul J. Thompson, of Minneapolis; Miss Bertha Hinshaw of Hibbing; Mr. Hiram M. Hitchcock of Redwood Falls; Mr. Thomas Hughes of Mankato; Mayor Victor E. Lawson of Willmar; Mr. Olai A. Lende of Canby; Mr. William B. Mitchell of St. Cloud; Mr. Richard D. Musser of Little Falls; Mr. Henry Oldenburg of Carlton; the Reverend Francis L. Palmer of Stillwater; Mr. Andrew D. Stephens of Crookston; and Mr. John R. Swann of Madison.

The committee on local arrangements was headed by Mr. Culkin, the other members being Mr. Luther B. Arnold, Mrs. Archibald T. Banning, Mrs. Julia M. Barnes, Mr. Edward C. Congdon, Judge Josiah D. Ensign, Mrs. N. Fred Hugo, Mr. Trevanion W. Hugo, Congressman Oscar J. Larson, Mrs. John R. McGiffert, and Mr. Luke A. Marvin, of Duluth, and Mr. Fred Bessette of Orr.

About fifteen Minneapolis and St. Paul people gathered at the Historical Building in St. Paul on Thursday morning, July 27, and at 9:00 A.M. started on an automobile tour to Duluth. After a delightful trip the party reached that city about 6:00 P.M. Other visitors came by train or automobile and when the registration during the convention was completed it was found that in all 51 members of the society

attended the meeting, 19 of whom were residents of Duluth. Non-members who registered numbered 130, and of these 92 were from Duluth. Thus of a total registration of 181, those from outside the city of Duluth numbered 70. The actual attendance at the meetings, it should be added, was considerably larger than these figures indicate, for many persons failed to leave their names at the registration desk.

All the sessions of the convention were held in the Memorial Hall at the St. Louis County Court House. In the large corridor approaching this hall an interesting array of war posters, collected by Mr. Henry L. Stafford, was displayed. The registration booth was situated in this corridor, but the convention headquarters were established nearby at the chamber of commerce. As a courtesy to the visitors the privileges of the chamber of commerce and of the Duluth Boat Club were extended to all who wore the convention badge. The two days of the convention were so crowded with sessions and other stated events that few of the visitors found time to indulge in the pleasures of canoeing or boating. But no one was so busy that he failed to study and to appreciate the picturesque and panoramic scenes afforded from the heights of the city — the majestic sweep of Lake Superior, the great wharves and gigantic ships, the far-flung line of the city hugging the north shore.

The first session began on Friday, July 28, at 10:00 A.M., with Mr. Jed L. Washburn of Duluth acting as the presiding officer. An address of welcome was delivered by the mayor of Duluth, Mr. Samuel F. Snively. After speaking first of the French and the contributions which they, as early explorers who "followed the path of the great inland seas," made to the history of the Northwest, the mayor called attention to various other racial elements that have gone into the making of Minnesota, particularly stressing the importance of those peoples who have possessed the heritage of constitu-

tional liberty. Speaking for Duluth, the mayor then welcomed the visitors cordially and expressed his good wishes for the success of the convention.

The response on behalf of the society was made by Mr. Ives, who first pointed out that one object of the summer meeting was to acquaint the people of the state with the work of the Minnesota Historical Society. He then told of the founding of the institution in 1849 and described the varied activities of the society since that time. Mr. Ives emphasized the value to the state of a thorough understanding of its past and pointed out that this implies that the mistakes as well as the successes will be studied with profit. In this connection he described the ruinous policy of the past with reference to the great forests of the region and urged the adoption of a comprehensive policy of reforestation. Another present need to which he directed attention is the adequate protection of the headwaters of the Mississippi.

The first formal paper presented was a study of "The Origin and Early History of the Farmers' Alliance in Minnesota," by Dr. John D. Hicks, professor of history at Hamline University, St. Paul.¹ Owing to the absence of Dr. Hicks, the paper was read by Mr. Cecil W. Shirk, the society's field secretary. The paper was based upon a careful examination of manuscripts, newspapers, and other sources in the possession of the Minnesota Historical Society and is one of a series of studies by the author on aspects of the "agrarian crusade." After a brief introduction relating to the national Farmers' Alliance, an account was presented of the formation of the Minnesota organization in 1881. Its early growth was slow, but "when the fourth meeting of the alliance was held in St. Paul on February 4, 1885, the order was a definite factor to be reckoned with in the politics of the state." At this stage the alliance men were not in favor of

¹This paper is to be printed in the December, 1922, issue of the *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*.

a separate political party, but did look to legislation for the mitigation of alleged farmers' evils. Much of Dr. Hicks's paper was devoted to an analysis of the situation of the Minnesota farmer in the eighties, which was the background of the alliance movement in the state. "The root of the evil was the low price of wheat." Territorial expansion, with the influx of population into wheat-growing territory and the consequent oversupply of wheat in the markets of the world, was an important factor in the situation. In 1884 the Minnesota wheat-grower sold his crop at prices ranging from forty-two to forty-eight cents a bushel. Yet the farmer himself, according to Dr. Hicks, was in part responsible for his own plight, for his over-investment in equipment and his reliance upon the one-crop system contributed to the distress.

A more specific grievance of the farmer was the claim that the cost of transportation, elevator charges, and fees paid to the railways, warehouses, and commission merchants absorbed a large part of the fair share of the selling price to which he was entitled. Thus the railroads became the focus of the farmer's complaints. Excessive and unreasonable rates and discriminations of various sorts were vigorously charged against the railroad companies. Scarcely less sharp was the farmer's condemnation of alleged unfair practices of elevator companies, particularly with reference to the grading of wheat. The result was a demand for legislative redress which led to the remedial laws of 1885 and the creation of the railroad and warehouse commission of that year, a body which "acquitted itself creditably considering the handicaps under which it worked."

A new mobilization of farmer forces began in 1886, more aggressive political action was threatened, and in 1887 a revision of the railroad and warehouse commission act of 1885, by enlarging the powers of that body, brought comfort to the alliance. The most important features of the new act, its rate-making provisions, were eventually ruled unconstitutional

by the United States Supreme Court. Dr. Hicks closed with a survey of the later history of the alliance, but did not tell in detail the story of its entrance into politics as a distinct third party. He believes that, although the farmer's organizations usually have fallen to pieces, his organized protests have "forced the older parties to take up his cause, and to grant him concession after concession."

The Governor of Minnesota, the Honorable Jacob A. O. Preus, who had come to Duluth to study the Minnesota coal supply problem in relation to the coal strike, was present during the reading of this paper and was invited to open the discussion. Apropos of the function of third parties the Governor pointed out that they brought forward ideas some of which were adopted and some of which were corrected by the larger parties. "The Farmers' Alliance," he said, "did a great deal for men as a minority party." As for the solving of the farmers' problems, he asserted that coöperative marketing offers the greatest possibilities. He stressed particularly the point that lack of uniformity in the grading of wheat was the specific cause for stricter regulation and for the forming of the railroad and warehouse commission and the board of grain appeals. The Governor then turned to the coal problem, and analyzed the situation as it affected Minnesota. In closing he pointed out the value of the study of history, asserting that only by drawing upon the wisdom of our fathers, by understanding what has gone before, can we leave to posterity a heritage comparable to that which we ourselves have received.

At the conclusion of the Governor's remarks, Mr. Theodore C. Blegen of Hamline University, St. Paul, was called upon to discuss the paper of Dr. Hicks. He said that the analysis by Dr. Hicks was a valuable contribution to Minnesota history and that students who wish to understand the economic foundations of Minnesota politics are grateful to the author for this and other able papers on the agrarian third parties

and their leaders. Mr. Blegen pointed out that the Farmers' Alliance entered Minnesota politics in 1890 and not only carried a tier of twenty-four western counties for governor but also won the balance of power in the legislature. He called attention to the need for monographic studies of the entire Farmers' Alliance movement in Minnesota and in the country as a whole and also of a thoroughgoing study of the milling industry in the state. It is important, he said, that such studies be carried through by trained scholars in the spirit of impartiality. "The business of the historian is to ascertain the truth from the records, and to set it forth without bias and without fear."

Mr. Adams and Mr. Lawson, whose names appeared on the program for the discussion of the first paper, were unable to be present, but the latter submitted the following brief paper on "The Farmers' Alliance in Kandiyohi County," which he prepared for the occasion and which, as an analysis of the situation in a typical county, merits publication in full.

THE FARMERS' ALLIANCE IN KANDIYOHI COUNTY

Perhaps conditions as they existed in Kandiyohi County were more or less typical of other counties of the Northwest. At the outset it might be said that the early settlers of Kandiyohi County (not the immigrants so much as the native-born Americans who came from the Eastern states) were somewhat interested in the early Granger movement and many of them supported the Greenback party. In 1876 Harrison Township gave Peter Cooper a majority of the votes cast for president—fifty-one votes to forty-one for Hayes and Tilden together. In 1886 the townships of Burbank, Irving, and Roseville were carried by Benjamin Butler for president.

The alliance movement, however, developed strongly throughout the county. Twenty-two local alliances were organized, the first of which, number 51, was organized in Burbank in December, 1881. It continued in existence until 1893. The last "local" organized was number 1,284 in Fahlun Township in 1892; it continued to function three years. The two largest

"locals" were Lake Lillian with eighty-two members and Dovre with eighty members, both in districts almost exclusively Scandinavian in population. A fair estimate of the number of active members in the county would be about one thousand.

The coöperative business activities of the alliances did not extend beyond buying binding twine or in a few instances other supplies in carload lots. In the case of the Whitefield Alliance, the initiative was taken to organize the Kandiyohi County Farmers' Alliance Elevator Company for the purpose of building and operating a grain elevator at Willmar. This company was organized on August 26, 1896. This business still continues as the Willmar Coöperative Elevator Company and does a large annual business. It is evident that these early alliance organizations in each community brought the people together and that the discussion of common needs gave rise to many of the coöperative enterprises since successfully launched in this county. At the annual county conventions of the alliance resolutions were adopted touching all phases of civic affairs.

It has been a common belief that the decision of the Farmers' Alliance for independent political action was the reason for its decline. In Kandiyohi County this decision was reached after a very exhaustive discussion and it led to many prominent members leaving the movement in order to maintain good standing in the dominant political party organization. On the other hand it is certain that the men who had the responsibility of administering the affairs of coöperative enterprises felt the necessity for legislation that would give them fairer opportunities, and in the absence of the means for making their influence felt in the diplomacy of the legislative lobbies they saw a chance to secure by direct political action what their numbers would seem to warrant. The political Farmers' Alliance was merged later with the People's party and that in turn lost its identity by fusing with the Democrats.

The Equity Society, which is the logical successor of the alliance organization among the farmers for promoting coöperative enterprises, essays to avoid direct political action. There is little doubt, however, that the political problems encountered by the Equity Society in the Northwest led to the organization of the militant political force among the farmers now known as the Nonpartisan League.

At the Kandiyohi County Farmers' Alliance convention held in Willmar in 1890 the following resolution was unanimously adopted: "Whereas, The old political parties have proven unfaithful to their trust and have time and again broken faith with their promises, therefore be it, Resolved, That we favor independent political action and that a full state ticket be put in the field." Other resolutions adopted at the same convention demanded taxation of railroad property on the same basis as farm property; reduction of railroad tariffs; free shipment of grain from side tracks for private individuals; election of senators and president by direct vote; submission of a prohibition amendment to popular vote; enforcement of the government's rights with reference to the Union Pacific and Central Pacific railroads and its operation of these lines as government railroads. The use of money for the control of elections was denounced.

An attempt to establish a newspaper in full sympathy with the alliance movement was made in 1891, when the *Alliance Standard* was established. It suspended after two or three years of precarious existence. The need for friendly publicity was felt keenly by the farmers after the demise of the *Standard* and at a county alliance meeting held in the fall of 1894 a resolution was adopted pledging one thousand paid-up subscriptions to anyone who would give the county a newspaper that would treat the farmers fairly in their endeavor to secure economic justice. The result was the launching of the *Willmar Tribune* by Dr. Christian Johnson in February, 1895, a newspaper which still survives and has a large circulation in the county. There can be no doubt that the Farmers' Alliance organization left a lasting influence on the civic life of the county and the state.

After this discussion of the Farmers' Alliance, a paper was read on "Early French Explorers of Northern Minnesota, 1660-1743," by Dr. Warren Upham, archeologist of the Minnesota Historical Society. Dr. Upham began by reviewing briefly the western journeys of Groseilliers and Radisson. He then referred to Du Luth, quoting the laconic report of Vaudreuil of May 1, 1710: "Captain Du Lud died this winter; he was a very honest man." After speaking briefly of Jacques de Noyon, Dr. Upham turned to the story of

Pierre Gaultier de Varennes, sieur de la Vérendrye, and his sons. Considerable attention was given to La Vérendrye, the speaker asserting that a principal motive for the preparation of his paper was to advocate the name Vérendrye for the proposed new Minnesota county adjoining the Lake of the Woods. After a concise summary of present knowledge concerning the explorations of La Vérendrye and his sons, Dr. Upham said, "All that history has recorded concerning Vérendrye leads us to admire and honor him, for his courage amid many obstacles and keen disappointments, for his firm Christian faith under sickness and bereavements, as by the deaths of Jemmeraye and his oldest son, and for his persevering devotion to the interests of Canada and of France. Not less than Du Luth, he was a hero of the far frontier. These men were shining examples of fidelity and self-denial for what they deemed to be duty. For evidences of this spirit, both Du Luth and Vérendrye were outspoken and resolute to refrain from sale or barter of intoxicating liquors to the Indians." Dr. Upham closed with an appreciation of Father Aulneau, whose name is coupled with that of La Vérendrye, and an account of Joseph La France, "a French and Ojibway half-breed who in the years 1740 to 1742 traveled and hunted with the Indians through the northern parts of the area of this state and in Manitoba."

An informal twelve o'clock luncheon at the Chamber of Commerce was attended by many of the visitors and Duluth people at the convention. The afternoon session began at 2:00 P.M., with Mr. Mitchell presiding. The first paper at this session was by Dr. Wayne E. Stevens of Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire, on "The Fur Trade in Minnesota During the British Régime." This interesting description of the early Minnesota fur trade and fur-traders is to be published in full in the BULLETIN for February, 1923.

Mr. Mitchell next introduced Mr. Arthur T. Adams of Minneapolis, who presented an exhibition of "Pictures Illus-

trating Historic Sites in Minnesota." Mr. Adams indicated that the situation in the state with regard to monuments and markers is sadly in need of reform; his pictures showed that a great many markers have been placed in almost inaccessible places and that their location is not pointed out to passing tourists in any adequate way; many others have been neglected or forgotten; on yet others the inscriptions are inaccurate. As an example he exhibited a picture of Birch Cooley, where rank grass obscures a marker at the scene of the massacre. The monument marking the scene of the Beaver Creek massacre was shown as it lies, toppled over by cattle and utterly neglected. Pictures of numerous other sites and monuments in need of attention were shown by Mr. Adams. He suggested that the state should secure the site of the Lower Agency building on the Minnesota River, the home of Joseph R. Brown, and the spot where Le Sueur built Fort L'Huillier, and set aside these places as state parks which unite natural beauty with historical associations. Mr. Adams then exhibited a number of views of picturesque Minnesota scenes and little-known places of special historical interest.

The next speaker introduced was Dr. Buck, who told "The Story of the Grand Portage from Lake Superior to the Pigeon River." His paper is to be published in full in the next number of the BULLETIN, and therefore need only be mentioned here.

A general discussion followed on "The Importance of Preserving and Marking Historic Sites, Trails, and Landmarks, and How This Can Best Be Accomplished." This discussion was opened by Mrs. Coolidge, state regent of the Daughters of the American Revolution. Asserting that the keynote of the organization which she represented is service, Mrs. Coolidge told of its interest in the marking of historic sites. Fourteen markers or monuments in Minnesota have been erected by the Daughters of the American Revolution, she said. Among these were mentioned the stone at the site of the making of

the Treaty of Traverse des Sioux and the marker at the site of the blockhouse of Zebulon M. Pike. The Sibley House, which is administered by the organization, is filled with memorials of General Sibley and "is a great educational factor in the state." Mrs. Coolidge then sketched some of the admirable plans of the Daughters of the American Revolution for the marking of other historic sites and pointed out that interest and money for the work were assured. She closed by suggesting that if the location of historic spots were indicated on road maps greater popular interest in marking the state's historic spots might be aroused.

Mr. Perry Williams, manager of the *Minneapolis Journal* travel and resort bureau, who continued the discussion, asserted that the proper marking and preservation of the state's historic spots have an important bearing on a great industrial opportunity. "Minnesota's wonderful vacation opportunities," he said, "are attracting an ever-increasing flow of tourists to this state. If, in addition to our good roads and our service in guiding visitors over these roads and to their vacation points, we add the constant interest which is aroused by marking the historic places, we will add greatly to the prestige of the state as a place for the vacationist." Mr. Williams then stressed the need for a guidebook to Minnesota's historic places. "Such a book," he said, "should describe briefly the interesting events which make each spot worthy of a mark and also give the method of reaching the various places by railroad and by highway or water as the case may be."

Mr. Willoughby M. Babcock, Jr., curator of the Minnesota Historical Society's museum, who was next introduced by Mr. Mitchell, first told of the work which has been done by the neighboring states of Wisconsin and Iowa to preserve and mark historic sites. In Wisconsin the problem of high cost has been met by the secretary of the archeological

society by "evolving an attractive marker consisting of a slab of stone with a sloping face on which is attached a bronze tablet giving information concerning the spot marked." A great deal has been accomplished in Wisconsin as a result of thoroughgoing coöperation among various agencies interested in historic sites. Iowa has organized its administration of state parks and memorials and achieved excellent results. Mr. Babcock then took up the situation in Minnesota and declared that a state board of parks would have almost unlimited opportunities for carrying through a comprehensive plan for parks and memorials in this state. The Grand Portage region was mentioned as a desirable park site. Indian mounds are rapidly disappearing. Many have been cleared away, but those that remain should be marked in some adequate way. To meet the difficulties of the passing tourist, Mr. Babcock suggested that an added marker should be placed on the highway directing the tourist to the spot where the incident commemorated occurred and that the permanent marker should be at the place of actual occurrence.

Mrs. James T. Morris, national chairman of the historic spots committee of the Daughters of the American Revolution, spoke next, calling attention to one of the most interesting markers in the state, that placed on the old round tower at Fort Snelling in honor of Colonel Henry Leavenworth, the first commander of the fort, which was originally called Fort St. Anthony. This valuable general discussion was closed by Dr. Buck, who told of the plans of the state auditor, Mr. Ray Chase, for preparing a careful report on state parks and memorials in Minnesota and for urging the establishment of a state board to have jurisdiction over such parks and memorials. The Minnesota Historical Society, said Dr. Buck, is coöperating with Mr. Chase in the hope that the state's monuments and historic sites may soon receive the care and supervision which they so urgently need.

A large audience was present for the evening session which began at 8:00 P.M. Mr. Ives presided and first introduced Mr. Trevanion W. Hugo, who read an interesting paper entitled "Daniel Greysolon, Sieur Du Luth, the Original Exploiter of the International Waterway Proposition." The next speaker was Dr. Clarence W. Alvord of the University of Minnesota, whose paper on "How Northern Minnesota Was Saved from the British, 1783-1818," appears, under a somewhat different title, in the present number of the BULLETIN. An interesting special feature of the evening was the presentation of a series of pictures illustrating the history of the city of Duluth. Brief explanations were made, as the views were thrown on the screen, by Mr. Homer C. Fulton of Duluth.

"Minnesota and the World War" was the general theme considered at the morning session on Saturday, July 29, beginning at 10:00 A.M. Mrs. Barnes presided and presented as the first speaker Mr. Elmer W. McDevitt of Duluth, who took as his subject "The American Soldier." He paid tribute to the "determination, loyalty, self-sacrifice, and devotion" of the men who fought under the stars and stripes in the recent war. The World War, he said, introduced a new kind of warfare and the American soldier was hastily trained, but his adaptability and capacity for hard work carried him through the war triumphantly. The speaker then discussed the problem of adjustment which the soldier faced when he returned to civil life.

Lieutenant Governor Louis L. Collins was to have spoken on "Minnesota Troops in the World War," but unfortunately he was unable to be present. A further disappointment was the unavoidable absence of Mr. Julius H. Barnes, who was scheduled to tell of "Some War Time Experiences." Mrs. Barnes called upon Mr. George McCree of St. Paul, who related some of his experiences when enlisting men in Duluth

for the Motor Transport Corps. He called attention particularly to the eagerness shown by applicants, and cited a number of interesting examples. This zealous spirit, in his opinion, may be depended upon to help the United States to triumph over any similar dangers which may arise in the future. The speaker then discussed briefly the coal strike and its relation to the industry of the country.

Mrs. Barnes then called for the report of the convention's committee on resolutions. The following five resolutions, read by Mr. Mitchell, were unanimously adopted:

RESOLVED, That we express our sincere appreciation of the hospitality of the city of Duluth, of the courtesies extended by the Duluth Chamber of Commerce and the Duluth Boat Club, and especially of the efficient and untiring work of the committee on local arrangements, which has played so large a part in making this first annual convention a success.

RESOLVED, That this convention indorse the proposition for the establishment of a state commission to take over the management of all state parks and to develop a general park system for the state in which historic as well as scenic interests shall receive attention.

RESOLVED, That this convention recommend especially the establishment of a state park to include the Grand Portage from Lake Superior to Pigeon River — the first white man's road in Minnesota — with the site of old Fort Charlotte at the western end of the portage and, if feasible, the Split Rock Canyon and the cascades and falls of the Pigeon River.

RESOLVED, That this convention give its hearty approval to any movement looking toward the preservation and marking of historic sites and trails in Minnesota and urge that a state-wide survey of historic sites be undertaken by the organizations and agencies interested in this work.

RESOLVED, That this convention indorse the proposition that the new county to be formed out of the northern part of Beltrami County be named Vérendrye County in honor of Pierre Gaultier de Varennes, sieur de la Vérendrye, who laid the foundations of the fur trade in the region west of Lake Superior and who in 1732 established Fort St. Charles within the boundaries proposed for the new county.

After the adoption of these resolutions, Mr. Shirk read an account of a visit to old Fort Charlotte and announced that a preliminary examination already had been made of the remains of this historic post and that the Minnesota Historical Society was planning to make a thorough examination and survey of the site in the near future. ²

Mrs. Barnes then introduced Mr. Franklin F. Holbrook, secretary of the Minnesota War Records Commission, who read a paper entitled "What Minnesota Is Doing to Record Her War History." Aided by local committees, said Mr. Holbrook, the Minnesota War Records Commission has undertaken the collection of state, county, and all other material relating to Minnesota's participation in the recent war. Ultimately, on the basis of the materials collected, a comprehensive documentary history will be published, and already much has been accomplished in the assembling of materials. At first questionnaires sent to service men did not bring an adequate response, but after the state bonus law went into effect an arrangement was made whereby questionnaires were sent out with the bonus forms and as a result information from about eighty per cent of the Minnesota men in the service was obtained. In addition to these, questionnaires have been sent to Red Cross workers and Y.M.C.A. men with interesting results. In coöperation with the historical society, the speaker said, the commission has built up a collection of several hundred photographs of soldiers, of personal narratives, and the like. Various war organizations, such as the Minnesota Commission of Public Safety, the War Camp Community Service, the United States Employment Bureau, the Y.M.C.A., and the Y.W.C.A., have turned over an enormous volume of correspondence. "Taken as a whole," said Mr. Holbrook, speaking of these materials, "their contribution to

² A brief report of the results of this survey of old Fort Charlotte appears in the society's *Twenty-second Biennial Report*, 28 (St. Paul, 1923).

the interest, fullness, and accuracy of records will be as great or even greater than that to be derived from any other class of records."

The last speaker of the session was Mr. William E. Culkin, chairman of the St. Louis County War Records Committee, who gave an illustrated address on "St. Louis County in the World War." Mr. Culkin said that he had collected approximately ten thousand records of soldiers, with photographs, letters, and newspaper clippings. The purpose of the committee is to make a comprehensive collection, including the records of home activities as well as those of the men and women in the service. The collection as a whole already possesses exceptional value, but in all likelihood its value will continue to increase. From the committee's collection of slides Mr. Culkin had chosen a number to show on the screen as illustrating the nature and value of these records. These pictures illustrated many sides of the experiences of the soldiers and sailors and vividly recalled the varied activities of those who remained at home.

An informal luncheon at the Chamber of Commerce was held at noon, after which there was a discussion of plans for the organization of a St. Louis County Historical Society. The toastmaster, Mr. Congdon, first introduced Dr. Buck, who discussed briefly the possibilities for a local historical society. Dr. Buck made it clear that, although the state society is ready at all times to make suggestions and to coöperate, no successful organization can be effected unless interested persons in the locality take the initiative and prepare the ground. That there is a field for worth while endeavor in the organization of local historical activity is indicated by the work of hundreds of local historical societies throughout the country. Not a great many exist in Minnesota as yet, he said, but the situation is improving steadily. Affiliation of the local with the central society is desirable, in Dr. Buck's

opinion, and he suggested that possibly a branch society might be formed. The speaker then read parts of a proposed constitution for a local society and closed with the suggestion that a committee be appointed to go over the whole matter carefully and, if feasible, take preliminary steps toward organization.³

The distinguished historian, Dr. James K. Hosmer of Minneapolis, who was present at the convention, then responded to an invitation from the toastmaster to speak. Dr. Hosmer, who is in his eighty-ninth year and is the author of numerous important historical works, declared that he was steeped in history, that he was, indeed, "an historical inebriate." As a veteran he commended the work of the younger leaders in the historical field in Minnesota, and he complimented the people of Duluth upon their interest in the organization of a local historical society.

Mrs. Merrill of Duluth cordially indorsed the idea of a county historical society and declared that she favored close affiliation with the state society. Mrs. Coolidge, speaking for the Duluth chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, promised active interest and coöperation.

Mr. Culkin then moved and the motion was seconded and carried that the Duluth people present express their approval of the idea of organizing local history work and of affiliating with the state society. It was then decided that the committee on local arrangements for the convention should be continued as a committee on a local historical society. Thus the conference paved the way for constructive action. None of those who were present could doubt that an active historical society in northeastern Minnesota soon would be organized. The necessary foundation of intelligent interest and enthusiasm was there and definite, practical plans were under consideration. A local newspaper, the *Duluth Herald*, in commenting

³ The proposed constitution is printed in full *ante*, p. 252-256.

editorially on the convention, said appropriately, "It is believed that this important gathering will do much to direct the thoughts of our people to our local history, so full of interest. What a pageant historical reflection on Duluth's past awakens! Indians, traders, missionaries, lumbermen, miners, trappers, fishermen, empire builders pass in mental review."

After the luncheon conference an excursion was made, in automobiles provided by the local committee, to Fond du Lac, a place interesting in Minnesota history for its connections with the fur trade and with missionary work among the Indians. Here the members of the convention attended a meeting of the Old Settlers' Association of the Head of Lake Superior. An interesting feature of this meeting was an address by Mr. William E. McEwen of Duluth in which particular attention was devoted to the treaty concluded in 1826 by Governor Lewis Cass and the commissioner of Indian affairs with the Chippewa whereby the latter ceded "the right to search for and carry away, any metals or minerals from any part of their country." As the treaty was signed at Fond du Lac on August 5, 1826, the speaker suggested that plans be made for a celebration of the approaching centennial of this event, urging that a fitting memorial be erected as a part of the celebration. After the meeting the site of the old trading post was inspected. A visit was then made to Jay Cooke State Park, which adjoins the city of Duluth at its northeast line. Here a picnic supper was served, after which the excursion was concluded with a tour of the boulevard in Duluth.

This outing brought the state historical convention to an end. On the following day some of the visitors who attended the meeting started northward toward Grand Portage and Fort William. Others left on tours in other directions or departed for their homes. All were persuaded that the ex-

periment of holding an historical convention in Minnesota had amply justified itself. Interesting historical papers, fruitful discussions, trips to places of historic interest, conversations with people interested in Minnesota history—these things had made the summer meeting a delightful experience for the participants. That the convention served the community of Duluth will be proved if a local history organization is effected; that it served the state as a whole by calling attention to the domain of state history and to the ideals of the historical society seems certain.

THEODORE C. BLEGEN

MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
ST. PAUL



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