



Mrs. Mary Turnbull, who has helped countless Sooners find teaching positions

Teacher Placement

ALTHOUGH no book has appeared under the title "How to Influence Superintendents and Win Teaching Contracts," a considerable amount of good material for such a volume could be supplied by the Teachers Placement Bureau of the University.

The teacher needs to know how to approach the school authorities, how to state qualifications, and how to anticipate the tastes or whims of the school board members. The Placement Bureau can't always answer that last question, but it can, at least, point out some of the errors to be avoided.

The Teachers Placement Bureau has proved an effective agency as a contact for teachers and for school officials who are seeking teachers. The bureau is operated by the University in cooperation with the Alumni Office in the Union Building.

Mrs. Mary Turnbull has been secretary of the bureau for nine years. She has handled thousands of applications for jobs, given help to hundreds of principals and superintendents seeking teachers, and has been instrumental in the placing of a great many O.U. graduates in teaching positions.

Applicants must remember that the selection of teachers is no haphazard matter, not even in the smallest school system. School officials spend hours in the Placement Bureau office reading and studying applications, considering qualifications, and discussing the merits of various applicants. It is important to the school system to get the best possible teacher for each position.

It is well, therefore, for the applicant to go to considerable pains to make the application as complete and effective as possible. Qualifications should be presented in full, but without the slightest misrepresentation. Omission of any item of information called for on the application form makes the school official suspect that the item was omitted because of some unfavorable connotation.

A good picture with the application is more important than most teachers realize. It is customary for a teacher to get about the cheapest available photograph for this purpose. In view of the fact that the applicant is using the picture to get a position that may pay from \$800 a year up, an investment of \$3 or \$5 for a really good portrait photograph would seem a very reasonable expense.

School officials and board members are human, and it is human nature to judge a stranger to some extent by appearance. It is a generally accepted belief, too, that a teacher who is pleasing and neat in appearance is a much more effective teacher than one who is definitely unattractive in the eyes of the pupils. It is therefore good strategy for the applicant for a position to provide a picture that is well made and presents the applicant to the best advantage.

If the qualifications and photograph are satisfactory, a personal interview is usually the next requirement of the superintendent. Here again, preparation in advance is important, because the applicant should have answers ready for any kind of question, not only in regard to the various

teaching fields but also in regard to religious preferences, outside interests, ability to lead extra-curricular activities, and general all-around versatility.

In a small school, the home economics teacher might have to plan church suppers, coach the girls basketball team, plan gardens, direct the operetta and sponsor the junior class activities. In almost every school, a certain amount of supervision of extra-curricular activities is required of teachers, and versatility in this kind of work makes a teacher more desirable in the eyes of superintendents.

Many school boards are quite tolerant in religious beliefs, but in some systems, particularly in the smaller towns, the board will be interested in knowing what the applicant's religious preference is and in some cases might actually make specific requirements.

Scholastic requirements vary considerably, although state law requires all teachers to have a teacher's certificate. Most schools require a bachelor's degree of the applicant, and many require the master's degree. As general standards of schools increase, more each year require advanced degrees.

The Teachers Placement Bureau does not undertake to go out and search for a position for an applicant, because it does not have the facilities and cannot work on that basis. It serves O.U. graduates who seek teaching work by keeping their applications and recommendations on file where they can easily be examined by superintendents who are seeking well qualified teachers.

To apply for a position, the prospective teacher needs only to get in touch with the bureau and file an application. When a superintendent calls on the bureau, he is given all of the best applications for the particular type of job he is trying to fill, and he chooses the prospects he likes best for further investigation.

Many times, a superintendent who is trying to fill a vacancy in a hurry telephones the bureau, and is given a list of names of applicants whom he can contact directly.

The extent of work done is indicated by the following report for the period October 1, 1936, to October 1, 1937:

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| Interviews with superintendents | 411 |
| Interviews with teachers | 1302 |
| Phone calls from superintendents | 122 |
| Phone calls from teachers | 243 |
| Applications filed | 362 |
| Letters written | 645 |

Because many of those who obtain employment do not report back to the bureau after an agreement has been reached with a superintendent, it is impossible to state with accuracy the number of teachers placed. It is a fact, however, that so many were placed that the bureau was unable to fill some of the calls for high school teachers last year, especially in the fields of commerce and science.