

STATE SUPPORT OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN IOWA

By Irving H. Hart*

The interest of the pioneers of Iowa in higher education is evinced by a number of acts of the territorial Legislative Assemblies between 1838 and 1846. These acts authorized the incorporation of private "seminaries of learning in science and literature for the youth of both sexes" in twenty-eight towns and villages of the Territory. In many instances, the acts of incorporation reflected no more than the desire of certain people in these communities to provide facilities for the education of their young people in schools of higher grade than the elementary schools of the day. Many of the institutions envisaged by their sponsors never came into being, but a few, notably those at Davenport, Mount Pleasant, Denmark, and Washington, resulted in the establishment of colleges or academies which continued for many years.¹

The people of Iowa were, however, the inheritors of the idea that it was a fundamental obligation of the general government, both federal and state, to make provision for higher education. This idea had first found formal expression in an ordinance passed by the Continental Congress supplementing the famous Northwest Ordinance of 1787, and setting aside, in addition to a section in each township for the maintenance of common schools, two townships (46,080 acres) "for the support of a university."² Similar reservations of public lands for the support of a university were made by the Congress of the United States in the acts preliminary to the organization of the five states carved out of the original Northwest Territory. By the act for the organization of the Territory of Iowa in 1838, its citizens were guaranteed the rights and privileges previously enjoyed by the citizens of Wisconsin, of which Iowa had been a part.³ Later, Congress confirmed one of these rights by granting to Iowa Territory the customary two town-

*Irving H. Hart is archivist at Iowa State Teachers College, Cedar Falls.

¹ *Laws of Iowa Territory, 1838-1846, passim.*

² *Journal of the Continental Congress, Vol. 33, p. 400 (July 23, 1787).*

³ *5 U. S. Statutes at Large, 235 (June 12, 1838).*

ships for the support of a university.⁴ By a subsequent act, Congress confirmed this university grant and added a grant of five sections of public land to be used for the erection of public buildings or as the legislature might direct.⁵

Iowa's first state constitution (1846) charged the General Assembly with responsibility for the protection of the university fund, which was to be applied to the support "of a university with such branches as public convenience should thereafter demand and as might be authorized in terms of the Congressional grant."⁶

The First General Assembly, with confident faith in the future, established the State University at Iowa City. Since commissioners had been appointed to select another site for the state capital, the public buildings with ten acres of land in Iowa City and the two townships granted by Congress were donated to the University. The University lands were authorized to be disposed of as already provided for the common school lands (at a minimum price of \$1.25 an acre), and the fund thus derived was ordered to be deposited with the State Treasurer to be loaned by him and the interest only to be paid to the University trustees. This act also incorporated the constitutional provision that there might be established "such branches [of the University] as in the opinion of the General Assembly convenience may hereafter require."⁷

The creation of the University fund was delayed by the failure of the federal government to provide for the selection of these lands, even though the territorial Legislative Assemblies had twice made formal request of Congress for such action.⁸ Eventually by far the greater part of the University lands were selected; but the process had not been entirely completed by 1862, when the General Assembly authorized the Governor to select "the remaining 127.6 acres of the university grant of July 20, 1840."⁹

Of the selection and sale of the University lands, Leonard F. Parker, a

⁴ *ibid.*, 810 (July 20, 1840).

⁵ *ibid.*, 789 (Mar. 3, 1845).

⁶ Constitution of Iowa (1846), Article X, Sec. 5.

⁷ *Laws of Iowa, 1846-1847*, Chap. 125 (Feb. 25, 1847).

⁸ *Laws of Iowa Territory, 1843-1844*, Resolution No. 14 (Feb. 10, 1844); *ibid.*, 1845-1846, Resolution No. 20 (Jan. 2, 1846).

⁹ *Laws of Iowa, 1862*, Chap. 126 (Apr. 7, 1862). See Hugh S. Buffum, "Federal and State Aid to Education in Iowa," *IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS*, 4: 554-78 (October, 1906), for an extended treatment of this topic.

member of the University Board of Trustees from 1859 to 1862 and of the University faculty from 1870 to 1887, says that the fixing of the low price of \$1.25 an acre created a demand for the University lands which the trustees attempted to forestall: first, by appraising them above their current market value; and second, by making purchases of certain of these lands themselves, as individuals, above the appraised value. The Attorney General, however, pronounced those purchases invalid. These efforts to bolster the price of the University lands seem to have been measurably successful; in October, 1859, the trustees found that 31,411-1/3 acres (68 per cent of the entire grant) had been sold for \$110,582.75, an average of \$3.52 an acre.¹⁰

Early Iowa legislators gave little consideration to the desirability of centralization of support of the as yet embryo University. The General Assembly in 1849 authorized the organization of two branches of the University, one at Fairfield and one at Dubuque, both "to be placed on the same footing as to funds" as the University at Iowa City.¹¹ The same legislature established state normal schools at Mount Pleasant, Andrew, and Oskaloosa and directed that the sum of \$500 be paid annually from the University fund to each of these schools.¹² By later acts, the College of Physicians and Surgeons at Keokuk was recognized as the medical department (not a branch) of the University.¹³

This policy of decentralization of higher education in Iowa was not approved by Thomas H. Benton, Superintendent of Public Instruction, who was then ex officio president of the University Board of Trustees. In his 1850 report, he estimated the probable income from the University fund, less the amount pledged to the normal schools, to be annually only about \$1,500 each for the support of the University and its two branches, an amount "not to be regarded as a very rich endowment for an institution dignified with the title of State University." Benton suggested that a defi-

¹⁰ L. F. Parker, *Higher Education in Iowa* (Circular No. 6, U. S. Bureau of Education, 1893), 76. This decision of the Attorney General was later confirmed by the General Assembly by a joint resolution (*Laws of Iowa, 1857*, Resolution No. 23). Some other writers have put a less favorable construction upon the motives of the Board of Trustees in this matter. The character and record of Parker are such as to give much weight to his statement.

¹¹ *Laws of Iowa, 1848-1849*, Chaps. 114, 115, 117 (Jan. 15, 16, 1849).

¹² *Ibid.*, Chap. 78 (Jan. 15, 1849).

¹³ *Ibid.*, 1850-1851, Chap. 39 (Jan. 18, 1851); *ibid.*, 1854-1855, Chap. 55 (Jan. 22, 1855).

nite sum be set apart for each of these branches, "of which they should have exclusive control, without any further connection with or claim upon the University."¹⁴ This wise advice was not followed.

The citizens of Fairfield, by voluntary contributions, raised sufficient money to purchase twenty acres of land which they donated to the state for the site of their University branch, and they also built a building for its use. This building, destroyed by a "hurricane" in 1850, was rebuilt again by voluntary contributions. The normal schools at Andrew and Oskaloosa actually began operation and continued for several years. No serious efforts seem to have been made to organize the University branch at Dubuque or the normal school at Mount Pleasant. Since no aid was ever received from the state or from the University fund by any of these projected institutions, they soon disappeared from the scene. The legislature, however, did take cognizance of the steps taken by the Fairfield citizens by authorizing the trustees of this University branch to sell its property and (it is assumed) to reimburse the contributors to this project.¹⁵

Governor James W. Grimes took the decisive step that brought to an end the ill-advised policy of division of the University fund. The General Assembly in 1857 passed a bill proposing to grant \$5,000 from the interest on the fund for the relief of the medical department of the University at Keokuk. Governor Grimes vetoed this bill in a message in which he characterized the proposal as "an unwarrantable diversion of the university fund and a violation of the Act of Congress granting the land from which the fund is derived." He defined the term "university" as meaning "an assembly of colleges established in a town or city," and as not applicable to colleges scattered among several municipalities. He held that the Act of Congress applied to one institution only and that not even the state constitution could override the laws of Congress. "The Assembly," he said, "cannot dissever the institution." The Governor criticized the legislative attempts "to fritter away the university fund." He said that he had "hesitantly approved" the bill directing the payment of money from the University fund to the normal schools, and that he had advised the University trustees not to draw these orders unless required to do so by writ of man-

¹⁴ *Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction . . .* (Iowa City, 1850).

¹⁵ C. W. Slagle, "Report of the President of the State University," *Iowa Legislative Documents*, 1878, Vol. I.

damus. No such writ had been issued. This veto killed the proposal to aid the Keokuk institution and effectively supported the idea of the indivisibility of the State University.¹⁶

The idea advanced so ably and so courageously by Governor Grimes was shortly thereafter embodied in the new state constitution of 1857 in the provision that "The State University shall be established at one place without branches and the University fund shall be applied to that Institution and no other."¹⁷

The general school law, passed March 12, 1858, reaffirmed the establishment of the University at Iowa City and the grant to it of the old capitol building with the ten acres of land on which it was situated, and provided for the organization of the institution.¹⁸ The State Supreme Court held this act to be unconstitutional,¹⁹ but the newly created state Board of Education adopted a similar act for the government and regulation of the University in December of the same year.²⁰ The new Board of Trustees created by this latter act voted to continue the normal department of the University, which had been in operation since 1855; but in consideration of the fact that in February, 1859, "only \$1,239 [was] available for current expenses, though \$9,730 more was due but in the extreme prostration of all business was then uncollectable," it was deemed unwise at that time to attempt to organize the collegiate department.²¹

It seems originally to have been assumed, especially in legislative circles, that the University should look to the income from its federal endowment fund for current support and that the responsibility of the state for financing the institution should be limited to furnishing the money needed to erect buildings and keep them in repair. The first act by which money was appropriated for the University by the state was that of March 11, 1858, by which \$3,000 was made available for repairing and modifying the former capitol building for classroom use and \$10,000 for the erection of a new building to be used for a boarding hall, study rooms, and dormitories.

¹⁶ Benj. F. Shambaugh (ed.), *Messages and Proclamations of the Governors of Iowa* (7 vols., Iowa City, 1903-1905), 2:78.

¹⁷ Constitution of Iowa (1857), Article IX, Part I, Sec. 11.

¹⁸ *Laws of Iowa, 1858*, Chap. 52. Des Moines had been designated as the new state capital in 1855.

¹⁹ *7 Iowa Reports*, 262 (Dec. 9, 1858).

²⁰ *Revised Statutes of Iowa, 1860*, 342.

²¹ Parker, *Higher Education in Iowa*, 85.

Under this act the construction of what came to be known as South Hall began.²² The amount available proved to be inadequate, and two years later the General Assembly added certain saline lands to the University grant and authorized the trustees to expend a part of the proceeds of the sale of these lands for repairing and refitting the main building and for the completion of South Hall.²³

Governor Samuel J. Kirkwood, in January, 1862, reported that the University was in successful operation but that it was embarrassed for want of funds because of large losses on insufficiently secured loans made before the crisis of 1857.²⁴ The Assembly responded by a bill proposing to reduce the number of professors and their individual salaries and to increase the amount of the student fees. This bill was vetoed by Governor Kirkwood on the grounds that the proposed salaries were too low and the fees too high and that such matters should be decided by the trustees.²⁵

Increase in enrollment at the University made additional building space an imperative need, and in 1864 an appropriation of \$20,000 was made for the construction of "a building with one large room for a chapel and rooms suitable for a chemical laboratory and others as deemed necessary by the trustees."²⁶ With this money, the construction of North Hall was begun. In 1866 the Eleventh General Assembly made an additional appropriation of \$13,000 to complete this building.²⁷

In 1866 Governor William M. Stone said, "The State University is meeting with gratifying success. The largely increased attendance, magnificent endowment, central location and complete faculty insure a usefulness and renown equal to the famous seats of learning in the older states."²⁸ That this optimistic attitude was not wholly justified and that the "magnificent endowment" was inadequate is evident from Governor Stone's message of two years later, in which he said, "A peculiar obligation is imposed upon the state by the fact that the endowment of the University is not adequate to its current needs."²⁹

²² *Laws of Iowa, 1858*, Chap. 41 (Mar. 11, 1858).

²³ *Revised Statutes of Iowa, 1860*, 346.

²⁴ Shambaugh (ed.), *Messages and Proclamations*, 2:264.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 2:366.

²⁶ *Laws of Iowa, 1864*, Chap. 73 (Mar. 29, 1864).

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 1866, Chap. 84 (Mar. 31, 1866).

²⁸ Shambaugh (ed.), *Messages and Proclamations*, 3:42.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 3:90.

To this, the Twelfth General Assembly (1868) responded by passing the first act by which an appropriation was made for current support of the University in the sum of \$20,000 "for giving such aid to the science and other departments as the trustees shall deem proper to establish and increase their efficiency."³⁰ The Thirteenth General Assembly (1870) continued the policy initiated by its predecessor by appropriating \$25,000 "for the use and support of the University for the next two years."³¹ This Assembly also passed a new act for the government of the University, changing the name of the governing body to the "Board of Regents" and its composition to six elected members, with the Governor of the state ex officio chairman and the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the president of the University ex officio members. By this act also the regents were prohibited from using any portion of the permanent fund for ordinary expenses.³²

In January, 1872, Governor Samuel Merrill recommended the appropriation of funds to supply the University with a permanent income in addition to that from the original endowment, the first suggestion of a policy which was later to be adopted.³³ The Fourteenth General Assembly (1872) ignored the Governor's recommendation as to permanent support, but it did make an appropriation of \$52,300 for salaries, repairs, and contingent expenses for the biennium.³⁴ The recommendation for providing a permanent income from appropriations was renewed by Governor Cyrus C. Carpenter in 1874,³⁵ but the legislative appropriation "to aid in the support of the University in all its chairs and departments and the expenses necessary for the maintenance of this institution" was made for the biennium only.³⁶ Governor Carpenter enlarged upon this recommendation in his message to the Sixteenth General Assembly in 1876, in which he referred to the growth and widening popularity of the institution, pointing out that the University should be enlarged beyond the income of the grant for its support; that when the grant was made it was supposed to be sufficient for

³⁰ *Laws of Iowa, 1868*, Chap. 23 (Mar. 9, 1868).

³¹ *Ibid.*, 1870, Chap. 36 (Mar. 24, 1870).

³² *Ibid.*, Chap. 87 (Apr. 11, 1870).

³³ Shambaugh (ed.), *Messages and Proclamations*, 3:330.

³⁴ *Laws of Iowa, 1872*, Chap. 43 (Apr. 6, 1872).

³⁵ Shambaugh (ed.), *Messages and Proclamations*, 4:31.

³⁶ *Laws of Iowa, 1874*, Chap. 65 (Mar. 18, 1874).

all its wants, but that the lands had been sold at approximately \$3.00 an acre; and hence that "the state is bound to make good the conditions upon which this trust was accepted." He suggested a special levy of 1/10 or 1/5 mill as a permanent fund for the University.³⁷ The Assembly took no specific action upon this recommendation but continued the policy of making a biennial appropriation "for aid and maintenance" of the University.³⁸

In the absence of any evidence to the contrary, it would seem proper to credit Governors Merrill and Carpenter with being the first officially to advocate the policy of continuing support for the University. No recommendation of such a policy is found in the biennial reports of the Board of Regents of the University until 1877, although it may have been discussed informally at an earlier date. If so, the Governors, as ex officio presidents of the Board of Regents after 1870, would have been in a position to develop convictions on this question. It was Governor Joshua G. Newbold, in the report of the Regents in 1877, who first suggested at their instance the consideration of some policy of permanent support, "if they [the Regents] could have reliance of a certain amount to be received annually, it would greatly facilitate the making of plans for the development of the work."³⁹ Governor John H. Gear in his inaugural address in 1878 added his influence to the proposal to make the support of the University through continuing appropriations a matter of legislative responsibility.⁴⁰

These repeated recommendations at length elicited a positive response from the Assembly, which in 1878 appropriated \$20,000 annually for the University "as an endowment fund, \$5,000 on July 1, 1878, and the same sum quarterly thereafter." To this was added \$10,000 for two years for other purposes.⁴¹ The passage of this act provided a continuing annual income of \$20,000. No additional appropriations, either for "endowment" or for biennial support of the University, were made by the Eighteenth General Assembly in 1880. The Nineteenth Assembly in 1882 appropriated \$30,000 for a new building, \$10,000 "in aid of the income fund," and other amounts for the biennium only.⁴² In 1884 the permanent annual in-

³⁷ Shambaugh (ed.), *Messages and Proclamations*, 4:124.

³⁸ *Laws of Iowa, 1876*, Chap. 168 (Mar. 17, 1876).

³⁹ *Report of the Board of Regents of the State University* (Des Moines, 1877).

⁴⁰ Shambaugh (ed.), *Messages and Proclamations*, 5:5.

⁴¹ *Laws of Iowa, 1878*, Chap. 76 (Apr. 6, 1878).

⁴² *Ibid.*, 1882, Chap. 84 (Mar. 14, 1882).

come fund was increased by \$8,000.⁴³ In 1886 Governor Buren R. Sherman called attention to the request of the Regents for an increase in the endowment fund and recommended a special tax of 1/8 mill.⁴⁴ The appropriations were for the biennium only.⁴⁵

Governor William Larrabee in his final message in 1890 said that there was no reason why Iowa should not maintain a University on a distinctly higher plane than that of a mere college. He then suggested that a sufficient income for the University's support be provided "either by a special levy or a fixed appropriation," adding "I do not know how a quarter of a million dollars could annually be spent to better advantage."⁴⁶

Governor Horace Boies, the first Democratic Governor of Iowa after 1854, proved to be a good friend of the institutions of higher learning. In his inaugural address in 1890 he characterized the University permanent funds as wholly inadequate, and he recommended the permanent support of all the schools aided by the state. He said also in his message in 1892, "The revenues should be made reasonably certain. They should not be required to beg from year to year for the means of subsistence. It is the plain duty of the legislature to provide for the annual levy of a special tax, the proceeds to be devoted to the maintenance of the State University, the Agricultural College and the State Normal School in such proportion as is just to each."⁴⁷

It is to be noted that it was Governor Boies who first joined the Agricultural College and the Normal School with the University in his recommendations for permanent support. The legislative response to this proposal was immediately favorable in the case of the Normal School; a "permanent endowment" of \$17,500 annually was authorized for this institution in 1890 and \$3,000 additional in 1892.⁴⁸ Similar action in behalf of the State College at Ames was delayed until 1894.

The Republican party returned to full control of the state government in 1894, and the favorable attitude which the state legislatures had begun to

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 1884, Chap. 115 (Apr. 1, 1884).

⁴⁴ Shambaugh (ed.), *Messages and Proclamations*, 5:328.

⁴⁵ *Laws of Iowa*, 1886, Chap. 68 (Apr. 15, 1886).

⁴⁶ Shambaugh (ed.), *Messages and Proclamations*, 6:132. It was to be more than twenty years before such an amount was to be appropriated for University support.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 6:282, 304.

⁴⁸ *Laws of Iowa*, 1890, Chap. 79 (Apr. 16, 1890); *ibid.*, 1892, Chap. 102 (Apr. 9, 1892).

assume toward the state colleges continued. The Twenty-fifth General Assembly (1894) increased the permanent annual income of the State University by \$25,000, and brought the Agricultural College for the first time into the same category by appropriating \$15,000 "annually hereafter" for general expenses.⁴⁹

The State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts had come into being (on paper) by an act of the Seventh General Assembly in 1858, by which the establishment of a college with a course of study including "natural philosophy, chemistry, botany, horticulture, fruit growing, forestry, animal and vegetable anatomy, geology, mineralogy, entomology, zoology, veterinary art, mensuration, levelling, surveying, book-keeping, and such other mechanical arts as are connected with agriculture," and with a "model farm." For the physical plant of the new institution, an appropriation of \$10,000 was made, together with the proceeds of the sale of the five sections of land granted by Congress in 1845 for the erection of public buildings "or as the legislature may direct."⁵⁰ In taking this action, the legislature chose to ignore a recommendation made by Governor Grimes in 1854 to the effect that it would not be sound policy to establish from the proceeds of the University fund "a literary institution in rivalry with the various denominational colleges [then] struggling into existence." As Grimes saw it, the state had a greater need for a "practical scientific or polytechnic school," in which "farmers, mechanics, engineers, architects, chemists, metallurgists and geologists" might be educated.⁵¹ The Iowa legislature of 1858 may have been influenced in establishing an institution of this type by Justin Morrill of Vermont, who, in December, 1857, introduced into the national House of Representatives a bill proposing the donation of public lands to states that would provide colleges "for the benefit of agriculture and the mechanic arts." This bill was passed by Congress but vetoed by President James Buchanan on the grounds that it would be uneconomical, that it might encourage fraudulent speculation, that it would injure existing

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 1894, Chaps. 145, 152 (Mar. 29, 1894). The permanent appropriations for Iowa State College in 1894 were the first of this type for current expenses. Relatively small amounts had previously been appropriated for this institution on the "annually hereafter" basis; \$1,000 in 1880 for repairs; \$1,500 in 1882 for experimentation in agriculture and horticulture; and \$2,000 in 1888 for improvements on buildings. *Ibid.*, 1880, Chap. 67; *ibid.*, 1882, Chap. 68; *ibid.*, 1888, Chap. 126.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 1858, Chap. 91 (Mar. 23, 1858); 5 *U. S. Statutes at Large*, 789.

⁵¹ Shambaugh (ed.), *Messages and Proclamations*, 2:6.

institutions, that it would cause friction between the states, and that it was unconstitutional.⁵² A similar bill, introduced in 1861, passed both houses of Congress and was signed by President Lincoln on July 2, 1862.⁵³

By this act, known as the Morrill Land Grant Act, the federal government was pledged to donate to each state providing for the establishment of a college of agriculture and mechanic arts 30,000 acres of public lands for each Senator and Representative in Congress under the apportionment based on the census of 1860. Iowa, with six Representatives and two Senators, became eligible to receive as an endowment for the support of such an institution a total of 240,000 acres of land. This grant was accepted by the Ninth General Assembly in extra session in September, 1862,⁵⁴ but nothing more was done at that time than to notify the Trustees of the Agricultural College of this action. Governor Kirkwood called attention to this grant in a message to the Tenth General Assembly in 1864, referring to it as "a rich endowment, five times as large as that for the University." He called attention also to the important fact that to secure the grant, funds must be provided by the state for the erection of buildings.⁵⁵ This Assembly formally granted the lands received by the Morrill Act to the Agricultural College, authorized the Trustees to sell these lands at not less than \$3.00 an acre (but not before April, 1866), and took like action with regard to the sale of the five sections granted by Congress to aid in the construction of public buildings, which had been added to the endowment of this institution in 1858.⁵⁶ An appropriation of \$20,000 was also made to aid in the erection of a building for the College, the total cost of which was not to exceed \$50,000.⁵⁷

That conditions following the Civil War were not dissimilar to those following later wars is obvious from the message of Governor Stone in 1866, calling attention to the interruption of work upon the building for the Agricultural College "by unexpected and exorbitant increases in costs of labor and materials." Noting that the period of five years within which, by act of Congress, the state was required to provide such a college was

⁵² Monroe, *Encyclopedia of Education*, 1:59.

⁵³ 12 U. S. Statutes at Large, 503.

⁵⁴ *Laws of Iowa, 1862* (extra session), Chap. 26 (Sept. 11, 1862).

⁵⁵ Shambaugh (ed.), *Messages and Proclamations*, 2:319.

⁵⁶ *Laws of Iowa, 1864*, Chap. 117 (Mar. 29, 1864).

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, Chap. 62 (Mar. 22, 1864).

about to expire, Stone said, "To lose this donation by neglect would be a disgrace upon the state." He recommended an appropriation adequate for the completion of the building "within the time fixed by the grant."⁵⁸ An appropriation of \$91,000 was made for this purpose,⁵⁹ and the building was completed in time to enable Iowa to take advantage of the grant. The College was opened in October, 1868; the new building was dedicated on March 17, 1869.⁶⁰

From the date of the establishment of the Agricultural College and for a quarter of a century thereafter, it was assumed that the income from the proceeds of the federal land grant would be sufficient for current institutional support. Appropriations were made biennially for capital expenditures, although it evidently took some prodding to get the legislature to do even this. Governor Gear in 1880 reminded the Assembly of the conditions of the congressional grant (that the state erect and maintain the buildings necessary for the College), and urged the duty of enabling the state to fulfill its contract with the federal government.⁶¹ The immediate appropriation proved inadequate, and again in 1882 Governor Gear told the legislature that the erection of buildings needed by the College should be commenced at once.⁶² An appropriation of \$20,000 for building purposes was the response to this appeal.⁶³ After 1890 Iowa began to make provision for a building program to keep pace with the rapidly expanding institution at Ames.

In 1877 and again in 1890 Congress passed acts making additional appropriations of federal funds for the support of the land-grant colleges,⁶⁴ which may account in part for the fact that the Iowa legislature made no material additions to the Iowa State College support fund until 1894. After 1894 the Iowa State College shared with the other state educational institutions in the receipt of support funds appropriated biennially.

By 1894, therefore, the General Assemblies of Iowa had come to accept two principles of policy repeatedly recommended by the Governors: that

⁵⁸ Shambaugh (ed.), *Messages and Proclamations*, 3:42.

⁵⁹ *Laws of Iowa, 1866*, Chap. 112 (Apr. 2, 1866).

⁶⁰ Shambaugh (ed.), *Messages and Proclamations*, 3:262.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 5:21.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 5:100.

⁶³ *Laws of Iowa, 1882*, Chap. 78 (Mar. 14, 1882).

⁶⁴ 24 *U. S. Statutes at Large*, 440; 26 *ibid.*, 417.

the state was obligated to provide for the current support of the three state educational institutions; and that such support should be in part in the form of "permanent" or continuing appropriations.

The repeated recommendations of a millage tax for the support of higher education resulted finally in 1896 in an act providing for a levy of a tax of 1/10 mill for five years for the erection, improvement, and equipment of buildings at the State University.⁶⁵ In 1898 this levy was extended for one additional year because of the burning of the University library building.⁶⁶ In 1902 an act was passed setting aside the proceeds of annual millage levies for each of the three institutions — 1/5 mill each for the University and the Agricultural College, and 1/10 mill for the Normal School. These levies were to continue for five years, and the money so raised was to be used for the erection, improvement, and repair of buildings.⁶⁷ Before the expiration of these acts in 1906, a similar act was passed continuing the same millage levies for another five years.⁶⁸ The millage levies were again renewed for five years in 1911 on the same basis as before for each institution.⁶⁹ In 1913 a special levy of 1/2 mill for two years was authorized for the support of agricultural extension work and the work of certain departments in the Iowa State College.⁷⁰

In 1915 the General Assembly repealed the statute authorizing millage levies, provided for the levy of special taxes on property for building purposes in the state educational institutions in the amounts of \$300,000 each for the biennium for the State University and Iowa State College, and \$150,000 for the Iowa State Teachers College (formerly the Normal School), and required the transfer of the proceeds of the millage taxes of 1915 to the state general fund.⁷¹ Since 1915 no millage levies have been authorized for these institutions. Direct biennial appropriations for building purposes in all the institutions have been made in lieu thereof.

In this review of legislative acts and policies for the support of higher education in Iowa, only incidental consideration has thus far been given to

⁶⁵ *Laws of Iowa, 1896*, Chap. 114 (Mar. 17, 1896).

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 1898, Chap. 75 (Apr. 7, 1898).

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 1902, Chap. 117 (Apr. 9, 1902).

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 1906, Chap. 186 (Apr. 10, 1906).

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 1911, Chap. 201 (Mar. 30, 1911).

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 1913, Chap. 228 (Apr. 23, 1913).

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 1915, Chap. 246 (Apr. 17, 1915).

the State Normal School, since 1909 the State Teachers College. The Normal School originally inherited the forty-acre tract of land contributed by the citizens of Cedar Falls, together with the buildings originally erected by the state for the Soldiers Orphans Home.⁷² Since there have never been other funds available for either capital or current expenses, the support of this institution has been entirely a charge against the state budget from the beginning.

It was for this reason that Governor Boies was particularly interested in providing a source of continuing support for the Normal School. In his inaugural address in 1890 he said that, since this school was "wholly dependent upon temporary appropriations designed to supply its wants until another legislative meeting," its support should be in the form of permanent endowment.⁷³ This recommendation was followed, as has already been noted, by the appropriation of \$17,500 on the "annually hereafter" basis.

The act establishing the Normal School in 1876 provided appropriations for its support during the succeeding biennium — \$10,000 for the salaries of teachers and officers; \$3,000 for improvements and repairs; and \$1,500 for contingent expenses, a total of \$14,500.⁷⁴ The appropriations were gradually increased by biennial periods until by 1888 they had reached the amount of \$37,300. The original continuing appropriation of \$17,500 annually, made in 1890, was increased in 1892, 1898, and each biennium thereafter until by 1915 the total appropriations of this type amounted to \$285,000 annually.

In 1915 all continuing appropriations were combined in one sum for each of the state educational institutions, and no additions to this category were thereafter made. The Fortieth General Assembly, in extra session in 1924, enacted a state budget law containing a provision repealing all continuing appropriations.⁷⁵ Since that date, all appropriations for the current support of higher education have been made on the biennial basis.

Dissatisfaction with the plan for the management of the three state educational institutions by separate boards of regents or trustees had been evi-

⁷² *Ibid.*, 1876, Chap. 129 (Mar. 17, 1876).

⁷³ Shambaugh (ed.), *Messages and Proclamations*, 6:282.

⁷⁴ *Laws of Iowa*, 1876, Chap. 129 (Mar. 12, 1876).

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 1924 (extra session), Chap. 4 (Apr. 25, 1924).

dent in legislative circles before 1898; but in this year bills were introduced in both houses proposing to place the three state educational institutions under a single board of control. Various reasons were given for such a proposal by its sponsors. Among them were: the embarrassment to the legislators arising from competitive lobbying by the representatives of the three schools; the steadily mounting demands of the three boards for the support of their schools; and the difficulty of the legislators in arriving at the actual needs of the institutions. The debate over these bills was long and acrimonious, but finally a compromise measure was agreed upon and passed. By this, a Board of Control was created for the management of the charitable, penal, and reformatory state institutions, but with supervisory power only over the state educational institutions as to their financial management and business procedures.⁷⁶ This statute continued in effect until it was superseded by the law setting up the State Board of Education in 1909. The dual relationship of each institution to its own board and to the Board of Control proved to be less burdensome than had been feared, but the results did not satisfy the advocates of unified control of the state schools.

In 1900, for the first time, the appropriations for the three institutions were combined in one legislative act. A request by the State University Board of Regents for the extension of their millage levy in 1902 led to the introduction of a similar bill authorizing a millage levy for the Normal School. This in turn brought about a like request for Iowa State College. The three requests were joined in one bill, the passage of which inaugurated, as has been noted, a dependable and continuing policy of physical expansion on all three campuses.⁷⁷

The legislature had thus begun to think and act in terms of unification of support of higher education, but the agitation for unification of control continued. A bill for the creation of a state board of education to effect this end was introduced in 1904 but was indefinitely postponed. A joint committee was, however, set up to continue the study of the problem of unification. This body, known from its chairman as the Whipple Committee, made, during 1905-1906, an investigation of the three state colleges as to their financial management, control, functions, and provinces. In the report of this committee, submitted to the legislature in 1906, the conclu-

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 1898, Chap. 118 (Mar. 26, 1898).

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 1900, Chap. 152 (Apr. 6, 1900).

sions were almost without exception negatively critical. In particular, these institutions were criticized for failure to obey the law requiring approval in advance by the General Assembly of all plans for the erection of buildings from the proceeds of the millage levies, for waste in expenditures of public funds through unnecessary duplication of educational work, and for institutional rivalry "detrimental to the educational interests of the state." As a solution of the problem, the Whipple Committee proposed the creation of a single appointive state board of regents for higher education in Iowa, with a finance committee consisting of three full-time members outside the personnel of the board, whose duty it should be to see that the state got value received from the appropriations for institutional support.⁷⁸

A bill embodying the recommendations of the Whipple Committee passed the State Senate in the Thirty-first General Assembly but was defeated in the House.⁷⁹ A new bill, differing only slightly from that of 1906, was introduced and passed in 1909, and the long struggle to reorganize the government of the state educational institutions was ended.⁸⁰ A period of four or five years of stress and strain followed the establishment of the new State Board of Education as the immediate governing body of these schools; but eventually the new system became adjusted to its functions, and it has continued for almost half a century without essential change, not only without detriment to the institutions involved but rather to their advantage. Their united front in higher education has won for these schools so high a standing with the people of Iowa and of the country as a whole and has contributed to such efficiency of operation within their prescribed spheres of action as fully to justify the change that seemed so radical in 1909.

The Fortieth General Assembly (1923) proposed an extraordinary change of policy for state educational support, which directly involved higher education. It passed a bill providing for the training, under the direction of the State Board of Education, of teachers for elementary schools in private schools and colleges, and for the subsidy of this program in the private schools and colleges approved for this purpose. This bill was vetoed

⁷⁸ Report to the Thirty-first General Assembly of the Committee on State Educational Institutions appointed by the Thirtieth General Assembly (208 pages) (Jan. 9, 1906). The "Whipple Committee" was named for its chairman, Senator William P. Whipple of Vinton.

⁷⁹ *House Journal, 1906, 1017-1018; Senate Journal, 1906, 791.*

⁸⁰ *Laws of Iowa, 1909, Chap. 170 (Mar. 29, 1909).*

by Governor Nathan E. Kendall as a violation of the spirit, if not the letter, of the state constitution in proposing the abandonment of "the old and accepted principle of the divorcement of church and state."⁸¹

The Assembly of 1923 also requested the State Board of Education to increase the tuition charges in the institutions under its control,⁸² in order to relieve to some extent the burden upon the taxpayers of the state. This request was made in recognition of the reduction in farm income in Iowa resulting from the marked fall in the price of farm products and farm lands from the inflated levels following World War I. To this influence was added that of the friends of the private colleges in the legislature, the so-called "private college bloc," who could not infrequently be counted as opposing increases in the amount of support for the state institutions of higher education. The State Board of Education, by a series of acts extending over several bienniums, gradually brought the tuition charges up to a common institutional level. The income from this source was estimated in 1924 as \$450,000 annually for the University; \$350,000 for the State College; and \$125,000 for the Teachers College, in view of which the board decided not to ask for any increase in funds for institutional support for the 1925-1927 biennium.⁸³

A proposition looking to the enlargement of the dormitory systems in the state colleges without calling for any direct appropriations was presented to the Forty-first General Assembly by the Board of Education and was enacted into law. By this act, the Board was authorized to erect, manage, and control such buildings, to condemn property for sites, and to borrow money and pledge rents and profits for the payment of mortgages.⁸⁴ The policy thus established has enabled these institutions to set up dormitory systems of the highest quality.

The act of 1924 repealing all continuing appropriations and creating the office of State Budget Director (later State Comptroller) did not prove to be adverse to the interests of these institutions. On the contrary, the amounts appropriated biennially for their support (excluding appropriations for the University Hospital) were increased each biennium from \$8,500,000

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 1923, Chap. 64 (May 8, 1923); *Des Moines Register*, May 9, 1923.

⁸² *Report of the Iowa State Board of Education . . . 1924* (Des Moines, n. d.), v.

⁸³ *Idem.*

⁸⁴ *Laws of Iowa, 1925*, Chap. 94 (Apr. 3, 1925).

in 1923 to \$12,000,000 in 1929. The financial stringency resulting from the depression of the 1930's, which began in 1929, inevitably caused a reduction in the appropriations for higher education. The downward trend reached its lowest point in 1933, when the state schools received only \$8,100,000 for the coming biennium. From this figure, the support was increased each following biennium; but it was not until 1945 that the total came to exceed that of 1929,⁸⁵ and in the last four years of this period the people were faced with the tragic conditions of World War II.

One significantly new feature of the Iowa legislative appropriations policy for higher education appeared in the depth of the depression in 1933 in the form of specific limitations in the amounts to be paid as salaries to the presidents of these institutions. Such limitations were repeated in the appropriation acts of 1935 and 1937, and in 1937 it was further prescribed that the appropriations for repairs, buildings, and equipment were to be spent under the supervision of the state executive council and the committee on retrenchment and reform.⁸⁶ Similar "interim" committees were authorized by the appropriations acts of 1945, 1947, 1949, 1951, and 1953, and in each case the approval of a joint legislative committee was required for all expenditures for capital improvements.⁸⁷

This tendency toward increased legislative control of expenditures by the State Board of Education (after 1955 the Board of Regents) was further shown by the passage in 1951 of an act requiring a preaudit of receipts and expenditures by the institutions under this board to be made by employees of the State Comptroller appointed by him.⁸⁸ This act was followed in 1953 by the inclusion in the appropriation bill of a section setting forth in itemized form an approved budget for each of the state colleges, and requiring that the expenditures by each such institution should not exceed the figure shown in the budget as the total of receipts from state appropriations and from other sources.⁸⁹ The amounts received from student fees and from other sources had been given in the biennial reports, and these amounts had been used as the basis of estimates of institutional needs.

⁸⁵ *Laws of Iowa*, 1923 to 1945 inclusive.

⁸⁶ *Laws of Iowa*, 1937, Chap. 7 (May 1, 1937).

⁸⁷ *Laws of Iowa*, 1945 to 1953 inclusive.

⁸⁸ *Laws of Iowa*, 1951, Chap. 45 (May 15, 1951).

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 1953, Chap. 7, Sec. 12 (May 23, 1953).

This act of 1953, however, marks the first instance when the receipts from sources other than appropriations have received formal legislative recognition. A similar limitation was incorporated in the appropriation act of 1955.⁹⁰

The preaudit act of 1951 has been subjected to criticism on the grounds that it provides for an unnecessary triplication of service, since all bills are by law postaudited by representatives of the Finance Committee of the Board of Regents and of the State Auditor's Office; that it has resulted in delaying payment until the state has lost discounts; and that it is unsound in principle, implying "a disturbing lack of trust" in the officials of the state colleges. It had been suggested that "In the interest of good government, the legislature should abolish the preauditing requirement."⁹¹ Legislation to this effect was enacted by the Fifty-seventh General Assembly in 1957.

To summarize, in its legislative policy for the support of higher education, Iowa has followed a number of different plans. First, assuming that the income from the federal endowments should be sufficient for current support for both the State University and the State College of Agriculture, state responsibility was limited to providing the necessary physical plants. Second, there was the policy operating from 1878 to 1923 by which permanent incomes from continuing appropriations for current support were assured for each of the institutions of higher education. The third policy, in effect from 1896 to 1915, was one by which the proceeds of a millage tax levy were made available for successive periods of five years for building purposes in these institutions. Fourth, from 1909 to the present, a single board of regents for the government of the schools was substituted for separate boards of trustees. And fifth, a state-wide budget system was created, designed to provide still further supervision of the expenditure of state funds for the support of higher education. Since 1933 there have been a number of individual acts of the same intent.

The record of state support of higher education in Iowa exemplifies the democratic process, by which the elected representatives of the people have for more than a century shown in varying degrees their faith in the value of this type of education. When it is taken into consideration that Iowa has

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 1955, Chap. 6, Sec. 13 (May 6, 1955).

⁹¹ *Des Moines Register*, Dec. 31, 1956.

no natural resources, such as oil or iron ore, upon which it can depend in part for the support of its educational program, but rather that such support must come almost entirely from taxes paid by its individual citizens, the truth of a statement by Homer H. Seerley to a joint legislative committee in 1904 becomes clearly evident: "The people of Iowa do not believe in economy at the expense of opportunity for their boys and girls."