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On: 18 October 2014, At: 12:04

Publisher: Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK

Journal of Geography

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rjog20>

The Status of Geography in the Public Schools

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Published online: 24 Jun 2008.

To cite this article: P. C. Topping (1916) The Status of Geography in the Public Schools, Journal of Geography, 14:6, 236-238, DOI: [10.1080/00221341608986893](https://doi.org/10.1080/00221341608986893)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00221341608986893>

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mill, two wagon factories, a plow factory, and a planing mill, while just east of the city the Northern Pacific shops are located. Minnesota's fourth Normal School is located here. Concordia College stands in the south part of the city.

International Falls (4,500) of Koochiching, stands at the national boundary, separated from Ft. Francis, Ontario, by the Rainy River. Using electric power from the Rainy River, a pulp and paper mill, a saw mill, and a planing mill, are among the leading industries. An electric interurban connects with Ranier, five miles east. A daily paper is published.

Cloquet (8,000) located on the St. Louis River 25 miles from Duluth has five large saw mills and a fine paper mill. The manufacturing plants employ 2500 men. Logs often jam the river for miles. The city has a picturesque setting in the deep valley and on the hill sides.

MINNESOTA

THE STATUS OF GEOGRAPHY IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

GEOGRAPHY is more generally studied in the public schools than any other subject except possibly English and arithmetic. As a formal subject it is usually introduced in the third or fourth grades. The first work consists in the study of home geography, the village or the community, and the county, including the study of occupations, products, and industries, surface features from field excursions, streams, lakes, waterways, and so forth.

Sometimes the work is based on some such book as Robinson Crusoe; the struggle of man with the elements, and the manner in which he makes use of the natural resources at hand being the prominent geographical features of such study.

An elementary text book is introduced, as a rule, in the fourth or in the fifth grade. The work is frequently supplemented by the use of geographic or industrial readers. The advanced textbook is usually taken up in the sixth grade and completed in the seventh, leaving the eighth grade without work in geography. In some schools textbooks are practically dispensed with, supplementary geographic readers, periodicals, and reference books taking the place of the text.

IN THE HIGH SCHOOL

In the high school the subject is taken up in the form of physical geography, commercial geography, and what is known in Minnesota as senior geography, which is simply a review and amplification of a part of the grammar school geography. Each one of these subjects is studied for one semester and carries one-half credit towards graduation. The reports of the high and graded school inspectors show that last year physiography was studied in one

hundred and fifty-six high and graded schools; commercial geography in eighty-four; and senior geography in forty-two. It must be said, then, that on the whole, geography is a popular branch of study in the public schools. But the development and general results have not been commensurate with the importance of the subject—the only true sociological subject in the curriculum.

PRINCIPAL DEFECTS IN GEOGRAPHY TEACHING

One of the greatest defects in the work in geography is the purely statistical and cyclopedic character of the instruction in the upper grades. A teacher may start out with the correct basic notions and principles of geography with the study of man in relation to his environment, but textbooks and examination questions soon deflect him into the easy and well-beaten paths that result in mere memoriter work.

It is also a grave mistake to drop the work in geography in the seventh grade. This is quite a common practice in the schools of the state, and the result is that the study of geography is discontinued just at a time when the reasoning faculties of the pupils are developing, and at a time when the student could get the most value as well as enjoyment out of the work. The study of geography should be continued throughout the eighth grade. This is especially necessary when we consider that a large percentage of the pupils that go through the grades never pass into the high school, to continue geographical studies. For such pupils, as well as for others, geography is one of the most practical studies of the elementary curriculum, and the benefits resulting from its study should not be curtailed by discontinuing it at the end of the seventh year.

A few high schools organized on the junior-senior plan have introduced in the eighth year a practical course in elementary commercial and industrial geography. The work begins with the study of the geographic conditions bearing upon the commercial and industrial life of the community and of the state. From the community and state as a center, the work is extended to include the United States and foreign countries.

Physical geography or physiography as studied in the high school has developed into what might be termed an unrelated science, and is in much the same position that chemistry was in a few years back. It does not seem to lead anywhere or to have any practical bearing upon life or man's relation to the soil or climatic conditions. It has come to be largely a study of elementary geology.

Physiography can be made a very valuable high school subject, but its value in the high school curriculum will depend upon the extent to which it is related to the life and activities of the human race. Physical geography as now commonly taught, and senior geography, might well be dropped from the curriculum of the average high school, and the time given to a strong course in commercial and industrial geography, with enough of the physical geography to serve as a background for a proper understanding of the geographic facts bearing upon industrial and commercial life.

The above figure is from a photograph of a model about $3\frac{1}{4}$ feet square recently made for the University of Minnesota. It is based upon 4 quadrangles of the U. S. Geological Survey, 1 inch to the mile. The remarkably pitted surface with its many lakes is due to morainic deposits. The width of the valley of the Minnesota River (bottom of map) at once suggests that it was once the channel of a much larger river; this larger river drained Glacial Lake Agassiz.*

*The model is made and sold by E. H. J. Lorenz, Madison, Wis., from whom price and desired information may be obtained.

MINNESOTA

The total daily capacity of the 303 mills in Minnesota is given as 165,715 barrels of flour, of which 84,600 barrels is from 23 mills located at Minneapolis and 5,900 barrels from 4 mills at Duluth. In addition to the Minnesota output there is a demand for 15,200,000 bushels of wheat from the North and South Dakota mills. Thus there is a local demand for 142,784,552 bushels of wheat in this immediate Northwest.