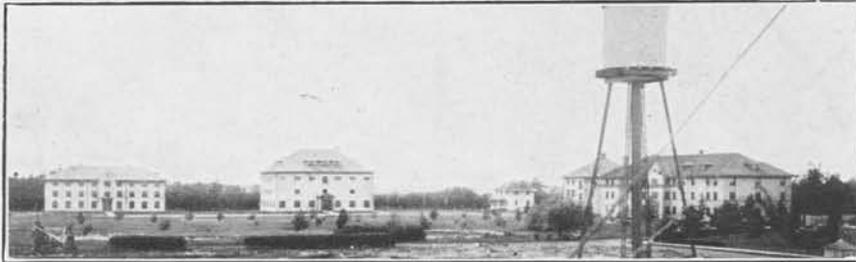


Agitation, largely led by Professor Willett M. Hays, of the Central School of Agriculture, for a branch school to be established in connection with the station at Crookston began and persisted. Mr. Elias Steenerson, as secretary of the Polk County Farmers' Exchange, on February 2, 1904, urged the establishment of a branch agricultural school at Crookston, according to the records of that society. Mr. William Robertson, who was appointed superintendent of the Crookston Station in 1906, and who had been an honored and revered instructor at the Central School for many years, had faith in the possibilities and worked in and out of season to secure a branch school at Crookston.

Here state-craft enters. The members of the legislature from the Valley region were naturally interested in developing this great section of the state. First, Representative B. S. Bennett, then Senator P. M. Ringdal urged that a school be established. Later Senator A. D. Stephens took up the task. Mr. Stephens succeeded by virtue of his untiring efforts, his faith in the value



THE CAMPUS IN 1911

of such an institution and, shall we say it, by virtue of his holding the important position as chairman of the finance committee of the Minnesota Senate.

The legislature voted \$15,000 for a building, which was to include the school's dining hall, quarters for the cook, one assembly room used also as a class room, another class room, the superintendent's office, the library, and, on the third floor, nine sleeping rooms and one bathroom.

One building, and only one! But a seed in a good soil.

To feed the students on the first floor, to teach them on the second floor, and to "sleep" the boys on the third floor, epitomizes the all-inclusive function of this building which is known familiarly to the earliest alumni as the School Building. It is now called the Home Economics Building. *1906*

The school was opened in the fall of ~~1896~~ and 31 students came. No funds had been voted for a faculty or for furnishings, so Mr. and Mrs. Robertson with their undaunted faith, tireless energy, unflinching enthusiasm and whole-souled consecration, passed the hat in Crookston and secured \$2,500.00 as an advance loan for the first year's expenses.

Every student I have met, of those who attended during that year, recalls those first-year days with genuine pleasure. "We were a happy family group and had many, many pleasant hours together," is what they all have said.

The second year 41 students enrolled. This was a legislative year and funds were voted for the boys' dormitory and dining hall combined (now named Stephens Hall) and a science or class room building (the original part of the