Notes: Owen D. Young as a speaker

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Young (Memo) -

Spent first day on files at 120 Broadway. I remember at the time of the Edison Anniversary there was considerable newspaper comment on the excellency of Young as Chairman - surprised that he spoke so well. He took to speaking young, a boy in Sunday School when the minister did not come he read the Scriptures and sometimes preached a sermon. It is evident from the stories of his classmates of Lawrence College that no record of his power there came from his skill as a speaker. He seems to have been ready to turn the tables on an opponent - to get himself out of a tight place, as the story of his graduation oration which he had not properly memorized - could not hear the prompting that was given from the side and without the audience realizing it he improvised part of his speech. (They should be verified by Young, himself). As the story goes in the manuscript, signed H.E.S. now the editor of People's Utilities, Inc., in Washington. The Dean coming out said, "Mr. Young, that was a very good extemporaneous speech," the Dean having censored the speeches, I suppose.

He must have perfected his natural inclination and talent for speaking in the Law. Of course he mastered here his technique for gathering material by adjusting it - putting it into form. What Mr. Case told me about his enjoyment of his night classes while he was still in Law School fits in with this. Evidently liked to talk on things, which interested him. Was full of a thing, enthusiastic over it, forgetful of himself. It poured out, but
poured out according to a plan. I take it that he grasped very easily the essentials of any subject and hung to those. Moreover he has a breadth of thinking and of knowledge that enables him to see the relation of the particular matter. There is an excellent paragraph on this point in the Extracts on Education in Miss Russell's file. (Get this from her.)

Young evidently went through all the experiences of the son of a hard-worked farmer. The Mother here comes in as the one anxious for his education. Tells of his going first to a school nearby where she packed him food for six days. . . . She was one of that noble company that boarded themselves in the early days.

Had remarkable facility in getting out of any tight place. The anecdote of his care of the Sophomores, after hazing the Freshman is excellent.

At the beginning of the talk of him as President, can be traced in these earliest seems to be in December 1924. Attach to this Memo the note made yesterday at headquarters.