PROCEEDINGS

BENNINGTON COLLEGE CONFERENCE

Bennington, Vt.
June 20-21, 1930.
FRIDAY AFTERNOON SESSION

June 20, 1930.

The opening session of the Bennington College Conference convened at four o'clock at the home of Mr. and Mrs. H. P. McCullough, at North Bennington, Vermont, Robert D. Leigh, President of Bennington College, presiding.

CHAIRMAN LEIGH: Ladies and Gentlemen: I think we will begin. I know of no better way of beginning, although it may seem a little embarrassing, than to go around the table and have each person give his or her name. You each have a complete list giving the names of the persons expected to attend:

Wilford Aiken, Director, John Burroughs School, St. Louis, Mo.

Willard W. Beatty, Supt., Bronxville Public Schools, Bronxville, N.Y.


John Clark, Principal, Lincoln High School, New York City

Dr. M.C. Del Manzo, Provost, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York City

Frederic H. Kent, 458 West 116th Street, New York City

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Dr. Fred A. Moss, Center for Psychological Service, Washington, D.C.

Helen Parkhurst, Principal, The Dalton Schools, Inc., New York City

Mary E. Pierce, Director, The Park School, Cleveland, Ohio

E.M. Sipple, Director, The Park School, Baltimore, Md.


Mrs. Eugene Randolph Smith, Beaver Country Day School, Chestnut Hill, Mass.

Herbert Smith, Principal, The Fieldston School, Fieldston, N.Y.


Morton D. Snyder, Headmaster, Rye Country Day School, Rye, N.Y.


Carleton Wasnburne, Supt., Winnetka Public Schools, Winnetka, Ill.

Dr. Eleanor Rowland Wembridge, Referee, The Court of Domestic Relations, Cleveland, O.

Edward Yeomans, Principal, The Ojai Valley School, Ojai, California

Dr. John J. Coss, Columbia University, New York City

Mrs. George S. Franklin, New York City.

Mrs. Arthur J. Holden, Old Bennington, Vt.

Dr. William H. Kilpatrick, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York City.
Hall Park McCullough, Esq., North Bennington, Vermont
Mrs. H.P. McCullough, North Bennington, Vermont
Mrs. Clarence M. Woolley, Greenwich, Conn.
Robert D. Leigh, President, Bennington College
Mrs. Robert D. Leigh, Bennington, Vermont
Fred O. Newman, Assistant to President, Bennington College

... Announcements ...

CHAIRMAN LEIGH: The first thing: I feel like expressing my great feeling of pleasure that you have all come. I know in the case of many of you it has been at the sacrifice of a great deal of time and energy. When the Trustees called this Conference, which we decided to do about a month ago, we did not know how many we could get. There are a few people who could not come who have sent their greetings, in some cases have sent long letters describing to a certain extent what they would have said had they come. Mr. Fowler Price, Carson Ryan, Miss Cooke, Lawrence Frank, Dr. Keppel, of the Carnegie Corporation, and Mrs. Dorothy Canfield Fisher are most of the people who could not come, whom we asked, and I think I have communications from all of them.

The purpose of this Conference can be pretty simply stated: At a meeting a little more than a month ago the Board of Trustees found themselves under the necessity of making a critical decision regarding the Bennington project, and they
unanimously that it would be proper before making that decision, as well as being very helpful to them, to call together the people who are most interested in the Bennington project as indicated by what they have said and written and done. They felt it would help us to decide what to do next. You know who comprise the group that has been called together here. Primarily it is the heads of progressive secondary schools, with a few other people called in who are not doing that work, to give us their advice or expert opinion.

The nature of the Conference for the next day is a meeting of this group with the Bennington Board of Trustees. Not all of the Board of Trustees who are going to be here are now present, but a few of the Trustees will be here tonight and tomorrow morning. So far as possible we would like to have this Conference your Conference, meaning not the Conference of the Trustees of Bennington College. For that purpose I am going at the end of the session to ask five or six of you to serve as a Committee, none of whom will be members of the Bennington College Board, to try and see if at the end of it there will be recommendations that will help us.

At the beginning I should like to indicate that in talking about the Bennington plan what we want is your best thought, free from any hesitation, of the Bennington plan, so that the people behind it can proceed better. At this time
we would appreciate courageous criticism rather than praise as to what we ought to do. If you think that the President ought to get a new Board of Trustees, you ought to say so, although they will be here listening to you. If you think the Board of Trustees needs a new President, say so. There is nothing that I can see that should limit the discussions of this particular Conference.

It is our hope that the group will come to some consensus of opinion about the things we are going to discuss, but if we do not, if we come to rather honest disagreements, that will, perhaps, serve our purposes best if that represents the best thought we can produce. The Trustees will be here, they will know what the nature of the disagreement is, and they, meeting after this Conference is closed, will have to make the decisions. They must come to an agreement. This group may end in any kind of opinion that will represent the best thought for these two or three days.

So that I feel that what we want to do is deliberate as rapidly and as honestly as we can upon this particular problem of what the Bennington College project should do next, as this can, perhaps, be answered best by people who do not know each other, although there is a great percentage of the group here present who are used to working together.

The session this afternoon, which will be necessarily brief, I think we might use in as clear a statement
as possible of what the point is which we have arrived at.
To do this it is necessary to tell you something of the history
of the project, something of the principles or hypotheses
which we have as to what we should do next, how we can agree,
and at the expense of what. It is a very familiar history to
some of you, but I should like to mention certain things which
help to define it at the present moment.

It is six years since the College project was
started. The point I think that needs to be emphasized re-
garding its origin is that it was of local origin, it was a
local group that started it. Now, as the time has passed it
has become, from the trend of things and from the nature of
its support, general in its appeal, general in its financial
support and general in its clientele. The immediate occasion
for starting the College, I think, needs to be borne in mind.
It was the comparative scarcity of women's college facilities
in this section of the country six years ago that brought this
about, a reason which is not so great today as it was six years
ago, and that I think might be a factor in our discussion.

It started then as a project which appealed
because it was proposed to fill a quantitative need, and a pro-
ject which was based upon an interest of a local group very
much concerned with the duties of the environment and the ad-
vantages of a college in this part of the world. With that
point of view, at a meeting in New York, the Colony Club meet-
ing as we always call it, the heads of the women's colleges were called together, and they I think gave the College its first significant direction. They said it was a good thing to have a new college, that it was a good thing to have it in Bennington, but the significant thing was that now the colleges were in need of experiment, and that a new institution for women could promote experiment in a way that was impossible in the old established colleges for women. President Comstock and President Nielson expressed this view as forcibly as it could be made.

Following that there was held in Bennington a conference of people largely chosen from the college field under the leadership primarily of Dr. Kilpatrick, and that group decided its more specific direction as being not only a college that should carry on experiment in the college field but a college that should tie itself up to the larger educational movement, which we have come to know as the progressive school movement; and I should say that from that day in August of 1924 to the present time there has been a rather consistent development of the Bennington project in that direction.

So that although it started as a local project, although it started because there was a great need for facilities for women, from its early days it has obtained its support and interest because of its proposed educational development.

As to the financial support which the College has
obtained, after that Bennington Conference, Dr. Booth, who is Secretary of our Board of Trustees, and a Bennington citizen, largely by his own efforts obtained in a few weeks two-thirds of a million dollars as pledges for the College. Since we are going to discuss the financial support, I would like to analyze that now. Of that $675,000 which came from Bennington, there were five large gifts amounting to $475,000 altogether, and eighty-eight small gifts, largely of the merchants and Bennington citizens generally, with total contributions of $181,000. Most of those gifts were given, as I think they would be given in any town, aside from some of the large ones, to support a college in Bennington. All those original gifts, or I should perhaps say pledges, bore the proviso that they would be paid only in case the College raised the total of $2,500,000 by the Fall of 1928.

It was not until the Spring of 1928 that a President was chosen, and the financial campaign outside of Bennington did not get underway until January of that year, so that proviso was renewed during 1928 to December 31, 1930. In summary, therefore, the large part, and certainly the original support of the College was two-thirds of a million dollars, two-thirds of which came from four large givers, was given with the proviso that a total of $2,500,000 be raised by December 31, 1930.

After 1924 when that money was raised, there was
a long period of, I don't know what to call it, fumbling and searching, and not until 1918 did the financial campaign outside of Bennington get started. At that time the Trustees were able to find a President and employed the John Price Jones Corporation to carry on a financial campaign. As I look back at that time when I was just learning some of this side of college life, and the enthusiasm of the Trustees regarding the John Price Jones Corporation, it seems that we were quite naive. It was the confident opinion that it would be a matter of a few months, with the aid of this high powered, efficient money-raising organization, when they would secure all the money they required and needed.

To go on, the story of the work in New York is quite different. There was organized, and has been gradually enlarged, a group of people who are about as expert in raising money, mainly women in New York, as you would find in connection with any money-raising project in that city; and they have worked long and hard at getting contributions to the College. They have succeeded admirably when it comes to getting what might be called medium sized gifts. In the two winters in which they have been working they have obtained a total of $460,000 from seventy-two givers. Aside from one gift of $50,000, these were practically all medium sized gifts. All of these gifts have not been made on any condition that a certain sum of money be raised by December 31, 1930. Very few of them
were raised on any other theory than that it was a good thing to have a college like the Bennington College plan. In all of these gifts the main emphasis has been on the educational program set forth, and there is no time limit on them. Practically all these were first gifts which would be followed when the College started by later additions.

The theory in going to New York, however, was that we would get enough gifts from the foundations to build the College, and we have worked as intelligently as we could on all the foundations: the Rockefeller Foundation, the personal giving arrangement which Mr. Harkness employs, the Rosenwald Fund, and a great many others which we traced down. For two successive years we have made applications to most of them, and this Spring the thing that perhaps made us come face to face with the dilemma in which we now find ourselves occurred. This Spring we were definitely turned down by all these foundations, so that although you may have questions to ask about this, I hope some of you have some suggestions on how we can interest the foundations in a financial way. My opinion, however, is that the college will not be started by any gifts from any foundations that are now operated, at least in New York. You can never tell, but that seems to me the point at which we have arrived.

At the present time Bennington College cannot obtain any financial help from the foundations, under its present
organization at least. In addition to that, the group of workers in New York has gone through practically all the usual big targets, the big givers who give money individually, and as far as the organization itself is competent it has found out there was no possibility of money from there. So that although we have had great support from Bennington, we have had an increasing group of people who have been willing to increase their pledges, on the outside of Bennington we have failed in the one thing that we started out to get: one or two big gifts which would make the College possible.

I am going to give you now my own analysis of the reasons for that failure. The members of the Board of Trustees may give you different views, but these are mine. My own feeling is that no foundation in New York or Chicago is interested in the kind of thing we are attempting to do. Secondly, the foundations find an objection in our request for experimental work in a new college. They feel that experiment, so far as they see its need, can be carried on in existing institutions. That is a thing that we have honestly not been able to agree with them about, but as far as I can generalize the reasons they are: In the first place, the foundations are not really interested in the kind of thing we are doing and propose to do; secondly, they would rather invest money in educational experiment in existing institutions. They believe it is dangerous to start a new college for the type of work which we are contemplating.
The present status then of the Bennington project is revealed by this story, that with $1,116,000 pledged, we have a part of that - more than half - which is pledged conditionally upon our obtaining $2,500,000 by the end of this year, that we have felt this Spring as we did last Spring that we did not have enough money, and have had to postpone building. On the other hand, if I should give you, as you will discover for yourselves, the attitude of the Bennington trustees, it is that we are in no position to be really discouraged. Whereas our financial efforts have not yielded very good results, as we have not been able to start the college, the almost universal acclamation and enthusiasm with which its educational ideas have been received is distinctly encouraging. We feel, therefore, the present situation is a strategic one, which we, because we happen to have been associated with it just at this time, should make every effort to turn to account, to get some kind of college to carry out these ideas.

Our hypotheses are about as follows: I would like to examine these this afternoon to see if we should go ahead. First, there is a specific need for the Bennington type of college, and we may spend some time discussing that; but we may be able to go beyond that without much discussion to another heading closely connected with that. Second, there is no other college in existence which at the present time, or in the very near future, is doing the type of thing that Bennington College
proposes to do. Third, that this is a very strategic time in the educational situation to concentrate our efforts reorganizing in any way necessary to get such a college established.

Now, if we agree on those hypotheses, we go ahead to the next step in two committee meetings this evening to examine ways of getting started; but I should like to stop a little as I have talked too long for a Chairman at a Conference. We would rather like to have a series of speeches, a general expression of ideas. I would, therefore, like to stop to examine some of these hypotheses.

The first one I think the members of this Conference better than in any group in the United States are prepared to answer: Is there a specified need for a college of the Bennington type? There are some of us who have not attended two important conferences that have been held this year, one in Hot Springs, the progressive educators, many of whom are members of this group; the other in Washington, The Progressive Educational Association, which dealt with certain problems on progressive education. So I will call on some of you who have been at those conferences, or who are in charge of secondary progressive schools, and have you tell us whether there is a specified need for a college of the Bennington type as it has been outlined.

I will call on Perry Smith, who was at the
Washington Conference, to talk on that point.

MR. PERRY D. SMITH: At that Conference, of course I am not speaking officially but merely from memory, I got the impression that we agreed unanimously that there was a great need for such a college. One of our problems, one of the problems of those progressive schools which were doing secondary school work, that is high school work, was to find a girls' college, in particular in the East, to which we could recommend our students with a clear conscience as continuing the type of education that we have tried to give them in our progressive high schools. It was discussed at considerable length, and I remember it was the second recommendation which was made at the end of the Conference as to what we needed to do, the first one being that there was some need of training teachers. The second was we needed a college, and I believe Bennington was mentioned.

CHAIRMAN LEIGH: I would like to ask the people who represent these progressive secondary schools here if the need for an outlet is any greater in the case of girls than in the case of boys.

MR. HERBERT SMITH: Oh, yes, no question about it!

CHAIRMAN LEIGH: Do you find that in The Fieldston School?

MR. HERBERT SMITH: We are very acutely aware of
it in The Fieldston School. The tendency among the Eastern colleges varies. Mt. Holyoke, Smith and Wellesley have been much consistent to select the girl of high academic aptitude, and not only to bar practically from the college the normal all around student, but not to give that student the type of education suited to her need. They have gone much further than any of them realizes in the direction of specialization on academic students.

Now for boys, the pressure has not been so great. For one thing the policy followed at such institutions as Dartmouth, where the students are selected for their athletic ability as well as on an academic basis, at Harvard where only a fraction of the students are selected on a purely academic basis, and the existence of a much wider variety in the number of men's colleges makes the problem much less acute for boys than for girls.

MR. PERRY D. SMITH: A boy has a much wider choice as to a career than is open to girls at this time. It is a very hard thing to advise a girl now to continue her education when she has nothing to choose from in the seven or eight women's colleges which are very much alike.

CHAIRMAN LEIGH: Is there any college for boys or men that does carry forward progressive ideas?

MR. CARLETON WASHBURN: Not as such, but they get a tremendous opportunity to put them in practice. In spite
of the tradition which covers most of the Eastern colleges, really there is a much more liberal attitude toward the fitting of the boy to his future work in a boys' college, it seems to me, than in a girls' college.

MR. PERRY D. SMITH: I cannot get away from the idea that the girls' college is primarily interested in showing that the woman can do the same work that a man can do; and their ideal is not to fit women for their jobs, it is an imitation of the men's college curricula of forty or fifty years ago, although we are making strides in each college to get away from it, especially in the Euphones Institute and the other experiments of that kind.

CHAIRMAN LEIGH: At the Hot Springs Conference, Mr. Embree, of the Rosenwald Foundation, said a college like Bennington could be of no value - I am not giving the exact words - because the graduates of schools would go to the older colleges anyway, that a new college without prestige and without standing could not solve the problem, that girls would not go to them. I would like to know from some of the heads of these progressive secondary schools, is this an accurate statement of the facts? What is the type of girl in the progressive schools who is headed toward a college like Bennington?

MR. EUGENE R. SMITH: I think the girl who is not satisfied with a rather narrowly delimited academic type of training, but who has broader interests, particularly if those
interests should include something like one field of art or music or drama, or something of that sort, in which she would like to do considerable work without limiting herself to that alone. At the present time, suppose a girl has a good deal of talent in music but has good general ability, when she finishes the progressive secondary school she has a choice of going to an academic school, where all the pressure will be brought to bear on the academic subjects, and so limiting the musical side for four years that she has no means or opportunity of developing in that direction, or to a conservatory for music where they will give her such a limited amount of time, if any, for academic work that she is not a well educated person. There is no half way situation where various interests have a chance to mature, and while maturing one can really get a broad education. There are some attempts of one kind or other throughout the country but not completely worked out for a broader type of education.

In my own experience there are a great many promising young women who need that sort of thing, and would be a credit to any institution, but who at the present usually have crushed out of them the particular abilities in which they are interested or else cultivate them and end up by being half educated or uneducated people.

MR. ROBERT S. LYND: Is broad education defined in terms of music and art?
MR. EUGENE R. SMITH: No, I meant the broad education to have a thoroughly good background of languages, history and the various academic subjects which would well center around any particular interest. I was thinking of the art as the specialty. Suppose, for example, a girl such as I have in school at present, who is unusually talented in representative art, who is a perfectly sound student in other ways: If she goes to any one of the present women's colleges and takes a regular academic course, she will have no art opportunities until she is through college, and by that time she is too far along to prepare herself should she wish to pursue any profession that is artistic. Should she go to an art school, she will do nothing but art for the next four years, and her education from the broad stand of having a cultural background in literature, etc., will stop. Right now what would you do with a girl like that?

CHAIRMAN LEIGH: Would you say the Bennington type of college is only to take care of the girl who would be a professional musician conceivably, or artist?

MR. EUGENE R. SMITH: No, I wouldn't think so. That is simply one group I should say.

CHAIRMAN LEIGH: Who are the others?

MR. EUGENE R. SMITH: I should say that a great many of the ones who would apply to such a college as Bennington would be those who are particularly strong in some one academic
branch and perhaps had a weakness in some other one.

There is a boy, for instance, with whom I recently had contact, who is unable to master Latin and has considerable ability and looks like a real promise in the field of English. The question comes up as to whether it is fair to the boy or to the school to force him to a Latin career, or would it not be better to give him subjects centered around his strong field in English and all leading up to his possibilities in that field? I do not see why an interest of that kind could not be capitalized by a college such as Bennington. It is a difficult matter now. A boy of a one-sided type with very strong abilities and certain weaknesses is not particularly welcomed in most of the colleges at present. He might be well welcomed in such a college as Bennington and turn out a genius.

I am thinking of the six-sevenths, for whom Dr. Nielson said a while back we needed at least seven new types of college to take care of all of the different types of people. If we can have a certain number at least of these various types come to Bennington, that would solve much of the problem.

CHAIRMAN LEIGH: The two ideas that I get as I have gone around are: First, that expressed by Mr. Smith and others that in the progressive school continuum there are certain people who stand out as needing a different type of treatment; therefore, a college like Bennington might be good for them, but I wonder what there is to the other idea that the
progressive school, inasmuch as it carries new educational devices, is hampered essentially in its work, that it is dealing with a group of institutions of a high level that do not agree with its philosophy of education at all and, therefore, for what I might call the typical girl in the progressive school there is needed a college that in the first place lets the school do what it wants to do, and second carries on the ideas which the progressive secondary school has started and has the same philosophy of education. One of these things, I think, has been stressed in the girl with the art interest and specialized or narrow interest, but I wonder whether the progressive schools fill the other need for a college which would take the normal type of girl or boy who comes to that school, and that that type of girl would be likely to go to a college like Bennington rather than to the older type of college. Mr. Beatty, what in the experience of the Bronxville School, does the Sennington College project represent in the nature of meeting a demand?

MR. WILLARD W. BEATTY: In the first place I am inclined to agree with Washburne in asking why we should limit this need to girls. I find just as many boys who would be interested in the type of college that the Bennington prospectus anticipates as girls. Out of approximately 70 graduates of our high school in the last two years I can think of 14 to 16 boys and girls who would be interested in this type of thing, and
whose parents have come to us asking, "Is there such a place to
which we can send our boys or girls?" I don't think the pre-
ponderance is feminine at all. There is the need that Mr.
Eugene Smith has pointed out of a place where youngsters of
both sexes can pursue major interests.

I have graduated in the past two years a number
of girls who have shown an interest in the art of creative
writing, two girls particularly who indicated great potential-
ities in the field of poetry and prose. One is now at Barnard,
the other at Vassar. Both of them are having squeezed out of
them all the potentialities that they demonstrated in the last
three years that they were at Bronxville. They are not getting
any chance to carry it out as they did in Bronxville in spite
of meeting college requirements for those particular colleges.
They would have considered a four year college where they could
have pursued that type of thing. I say that because they con-
sidered the Sarah Lawrence College, but as it was a two year
junior college it was rejected by the parents.

I have a boy who is particularly interested in
history, and who is remarkable in the subject. He wants to
become a professor of history, but Latin and higher mathematics
are simply out of his range entirely; in fact, the Latin situ-
ation almost drove the boy to suicide this Spring. He ran away
from home and carried with him poisons that would have put an end
to him if we had not accidently discovered through one of our
faculty, who was a friend of his, what was going on and brought him back. We graduated him finally, but what he is going to do now is another thing. He will not go to college, so will probably end up in industry, with which he has no sympathy. He might be made something out of, if he went to the right type of college.

If you read the "New York Times" a few weeks ago, when it carried a progressive education page on Sunday, there was discussion from some colleges on the type of work in science which the high schools were turning out, where the professor of one of the sciences in one of our large colleges said that the colleges all prayed that the incoming students would forget all the high schools had taught them about science in their high school course of four years so they really could start in and teach them something. What the high school has to teach them has been set up and determined by those same colleges. They must take the College Board Examinations to get into the colleges, and we must teach them with that point in mind. The college has set up a requirement which it says is absolutely ridiculous and a waste of time. We have been trying to train students really to learn something about science, and at the same time meeting the college entrance requirements. That answers your second question.

It would be better if we could have an outlet for some of our youngsters, and that represents boys to a large
extent. We have boys now in our junior and senior Physics and Chemistry Departments well on a collegiate level. In addition to meeting the college requirements, the opportunity for individual work in pursuing individual interests that our curriculum organization allows, has made it possible for those boys to go much further in the sciences than the average high school ever dreams of doing; and they are constantly brought back to earth by the instructors saying there is a Regent's Examination in six weeks, or there is a College Entrance Board Examination that you have to get ready for if you are going to college, you keep this in mind and give up this tremendously interesting pursuit you have engaged in and file it away for future reference. We hope you can get a laboratory next year and pursue the thing, but now we have to sit down and get ready for the examination and teach you for six weeks things that the colleges don't want you to know when they get you into the college. The same thing is true in other fields as well as in the science field.

CHAIRMAN LEIGH: Mr. Aiken, you were Chairman in the Progressive Education Association in Washington, which dealt with this problem, and are also the head of a school, how does the demand for a college of the type of Bennington seem to you, or have you anything to add to this statement?

MR. WILFORD AIKEN: Speaking not as the Chairman of that Conference, but rather as the head of a school, I
should say that colleges of the type of Bennington are the greatest need that I know of, and the need is great not so much for the special sort of student but for the typical student, the fine all around excellent student who has tremendous possibilities as a human being.

Now, whether such a girl will come to Bennington depends, in my judgment, upon the wisdom of her parents. If her parents are the product of the conventional college, they may not come; but if her parents, whether products of convential colleges or not, have an insight into the needs of that child and the possibilities of modern education, she will come. That group of parents is probably not very large, but I am sure there are some.

MR. EUGENE SMITH: Isn't that the second stage somewhat, Mr. Aiken? Haven't we got to educate the parents to that?

MR. HERBERT SMITH: Five years ago it would have been very difficult to induce children of the kind Mr. Aiken has spoken about to enter a college like Bennington. It is my belief at the present time there would be no difficulty in recruiting a full freshman class if Bennington College were to open a year from this September.

MR. WILLARD W. BEATTY: I feel that while the number from any one of the progressive schools might be very limited, the demand is very real throughout the country. I have
met it from coast to coast in talking with parents. I know in Bronxville I am up against it constantly in talking with parents about the Sarah Lawrence College and hearing regrets that it is only a junior college.

CHAIRMAN LEIGH: I don't want to prolong this discussion at that point, but to a certain extent we have an agreement. I think for some of us who have not been in close touch with the situation it is valuable to have had this discussion. We seem to agree that a college class could be easily recruited for Bennington if we were to get started.

I would like to look at it from this angle: Could we get started from the need? Is the need so great that we should get the college started? That is the proper way to look at the task we have before us. There is something of a disagreement as to the acuteness of the need. One idea that has existed in the minds of the Bennington Trustees is that the attitude of parents toward the traditional college for the girl and for the boy tends to be different; that in brief they are willing to take a chance on the girl but the boy must go to Harvard, Yale or Princeton because the family property interests are at stake. Somewhere that does exist as a practical difference among the girls. So that if we are thinking of starting a college on the progressive school ideas we would have more first rate material among girls than we would among boys.

Now I wonder if we might postpone the analysis of that decision
until this evening in connection with our educational plan when we will take it up of course.

When Bennington College was started as an idea, it was to meet a demand for girls. As it is now understood by most people it is a progressive college carrying the progressive school ideas up for girls. There seems to be a definite illogicality in a college which we are attempting to establish with such great pains not carrying both boys and girls through from the progressive secondary schools.

MR. JOHN CLARK: I have a feeling that the parents who are interested in this type of education are also interested in co-education. I think that would be true in the Lincoln High School to some extent. Swarthmore appeals more to our parents than any other school. To parents of normal girls and boys co-education is not the least of its merits in their judgment.

CHAIRMAN LEIGH: From the Lincoln School situation would you say that insofar as there is a demand for our type of college, it practically and actually exists as much for boys as for girls?

MR. JOHN CLARK: I should say there is a need for co-educational colleges, not for a boys' college and a girls' college separately.

MR. WILLARD W. BEATTY: May I say this: It complicates the boys' problem. We have two types of thought
in the collegiate training for boys among our parents. The first is the vocational thought: A boy who is going to college to prepare for a profession, and he represents a very large group of boys. Then we have the group of parents who are still thinking of sending their boys to liberal arts colleges with the idea that the profession comes afterwards. It would be largely from that second group that you would have to draw for the boys in a college of the Bennington type. I don't think those who are committed to professional training within the four years of college would be a group whom you could handle here in any near future at all because it would mean too wide a diversification of your facilities. Therefore, the proportion of boys upon whom you could draw out of the entire group would be much smaller than the proportion of girls because most of the more well-to-do families think in liberal arts terms for their girls rather than in professional terms, and there would be more girls where the possibility of that appeal would exist than with boys; but I don't think that means at all you would have difficulty in enrolling all the boys you would be able to carry here if the college were co-educational.

CHAIRMAN LEIGH: Yes.

MR. EUGENE R. SMITH: To me, I hate to say it, but Boston would be prejudiced against the college if it were co-educational.

MR. HERBERT SMITH: I agree with Mr. Eugene R.
Smith. That would certainly be true of the clientele of New York. I would like to ask Dr. Clark whether the parents of his boys would like to consider a co-educational college. The parents of the girls want it for their daughters. In my group it is certainly the latter, and for such a college as Bennington I would be very dubious about whether the parents of boys would want it for their sons.

MR. WILLARD W. BEATTY: I am inclined to agree with Dr. Clark on this.

MR. HALL PARK McCULLOUGH: If you have a very much smaller boys' plan than normal, wouldn't the girls be apt to submerge the boys in college?

MR. WILLARD W. BEATTY: That would simply mean that you would have to declare your number of each sex.

MR. HALL PARK McCULLOUGH: If you limit it, wouldn't the boys be apt to run down hill?

MR. WILLARD W. BEATTY: I would like to hear somebody coming from further West answer that question.

MR. HALL PARK McCULLOUGH: Do you think the West a fair comparison with New England?

MR. WILLARD W. BEATTY: I think you would have to depend more on the West to supply your boys than the East.

MR. HALL PARK McCULLOUGH: I thought you meant comparing the Western co-educational colleges with New England.

MR. WILLARD W. BEATTY: The East is brought up
on segregation of sexes, and the idea of co-education is making slow headway in the East. I grew up in the West, and I am inclined to be prejudiced. I have not become used to the East and the New England standards for the segregation of the sexes.

CHAIRMAN LEIGH: There is Mr. Yeomans from California.

MR. EDWARD YEOMANS: I am not in close enough touch with the colleges. The co-educational out there seems to me to work very well if you have not any very exacting school with particular standards. It does not work very well where you expect a great deal of concentration and achievement. I think if the college makes the courses sufficiently interesting that the co-education works perfectly, but I think where the college courses in themselves are not very interesting, and therefore you are easily diverted, that co-education does not work well at all. I believe that the Bennington College, from what I know of it from its prospectus, might be so interesting and I should expect it to be so interesting — they would not have the usual co-educational difficulties. Therefore, I should be inclined to favor co-education for Bennington where I would not for a college of a different sort. I am not convinced, of course, I am just unprogressive enough to be down on this co-educational affair after you get past the high school, and sometimes in the high school you see out there the gravest difficulties, and in a place like Stanford you get the most grave disadvantages arising
from co-education. I think the other people in other places probably see the same thing. Whether Bennington should accept the risks I think would depend entirely upon the kind of courses that it offered and, therefore, the kinds of people who were likely to be enrolled. If you enrolled the usual people with the usual courses, I should be very much against it.

CHAIRMAN LEIGH: I don't want to limit our discussion of this subject, but I think we can get further with this general problem of co-education in our Committee meetings this evening. It does inevitably enter into this preliminary discussion that I hoped we might get this afternoon as to what the need for Bennington College is. I wonder if it would be honest to say that at any rate there is a demand for both boys and girls; that if Bennington were a college for women there is a real demand which affects the interests and ideas of the secondary school. If it is both for boys and girls it undoubtedly would do the same thing.

MR. MORTON D. SNYDER: It seems to me that the co-educational college in the present state of our college world in the East is a splendid ideal and a poor risk. Mr. McCullough asks whether you would get the average run of boys or the fag-ends. I am at the present time engaged in trying to build up the boys' half of the school, and the constant challenge that I get from the parents who have the boys is that they do not expect us to get anything but the fag-ends of the schools
since we were already started as a girls' school. I feel you would run into that situation if you started it here.

We have discussed what the parents want for these youngsters, but the boys themselves are going to select their colleges more than the parents do, and I question whether you will get boys in the East to do it.

MR. HERBERT SMITH: For five years Bennington has been advertised as a college for women, and to break down what has already been built up in the minds of boys, who do have an active share in choosing their colleges, is extremely difficult. One boy says to another, "What college are you going to?"

"I am going to such-and-such college."

"That's a women's college."

It is a thing that will take a great deal of living down.

CHAIRMAN LEIGH: It is true of every part of the Bennington project that to a surprising extent it already has become a promise and condition, and in any way that we would change our location or change from a women's college to a co-educational college we would have to recognize all the risks of such a change; and insofar as you are dealing with our problem now I think that, perhaps, we could postpone until this evening a further discussion of the acuteness of the needs between boys and girls, or whether the girls want to go to a co-educate-
tional college. Just in concluding that part of the discussion it might be well to indicate how I think most of the Bennington people have thought about it. In the first place we are very much all of us very much against the spirit and the atmosphere of the older women's colleges. That spirit and atmosphere is not alone because they are women's colleges. In our judgment it is because they have, due to economic situations, found it was much easier to get single women teachers at lower prices than men, and they have become places taught entirely by spinsters. They have created the spirit and atmosphere that is not conducive to the right idea concerning sex. That means that when a girl goes to such a college she gets into a different atmosphere than she would in a co-educational college. We have, therefore, thought one of our main objects is to create a spirit and atmosphere which would lead girls normally to see as much as possible of the normal family and married life; that one way to do this was to have a salary scale by which you can compete for men teachers. Secondly, to make every effort to get women and men on the faculty who represent the carrying on of the ideas of normal family life. In so doing, you will create a different sort of women's college.

I am against women's colleges with their monastic isolated ideas. I know that I, personally, would not have thought of Bennington if it were not fourteen miles from Williamstown. I think if we get time we ought to go into this,
and remember that in our situation it is twenty minutes from a men's college, so that the girls do have the possibilities of a fairly normal week-end social life.

As the situation has developed it is an attempt to build a college with a faculty who will represent almost unconsciously a different spirit than the existing older women's college. We could do a great deal towards spreading the right ideas of a normal wedded and family life if we were a women's college exclusively, I sometimes think, more than if we were co-educational; but after all some of the finest work in that line has been done in co-educational colleges, none in any of the women's colleges except in Vassar. Also with our proximity to Williams, our good relations with them, we could build a life for the girls, and incidentally for the boys, which would approximate what I think is a very desirable social relationship in any educational institution.

MR. WILLARD W. BEATTY: Just one point about the possibility of Bennington's ultimately becoming co-educational, I think that would be more impossible than the shift now. If it is started as a women's college, it is a women's college for the rest of its life. If there is any thought of its becoming co-educational that must occur with its opening classes.

CHAIRMAN LEIGH: What about the idea of establishing a John Jones College which occupies the same character
as the co-ordinate college, which is in effect the same thing?

MR. WILLARD W. BEATTY: That is not impossible.

MR. CARLETON WASHBURN: It gets away from the co-educational plan on the college level, that is the associating of the men and women in classes together so that men and women would see each other not just in the social life, which is necessarily more or less sentimental, but on the intellectual plane as companions, as co-workers.

MISS KATHARINE TAYLOR: Hasn't that happened in the Claremont School in California?

CHAIRMAN LEIGH: As a teacher in a man's college I do know they meet on an intellectual level nowadays. They discuss such subjects as philosophy when they meet at house parties, the boys and girls know each other quite intimately, they see each other fairly regularly, and they get a pretty good approximation to the co-educational atmosphere. I am by inheritance a Westener, and I am in favor of co-education. I have seen some of the worst features of the isolated, monastic men's colleges. I think co-education is going to grow in the East, but it may be that our notions will be changed by something other than the automobile which has changed the old type monastic women's college.

MR. MORTON D. SNYDER: It seems to me that Smith College is tending in the direction of what you are suggesting. Comparisons between women's colleges are forced and
undesirable, but some of my pupils' parents criticise Smith because it is too free. I recommend it as the most liberal of the six women's colleges.

MR. WILLARD W. BEATTY: The possibilities in coordinate colleges I think are high for even intellectual cooperation because if the thing were done that is done in some of the high schools I know of in California, which are boys' and girls' high schools on adjoining properties, where there are merged classes in many fields where the girls and boys both go to a common building for many types of work, although they are students from separate schools, partly co-educational and partly separate, that would be good.

CHAIRMAN LEIGH: I do not know at this point whether we can sum up definite conclusions as to the need of Bennington College. I think we would not get into a great disagreement, however, to say it could be utilized successfully both by the unusual type of student and by the typical student.

I would like to raise as an hypothesis again the idea that there is no other college which in a very short period is likely to do the task that we have been for six years trying to define and get money to do. That I think today is the hypothesis upon which the Bennington Trustees are working. Is that false or is it true? I hoped very much to get Mr. Ryan, of Swarthmore here today, and he wrote me a six-page letter in answer to very specific questions, and I do not think it would
be violating his confidence, because I think he and the Committee would be willing to say what he said in his letter, if I told you the substance of it. I asked him if Swarthmore is moving rapidly in the direction of going toward the progressive school clientele, and will it do this job with the millions which it is able to get from the foundations. His answer was no, that while they are doing a fine job for the last two years, they are going to fight for languages and mathematics in the first two years. His idea is that Swarthmore, limited as it is in its student body, is doing a thing which is different from that which Bennington had advertised itself as proposing to do.

Now, there are other colleges that certainly stand out from the normal: Rollins, Antioch, Sarah Lawrence, etc. I wonder if Mrs. Lynd would tell us about what Sarah Lawrence is doing in relation to the Bennington project, how much it is going to do the kind of thing we have set out to do.

MRS. HELEN LYND: I will sum it up rather simply. I think it is doing what Bennington is trying to do to a large extent, the individual difference being it is only two years, and I think we are constantly encountering the difficulty which Mr. Beatty and other people have stressed: we lose people whom we would like to have because they do not want to go to a two-year college, and our ablest students are faced with the possibility of not wanting to go to one of the conventional colleges. Rollins and Swarthmore, moreover, do not fill
the need, and we are continually getting more and more requests from people to come back for a third year. On that account I think the aims of Sarah Lawrence and its practice are very closely akin to what Bennington is trying to do, but the two-year difficulty remains.

MR. HERBERT SMITH: We are in a very modest way, but much smaller than Sarah Lawrence, trying to meet the same need of the new type of education for women. We have encountered the same difficulty with parents. What parents want is a social equivalent for college, and there is no social equivalent unless you give an A.B. degree, unless you really are a college; and as far as we have been able to survey the field we are trying to meet all the problems that do come in working out a new program of higher education.

CHAIRMAN LEIGH: Are you going through to give the degree?

MR. HERBERT SMITH: I think eventually we shall. You people are much more near than we.

MRS. HELEN LYND: I would like to say that our experience on applicants very strongly reinforces all that has been said, particularly in regard to the desire of the very able all around students for this particular type of college. We are having one student next year who is transferring from Smith. She has been there a year, is an "A" student, and says that her creative writing ability - she is strong on all lines -
is not being satisfied, and even though Sarah Lawrence is a two-year college she is transferring there because she will get more of the kind of thing she wants. That would be infinitely more true in a four-year college.

MR. WILLARD W. BEATTY: We have had a remarkable growth in the last three years of post-graduate groups in our Bronxville High School. I think we are going to have as many post-graduates next year as we had high school seniors three years ago, who are staying in Bronxville because they can get the type of thing which they want and which no college offers, and they are asking that next year we offer certain courses of the survey type on the collegiate level, and what that may ultimately indicate I don't know.

CHAIRMAN LEIGH: What kind of student is that, students who are very mature?

MR. WILLARD W. BEATTY: They are students who are mature, chronologically young, who have a wide variety of interests outside of the field of purely academic courses leading to college entrance, and who ultimately are going to college but who wish to broaden their educational field before entering college, and who feel they have the time to do it. I think they would go into the other type of college sooner than stay with us if they saw the possibility of getting it.

CHAIRMAN LEIGH: It is now five minutes from the time we had planned to close this first session. I would
like to hear from some one who has not spoken if there are any comments upon this general topic that we have had this afternoon of the specific nature of the need for Bennington College. This is a very pleasant beginning. This is something which we all agree upon. It has its dangers, however. If you all do agree with us, and we all agree together that there is a specific need for Bennington, the task this evening and tomorrow morning is to figure out with us now we can get the college started.

You have heard from the recital we have been able to get the college well under way except for the important item of money. You may show us that we don't need so much money to get started, or how we can get money. We may decide to raise it in some other way. Dr. Kilpatrick, have you anything to say?

DR. WILLIAM H. KILPATRICK: No.

DR. JOHN J. COSS: I should be very much interested in hearing from Cleveland.

MISS HELEN PARKHURST: I was just thinking of the present situation we have just faced in our graduate class of '31. 2 of them have taken college board examinations this week, 19 are not going to college, and 10 of that 19 are better material than the student called for by the college examination. We also have a considerably large number of students, who in the past three years have been returning for extra work. Now of
the better material we have had, who have gone to college, the students don't like college, and that report is coming back, and it is very discouraging to the better material. So it is not at all difficult to get the poorer material into the frame of college mind, but it is very difficult to get the better material feeling that way. Now that some of them have jumped the hurdles of the entrance examinations and have actually gone to college, from the reports they have circulated the rest of them are not at all inclined to go out of the school.

Then again there is the type, I won't say type, the mother of the child, say ten years of age, who is not going to have her child go to college, to whom Bennington makes a great appeal, the very alert executive type of mother, who wants a great deal of her daughter - and of course at that age the child's attitudes are formed - and I think it is going to be an increasingly difficult problem. It seems to me that Bennington, while it does offer a great deal to the artistic, onesided, lopsided child, offers even more for the all around student, such as the ten who are represented in our present class, who are excellent material, and whom we could not persuade to take the college board examinations.

MISS KATHARINE TAYLOR: What sort of next step do these people take who are not going to college?

MISS HELEN PARKHURST: Some of them are going to travel, some of them are going abroad to study for a time.
MISS KATHARINE TAYLOR: To study in specialized schools?

MISS HELEN PARKHURST: Yes, not all of them so young. 5 who took an extra year were extraordinarily gifted, and could easily have finished the required four years in time. They took five instead. It has forced us to do a thing which we have not done before, make the ninth a year of orientation, and let them in the ninth year do the things they want to do very much, and to see what sort of material they are, and then after the ninth grade either form themselves into a college group or non-college preparatory group, and then making that work not just easy work but difficult work, and the sort of work that will give us pupils who are not going to college in the right attitude, which will build up within them a power to select for themselves from the world they are going to live in the things which will satisfy their needs. That is very difficult and needs a good course because college does give a very logical training and discipline. We are attempting to answer the problem for ourselves three years in advance of college, but that forces us right back to the place where there is no place for these girls unless something like Bennington is established which will offer them opportunities that they do not find now.

CHAIRMAN LEIGH: The hour of adjournment has come, we will now adjourn.
... The meeting adjourned at five o'clock ...