THE NORTHWEST SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURE AND EXPERIMENT STATION

The Northwest School of Agriculture and Experiment Station at Crookston serves the Red River Valley counties in the dual capacity as a branch of the Minnesota Experiment Station and as a Regional Sub-Collegiate Branch of the University of Minnesota. The Experiment Station was established by the State Legislature in 1895 after assurances had been given by the late James J. Hill, president of the St. Paul and Pacific Railway that three quarter sections of land in Section 19 Crookston Twp. Polk County would be given the University for Experiment Station purposes. The St. Paul and Pacific Railway was absorbed as a part of the Great Northern Railway and in 1903 that Company gave the University of Minnesota a Conditional Deed with an option to buy the land at any time for $25.00 per acre, the conditional deed had a reversion clause in which the land, if not used for experimental or educational purpose during any three year period, was to revert back to the donor. (Clear title to the entire section, minus the railroad's Rights of Way was given in 1939 when a committee appointed by the University Regents met with the Great Northern officials regarding the acquisition of the remaining 68 A. of the southwest quarter of the section. The Committee consisting of W. T. Middlebrook, Comptroller, R. J. Quinlivan, Regent, and myself, convinced the railroad officials that with more than three quarters of a million dollars invested on that site indicated, a perpetual interest by the University in that land.

Great credit for the idea of establishing regional Experiment Stations in Minnesota, to be coordinated with the Central University Experiment Station in St. Paul, should be given to Willet M. Hays, then director of the Minnesota Experiment Station. The enabling legislation for the establishing of Regional Experiment Stations in both Northwestern and Northeastern Minnesota was passed by the 1895 Session of the Minnesota legislature, due largely to the work of Senator P. M. Ringdal of Crookston and members of the legislature of Northeastern Minnesota counties. (An interesting and detailed account of the leadership exerted by the Senators from Polk County in the Legislature to passage of the bills establishing the Experiment Station in 1895 and the School of Agriculture in 1905 has been recorded by the late C. G. Selvig in both his book entitled the TALE OF TWO VALLEYS, 1951, and his Article in the 1916 edition of the HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY OF POLK COUNTY) Senator A. D. Stephens was credited by Selvig as being the dynamic force behind the legislation establishing the School of Agriculture at Crookston in 1905.

It is not the intent of the writer of this report to repeat the published historical record of the Experiment Station and the School of Agriculture, but rather to report the historical highlights of its growth and accomplishments during the fifty years