

QUARTERLY CONFERENCE
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Executive Office of State Institutions
WITH THE
State Board of Control

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OFFICIAL INVESTIGATION OF STATE INSTITUTIONS.

By Hon. A. O. Eberhart, Governor of Minnesota.

Mr. Chairman and Superintendents: There is no one who realizes more than I the importance of extensive preparation, as well as experience and study, in order to speak on such a subject as "Official Investigation of State Institutions." It has been my object, since I was made governor, to become as thoroughly familiar with the institutions as time would permit, and I think I can truthfully say to all of you superintendents and to the Board of Control that it is really wonderful that there has been so little complaint and so much commendation given, not only in Minnesota but in other states, to the management of the Minnesota institutions, when you bear in mind the fact that there are thousands of delinquents under the charge of the State Board of Control and the superintendents. In the entire period of time I have been governor, there have been comparatively few complaints. There can be but one conclusion drawn, and that is that the institutions have been well managed in the interests of the state.

The question of investigation of all state departments is one that is important. There was a time, and that not long ago, when a state department considered it not exactly an insult but unnecessary to have any special investigation. There was a time when we did not investigate our banks or our state departments, but today we have investigations of them all. There is not a state department that is not subjected to a rigid examination at intervals every year, and it is conceded that it is for the interests of the department and not a reflection upon it.

Investigations at state institutions should be made by three different parties. In the first place each superintendent must inspect his own institution; in the second place the Board of Control, constituting the managers, must investigate all the institutions; and in the third place, investigation must be made by some outside party.

With reference to the results to be obtained, there are three reasons for investigations. One is to secure a better knowledge of the institution itself. The second is to see that the rules and regulations are properly observed throughout the institution. The third, and perhaps most important, is to find out where we can better it; where we can make changes so that it will compare favorably with the institutions of other states; where we can make progress and advancement; and whether or not we can reduce the causes that contribute the delinquents and defectives that are now occupying our state institutions.

I can only discuss each point very briefly, and I am doing it informally because I think we are a body of men who should get as close to each other as possible. There should be trusty and confidential relations between the three bodies here represented—the superintendents, the Board of Control, and the Chief Executive of the state—and I am glad to know that at all times, when I have endeavored to get any information regarding the institutions, the Board of Control has placed at my disposal all the data it could get.

The superintendent is, of course, the most important figure with reference to the investigation. The Board of Control cannot possibly know the details of every institution as the superintendent knows them; that is beyond the range of physical possibility. The board, the governor, and any outside investigating body, must necessarily depend upon the superintendent for details.

There was a time when we considered that the most important function of the Board of Control was to save money for the state of Minnesota. At first, when that body was established, the great thing that was argued in the legislative halls was that it would save the state of Minnesota a great deal of money to have a board of control, and it has saved the state money, but we all realize that that is not the great function of the Board of Control or the superintendents.

I think it is conceded that the superintendent should make investigations. He must make them in the first place to know the institution in all its detail. He must make them for the purpose of seeing every rule enforced. When an employe knows that the superintendent has absolute control, that he knows everything that is going on in the institution, he has a more complete and full respect for his authority than he would have if he thought the superintendent did not know what was going on. So I deem it essential for the superintendent to make an investigation with regard to the observance of rules by all employees.

But I believe the most important investigation the superintendent can make is one that will help the state in solving the problems of defect and delinquency. It is admitted to be true, I think, that Minnesota has come to be a dumping ground to some extent for the surrounding states. The superintendents, the Board of Control and state officials are absolutely without power to prevent it under the legislation the state has provided. If the bill which was recommended by the Board of Control and superintendents, which provided for partial contribution by the family and the

estates for the support of the insane, had passed the house—it lacked three votes, I believe—I think we could have lessened the number of inmates to quite an extent.

With regard to our defectives, I know that research work is now being conducted by the superintendents in charge of those institutions which, when it is published and analyzed and when the results are obtained by the superintendents, will help the state a great deal in providing against and doing away with all the causes that contribute to such defect.

If we could have at the next session of the legislature a report from the superintendents showing approximately how many in each institution could be either wholly or partly provided for by relatives who ought to be responsible for the care of their unfortunate, it would be a great thing for the state. There is no more reason why Minnesota should pursue its present policy than should the states surrounding it. We have personal knowledge of cases where residents of other states have come into Minnesota, made their homes here long enough to establish a residence, and then sent their relatives to state institutions to be cared for by the state of Minnesota.

Another important thing is to lessen crime and degeneracy in the state, and there is no body of men—I am not saying this to flatter our superintendents—on whom the state can depend to give it reliable information which will help it in removing crime and the cause for crime more than the superintendents in charge of these institutions.

I think we have spent too much money for the care of criminals, and we have done comparatively little for the direct prevention of crime and degeneracy in this state. If we can provide more funds for it, I believe that investigation on the part of the superintendents is going to be of great value to the state.

The Board of Control must necessarily make investigations. I do not believe there is a superintendent here who feels that there is any reflection on his management when the board comes along without notice and inquires into the affairs of the institution.

I think that, if it is for the purpose of bettering conditions in the institution, for the purpose of being a help to the superintendents and the Board of Control, the recommendations and investigations of an outside body are perfectly justifiable. While members of the Board of Control and the superintendents may not agree with me, I think that the Board of Visitors should co-operate with the managers and superintendents to raise the standard of the institutions, to make them serve a better purpose, and to give us more economy in administration, if it is possible. But, on the other hand, if there is an ulterior motive, if such a board makes an investigation and publishes it broadcast in the newspapers, without any effort on its part to meet with the superintendents and the Board of Control to rectify defects, it is wrong and an injustice and an injury to the institutions.

I think the fact that the Board of Visitors has been practically abolished in this state through the cutting out of the appropriation will not make

any difference in the policy pursued by the Board of Control. There was a time when perhaps the relations between the Board of Control and the Board of Visitors were not as friendly as they might have been—I want it strictly understood that I am not criticising either the one or the other—they simply did not get together, but if the Board of Visitors would work with the Board of Control for the purpose of remedying any defects in the institutions, I think the investigations made by either body would be perfectly justifiable.

When defects are greatly agitated in the newspapers, and the superintendents and the Board of Control are not given a chance to remedy and correct them, if any there are, then, of course, a great deal of damage is done to the institution. I am in favor of publicity, but when it comes to the management of these institutions, I think the investigations should be reported directly to the Board of Control; then the board should take them up with the various superintendents. The publicity necessarily connected with independent investigations is, I think, a damage to the institutions, and does not do a great deal of good to the state. It is co-operation that we need. I believe in investigations by the superintendents, by the Board of Control, and by outside bodies.

I think that the governor should be well acquainted with the institutions. While I haven't been able to see them as often as I should like to, I have visited them as often as possible. I am well aware of the fact that the problem of knowing all the state institutions is a great one. Each institution is a problem for its superintendent, and it cannot be expected that the chief executive will be thoroughly acquainted with all the institutions. I think it is perfectly proper for the governor to visit the institutions of his own and those of other states. Now, if anything happens, as in Iowa where the governor was involved in serious troubles at the state institutions, naturally anything that can be, is charged to the governor, and he is held responsible.

I think there should be the most confidential relations with regard to these investigations between the governor, the Board of Control and the superintendents, because if there is not, if we are working for other purposes and to fight our battles in the newspapers, we cannot accomplish a great deal. Now, since investigation of Minnesota institutions by the Board of Visitors is practically abolished, it lies largely with the Board of Control and the governor. It shall be my policy, as it has been in the past, to visit the institutions and to come in close personal contact with the superintendents and the Board of Control. I hope that the superintendents will always realize that when I come to their institutions I am not there for the purpose of finding fault, but to know the institution a little better for my own sake, as I ought to know it as chief executive of Minnesota,

But the greatest interest I have is in learning from the superintendents and the Board of Control what I can recommend to the legislature of this state in order to make our institutions better and to save expense, if possible, to the taxpayers. I think the question of saving money is not all important, but where efficiency can be secured at the same time with economy, I believe we should work toward that end. The time has come

when we should enlarge the facilities for raising products at our institutions. Already there has been quite a lot of land added by the Board of Control. That would be the kind of an investigation in which I should be personally interested, in finding out how much we could save the state of Minnesota by adding this farm land to it. I believe it would be a good investment for the state. If the results show that it is economic, and if it brings to the unfortunates in the institution a chance for outdoor work, which we all know is healthful, it is my opinion that such a policy should be pursued.

I do not know that anything will be done with regard to legislation for the state Institutions during the coming special session. My idea has been to confine the session to one thing only, the purpose for which it is called, although things may come up which would make it necessary to consider other matters. The problem of the state institutions, the apparently growing demand for buildings and for the increase in institutions, being very important, I hope that the superintendents will give me, in advance of the special session, the benefit of such investigations as they have made. Perhaps it would be better if such information were given to me through the Board of Control; then we could unite our forces.

We have now, under the new law, more support for the institutions. This means better help. I think that is one of the things about which the state has been negligent in the past. The superintendent cannot run an institution alone; he must have good assistants; and unless the state is willing to pay for it, we cannot get the best possible results. I feel that we have now entered upon a period of better and stronger support for the institutions. The funds may not be sufficient, but more can be accomplished now than has been possible in the past.

I should like to suggest, as we do not now have a board of visitors and perhaps shall not need it, that the investigations which have been conducted by that board in the past be made now by the Board of Control direct, to which I shall refer all complaints that come to me, as I believe that is the proper body to which complaints should be sent and by which investigations should be made.

I want you superintendents to know that you all have my hearty co-operation in your work; that I shall never ally myself with those seeking to find fault with the management of any institution. I want to see them all conducted along the best possible lines.

I am of the opinion that the state should adopt the policy of having the members of the Board, of Control visit the national and perhaps international gatherings, where the care of the unfortunate is being discussed. It would be a good plan for the superintendents to visit them. We want the fullest information possible. To sit in an office and figure on financial problems is a matter for clerical hire, not for the members of the Board of Control. The most important work that body can do is to visit the institutions, the details of which should be known by it, not for the purpose of finding fault, but that it may work with the superintendents toward making the Minnesota institutions the best in the country.

The state has adopted a liberal policy with regard to the care of the institutions, and there is no question but that it will be liberal in the future, although it should be restricted hereafter with regard to our insane. The matter of lightening the burden of the state in caring for the insane ought perhaps to be presented at the special session.

I think you have known for some time how I have felt toward the institutions and the policy you have pursued. It seems to me that the mutual relations existing between the three sources of management should be most cordial, earnest and confidential. If there is any way in which you think the executive can help, I don't see why you should not call on him to assist you. I shall always feel free to call on the superintendents and the Board of Control, and I hope you will feel at liberty to call on me.

Henry Wolfer, Warden State Prison: Mr. Chairman, His Excellency the Governor, and Brother Co-workers: I beg to apologize for not having included also the Board of Control, which is the most important body in our excellent organization in so far as the administration of the institutions is concerned.

I don't know exactly the scope that was intended to be allowed here in discussing the investigation of state institutions. In my experience of something over forty years in institution work I have seen investigations and investigations, and then again other investigations of all kinds and colors. I have seen a great deal of harm from investigations that were not rightly conducted and the result was harmful to the institution. I have seen other investigations which I think were helpful to the institution that was under investigation. I have seen again other investigations that were brought about by outside agitation, through the newspapers, the foundations of which were some trivial matters that ought to have received early attention and to have been corrected by the administration and in this way have prevented any outside publicity or outside agitation that finally resulted in general harm to the institution.

If there is anything wrong with an institution, with its administration, if there is slackness in carrying out rules and regulations adopted for the benefit of the institution and its inmates, it goes without saying that they should be promptly corrected.

As I understand the province of the Board of Control and its policy, and we have had some very good men on the Board of Control, it has been to investigate all matters that come to it which seem to be of sufficient importance to require it. In the first place the policy of the board, as I have understood it, has been to hold the executive head of the institution responsible for proper care and control of the institution, and when anything comes up that seems to indicate that everything is not as it should be, it is referred to the superintendent, with the request that he give light upon the subject. As a rule, I am satisfied, from what little experience I have had, those explanations are usually promptly made. If they are not, it is the fault of the executive head of the institution. And if the affairs over which he has charge are not properly administered and he does not properly account for his stewardship, he is not the right man in the place or for the place. But I think, in all fairness to the head of

the institution, if there is any complaint with reference to its conduct, the carrying out of the rules of the institution, or the administration of the responsibilities under his charge, if he is not given an opportunity to make proper explanations, it is likely to result in great harm to the institutions.

There are very few states in the country that have less trouble with general investigations than we have had in the state of Minnesota. I know of none, and I know of a number of them that are having trouble all the time, simply because there is a general disposition on the part of people outside to find fault, complain, and write letters to the newspapers. Letters to newspapers many times lead to picking up other complaints and fanning them into a flame, making a mountain out of a mole hill; in this way the discipline of the institutions is injured very materially. After this kind of agitation has gone awhile, there is a disposition all around to keep it up.

Frequently politics is at the bottom of it all. I know of two or three states where investigations are a rule with all political parties. I know one where there are three parties constantly watching for an opportunity to get an inning. As a result, the institutions are constantly in hot water.

In one state I have in mind, the state militia was kept around its prison walls for two months to prevent its being blown up by dynamite outside as well as dynamite inside. That institution has been under investigation for the last ten years at almost regular intervals, and the condition is chaotic. It is a shame, it is a disgrace to the state, but it is nevertheless true.

In the twenty-one years that I have been connected with the institution which I have the honor to preside over, we have had one investigation. I think I may truthfully say that I got some benefit from it. Dr. Smith was one of the investigators. We might not have received benefit if it had been in the hands of some investigators. I think Dr. Smith helped us. I don't know that we were very far off, but perhaps just far enough off to need a little stirring up. I had not been in the state very long at that time, and I think the investigation was an inheritance. The institution had been under investigation about as often as the legislature met for some fifteen years before that time, so the people were not accustomed to going through more than one biennial period without an investigation; consequently, I had one. I am glad to say that we haven't had any since.

I think the sentiment of people who are familiar with our state institutions is that we do not require or deserve investigation. Many things have been done to correct errors that crop up from time to time in our institutions; they have been corrected in a way that strengthened the institution and the confidence of the people in it, and in consequence we have had very much better results than we could have had if we had been constantly torn up by unnecessary investigation.

Rev. S. G. Smith, St. Paul: I accepted an invitation to be present at the meeting today, but I had no intimation that I should be expected to speak. However, I am very glad to cordially agree with all that Governor Eberhart has said, and for my own special topic I will refer to inspection of institutions by a body independent of its direct management.

I have been connected with such hoards in the state of Minnesota for a period of nine years. During the past twenty-five years I have made a continuous study of public, charitable and correctional institutions, both in this country and in Europe. As a result of all my observation and experience, I am convinced of the value of such a body as the State Board of Visitors. In the army and navy there is constant inspection of stores and supplies by persons who do not purchase them. In some European countries there are no less than three independent boards of inspection for public institutions. I think the difficulty, if any has existed, has been the failure to recognize the real function of the State Board of Visitors. Their function is two-fold. First, it is a cabinet of advisers for the governor. No governor, however intelligent or however industrious, has time to manage all the varied concerns of the vast commonwealth and at the same time make repeated visits to its public, charitable and correctional institutions, and yet he is the man most responsible in the entire state for their economy and efficiency. Under our present system the State Board of Control, consisting of three men, appoints the superintendents and purchases the supplies, erects the buildings, conducts the repairs, and must work harder than any other officials employed by the state. No other officials have so great responsibility. It is for the safety of the Board of Control, no less than of the public, that an impartial body of men should be vested with the authority to inspect the institutions, both as representatives of the governor and as representatives of the people. It is true, in a sense, that the public institutions are open to the entire public, but it is obvious that the entire public is neither qualified nor adapted to the task of adequate inspection.

Under the present system the superintendents, after having been appointed by the Board of Control, appoint their own assistants, have control of the staff, and in a general way have complete authority over the institution to which each one of them is assigned. This is a very serious responsibility. It is for the safety of the superintendents that their work should be inspected from time to time by competent men who can give fair and impartial reports upon what they find. It seems to me, therefore, in every way desirable that the state of Minnesota should continue and maintain its State Board of Visitors.

I have now a few frank words to say with respect to the functions of that board. I think they should be confined entirely to three things; to inspection, investigation when requested by the governor, and recommendations of legislation to the legislature. One of the troubles with the state boards of charities in various states has been that they have been entrusted from time to time with executive functions, and this has been particularly true in those states where their work has been successful. It was true in the old days in the state of Minnesota. For my own part I have always thought that this is a mistake.

The men who compose the State Board of Visitors should be chosen for their special fitness for this position from among the most competent men in the state. Any man should regard it as an honor to serve in such a capacity without remuneration. It should never be regarded as a stepping

stone to some other place. Any man who is a candidate for any other of flee should at once resign from the State Board of Visitors.-

May I be permitted to express my view as to the method of inspection which in my judgment should be employed by the State Board of Visitors? It is quite obvious that they should make a careful study of the whole field of charities and correction. They should be men with requisite leisure, temperament and ability for the acquisition of such knowledge. They should be permitted and encouraged to visit institutions in other states in order to make suitable comparisons.

In their work of inspection they should endeavor to gain a complete knowledge of the material and financial conditions of every institution, but especially as to the methods by which its wards are treated.

The main function of this board is not to find fault or discover abuses, but rather to suggest improvements and to lead the way in progressive methods. If on a visit of inspection they discover what they suppose to be faults of administration, they should, first of all, frankly tell the superintendent what their conclusions are.

I think I know something upon these subjects, and I am free to confess that what knowledge I have has come largely from my conversation with the superintendents of public institutions. When I have thought them wrong in some detail, three times out of four they have convinced me that they were right, and I have never yet found a superintendent who is not willing to accept a fair criticism and to remedy any defect that lay in his power.

I wish here to bear testimony to the high character of the body of superintendents at the head of the state institutions in Minnesota. No other state and no other country in my judgment has a body of men more intelligent, more devoted to their work, nor is there any public that gives to its institutions so hearty and affectionate a support as the people of Minnesota.

If it should happen that the superintendent will not correct what seems to the State Board of Visitors a serious error in administration, it is then its duty to report it to the Board of Control. If the Board of Control will not act, it should then report it to the governor.

If the State Board of Visitors is convinced that there are serious faults in public institutions and it cannot find any public official who will remedy them, it should then appeal to the public through the newspapers. There should be the most confidential relations between the State Board of Visitors, the Board of Control, and the governor of the state.

My own judgment is that formal investigations, with set charges, should never be undertaken by the Board of Visitors upon its own initiative, but only at the request of the governor. "When such request is made, the Board of Visitors should have ample power to do the work thoroughly. I have taken part in quite a number of investigations of various institutions in this state, and I do not now remember one of them that did not end with benefit to the public service.

At the same time my judgment is that the less heard of the State Board of Visitors by the public, the better it is for all concerned. The superintendents, as a rule, will be very glad to receive its suggestions. The State Board of Control will profit by its advice, and the governor of the state can be depended upon to call for an investigation at its hands whenever necessity requires. In my experience with the governors of this state for a third of a century, there has never been one of them who has not had a very high sense of responsibility with respect to the wards of the state in its public institutions.

I may say, finally, that I was very much opposed to the bill introduced in the last legislature suggesting that whenever any inmate of any institution complained to any official thereof, the State Board of Visitors should at once proceed to make an investigation. Had such a bill passed, it would have made the life of the institutions intolerable. The board would have had to be in continuous session, not only at one institution, but at all the institutions. It must be understood that the defective, delinquent and dependent classes are rather more likely to complain than the normal citizen. At the same time, because of their condition they are entitled to the protection involved in the inspection from time to time of the whole work that is done for them, and this inspection should be made by a wise and prudent body of men who have no other purpose to serve than the best interests of the commonwealth.

Dr. A. F. Kilbourne, Rochester State Hospital: Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen: Dr. Smith's resignation from the Board of Visitors, coming at the time it did, was rather unfortunate, as his experience in such work was of great value to any board.

I understand that the argument for the existence of the Board of Visitors was that, being a board separate from the active management of the institutions, they might be better qualified to investigate conditions and charges arising in such institutions. It seems to me, however, that the Board of Control, the members of which are constantly visiting these institutions, are even better qualified for such work than any board of visitors can be. They certainly have more interest in the institutions under their direct charge, and in my opinion a board of visitors is superfluous.

Every state should take pride in its institutions and at the same time should be interested in upholding their reputations. I should "like to see the citizens of this state more familiar with the state institutions. We have done what we could to encourage visitors. No institution can suffer from just criticism, but it is the unjust criticism and garbled reports which bring our institutions" into disrepute, causes the friends of patients unnecessary worry, and discourages those who are striving to bring them nearer to a state of perfection.

C. J. Swendsen, State Board of Control: I want to say that I, as a member of this board, believe in a board of visitors, and I think that my colleagues would have faith in such a board if it would work in harmony and co-operate with the State Board of Control and the superintendents of

here this morning, that particular board could be of great service to the superintendents, the institutions, and the state at large.

The state law makes it compulsory for the Board of Control to visit certain institutions at least once a month. I believe that we can name such official calls visits of investigation in a mild form, and that on account of them, investigations of a more serious character can be to a great extent avoided.

The board in authority is charged with certain duties. It must see to it, as far as it lies in its power, that the state wards receive plenty of good, wholesome food; that they are properly clothed; that the sanitary conditions are what they should be; and that loudness and humanity are the predominating factors in caring for the unfortunates. The taxpayers have a right to demand that all this be done in an efficient and economical way.

The greatest responsibility, however, in justly carrying out these requirements falls upon the superintendents of the institutions. They realize better than any one else that the heavy part of the burden rests on their shoulders. It is almost impossible for the average person to comprehend the anxiety and worry connected with the office of the superintendent of a state institution. Much do they need the co-operation and sympathy of right-thinking people, and the board should always do its utmost to protect them against unjust criticism. There should be mutual confidence between the board and the superintendent. In visiting or inspecting institutions, the various problems should be freely discussed, and advice should be given as to possible improvements and betterments.

In going through the institution, the inspector or the member of the board should always give the inmates all the opportunity they desire for a hearing. Let these poor unfortunates tell about their trials and tribulations, and if conditions are such that very little can be done to meet their requests, I am sure that a word of kindness and love will in many instances be very valuable. Their complaints should be given attention, and if of a serious nature but not implicating the superintendent, he should be requested to make investigation and report to the board. If the board for some reason is not satisfied with the report from the superintendent, or if the complaint implicates the superintendent, then immediate steps should be taken by the board, and if after investigation the charges are substantiated, proper measures should be adopted to correct the evil. The board should, however, be careful not to pay too much attention to all sorts of complaints, especially when such come from irresponsible busybodies or revengeful discharged employees.

Investigations of the state institutions may be of great importance, and if conducted justly, will bring beneficial results for all concerned. There are, however, other investigations equally, if not more, important; such as the social and hereditary conditions of the different communities. Causes should be ascertained, remedies recommended and adopted; and thereby the prevention of filling up state institutions would to a great extent be realized.

G. A. Merrill, State Public School: I don't know that I have anything to add to the discussion. I think that the general policy of state institution management in Minnesota as it has been carried out, has been fortunate and beneficial in the proper development of the institutions of this state. The chief executive officers appoint all subordinates and have power to remove them. The chief executive officers are appointed by the board and may be removed by it. We have, it seems to me, in effect civil service. Every subordinate officer in the institution knows that he is responsible to the head of that institution. His ability and efficiency in service are the tests of his remaining in the service. Political considerations do not affect the institutions in the least.

In the supervision of the institutions or in the investigations of them I feel, as I think every one who has spoken has indicated, that the greatest good comes from a frank statement to the superintendent of the errors discovered and suggestions as to the correction of those errors. I don't believe there is a superintendent among us who objects to intelligent criticism. In my experience I have found it helpful to have weak places pointed out and suggestions made for strengthening these places in the institution of which I have charge.

The men who come to us from the boards are men informed as to state institution management. They have visited state institutions in other states and in other countries, and come to us sometimes from these inspections, with ideas that are very helpful to us.

I have noticed that some visitors seem to be impressed by minor things. People have sometimes said to me: "You ought to be proud of the cleanliness of your institution." Well, of course good order and cleanliness are important; cleanliness is really a basal and proper subject of pride for a matron or a housekeeper. We superintendents ought to be proud of something else. I am pleased when inspectors ask me what line of research I am pursuing, how I am directing my staff and my assistants, what instruction I am giving my attendants, whether my nurses are mere servants or nurses with the dignity of a profession. As the superintendent of an institution for children, I ought to be concerned with the development of those children, with the equipment and organization of my institution, to offer the very best possible opportunities for their development. It seems to me that these are some of the things that an investigating board might very properly make inquiries about. The paramount question in my work is, how do the children turn out? And that is a question that I must devote time and attention to, and it is pleading to me when inquiries are made about it.

Dr. A. C. Rogers, School for FEEBLE-MINDED: I have always believed in a general way in a Board of Visitors, though their methods of inspection—I like the word "inspection" better than "investigation" for the ordinary visit—have not always been exactly satisfactory to those responsible for the work. Any one can find things to criticize, as suggested this morning. I, for one, and I am pretty sure the others feel the same way in reference to their respective charges, have no idea that the institution I have the honor to superintend is anywhere near perfect; in fact, it is

very far from it. We know many things that are not according to our ideals and standards. The point is, how can we approach those ideals? In other words, valuable criticism is constructive in its nature.

There are two ways, as I see it, of inspecting a public institution. One is by trying to see every part of the institution and, so far as possible, every inmate, to judge of the sanitary conditions and of the happiness and health of the individuals and their reaction to their surroundings.

The other is by spending less time in the direction of the inspection of quarters and interviews with patients, etc., and more in getting the attitude of the people in charge. In following this method it should be the object to first get into the spirit of the institution, then test the application of this spirit here and there. This sort of a survey, coupled with a general bird's-eye view of the institution as a whole, even though it be hurriedly made, is one of the most valuable kinds. The usual visits of inspection are too short to secure proper data for helpful or valuable criticism.

Every member of the Board of Visitors has been exceedingly courteous in all his relations with the speaker and his public work, and I have spoken to them freely on this point of hurried and thus necessarily superficial inspections. Occasionally I start out with my assistants—the heads of departments, assistant physicians, and secretary—to make an inspection. We take one department. To go through that one department of about two hundred and fifty children out of the fifteen hundred, to see every child and every part of every room—and we know just what to look for, too—takes at least an hour or an hour and a half. To cover say six times as much territory, would require a good part of two days. How utterly impossible for untrained inspectors to do this in an hour or less!

I believe thoroughly in publicity to the extent of telling the public frankly what we are doing. I believe that we should open our work to the public freely, so far as consistent with our duty to our patients; and I am sure we will all agree that nothing throws suspicion upon public service so quickly as an attempt to cover up unfortunate happenings. I remember several years ago a woman came to the institution and wanted to inspect a certain department. She wore a black veil; I didn't know who she was. I said, "All right; go through. I don't know who you are, but I want you to see anything there is in there; but when you come out, I want you to see me, and if there is anything that you think isn't right, to let me know about it." It turned out that she was the mother of one of the children. Fortunately she was pleased with what she saw, and she wasn't wearing any veil, either, when she came back. She had come to the institution with the idea, gratuitously supplied her, that it was a terrible place and that she better take her boy out. She simply wanted to find out for herself just what kind of a place it really was before removing her boy. She did not take him out.

On the other hand, our patrons are anxious about their friends in the institution, and the fact must not be overlooked that undigested newspaper criticism creates anxiety and worry, needlessly. We, as superintendents, expect to have troubles and to meet many trying situations; that is

a part of our work, but we naturally dislike to have the patrons given new anxieties without adequate cause, just because it makes exciting reading for the general public.

There is another phase of this matter that I believe is not generally understood. I speak now from my own experience with my special work only. If an institution executive is honestly doing his best it is not usually a difficult matter to satisfy intelligent patrons. We do have some people, however, among relatives and friends of inmates that are not reasonable or easy to satisfy. They themselves touch the great problem with which we have to deal and they complicate the situation, in handling our wards. They; are the people who are often aroused to aggressive opposition by public criticism.

Again, in our institutions there are a great many situations that have to be handled tactfully. I think I will refer to one that I have just gone through, as an illustration. It is typical.

On the "twenty-sixth of last month an epileptic man went into our hospital feeling ill, and developed pneumonia in the left lung. There was one little patch, apparently from an external bruise, on the left hip, not larger than a penny which was noted at the time in a few hours there was a very distinct discoloration of the skin on the left side, under the arm, covering quite a large area. Very soon other areas developed in the same way. I started a quiet investigation immediately, among the attendants in the department where this boy came from, and also had one of the medical officers engage in a quiet little talk with the boys with whom the patient had associated, to discover any possible physical cause for the discoloration, but could find absolutely nothing. He was a good-natured boy; he never had any trouble with anybody. Then followed an appendicitis with aggravated symptoms suggesting the necessity for an operation, permission for which was granted by the board by phone. The physician and surgeon in charge immediately reported that the inflammation was only secondary; that they had found the muscular tissues of the region examined generally friable as though the patient had been crushed; though the clinical history and social investigation both were against this theory. There was nothing to be done farther but await developments. The result of it all was that he died nine days after entering the hospital. I immediately telephoned the coroner that I wanted to confer with him. When he came I explained this whole thing to him and said we felt as though there should be an autopsy for the purpose of definitely settling the origin of the trouble if possible. I said to him it is possible that the boy has been knocked down by an automobile or that he has fallen in a spasm and been run over by an automobile. He ordered a post-mortem. Then I immediately telephoned to Dr. Robertson at the University, requesting him to make it. The mother and sister who had been previously notified, came on the same train as the pathologist, and I immediately told them the whole story and that we did not know the cause of the boy's death. The autopsy was finished last night at twelve o'clock and it showed the cause to be deterioration of the tissues from impaired nutrition. The tissues had so degenerated that internal hemorrhages had developed, possibly the immediate cause having been an epileptic seizure.

The people are perfectly satisfied now that they know the full facts; but what an exciting story could have been written up about an epileptic boy having been "pounded to a pulp" by the attendants in the institution.

It would not be my method to rush to the papers with a ease of this kind; though if a reporter had asked about it, I should have given him the exact facts and depended upon his honor to avoid giving them exciting publicity till the final outcome had developed.

As has been referred to in these meetings before, useful publicity work might be done by having some one prepare articles from time to time stating the purposes and giving descriptions of the physical features, methods employed and results obtained in the several institutions.

These articles should be well illustrated and characterized by an attractive literary style, vitalized by anecdotes of personal experiences of the community life, and put into circulation in the country newspapers as well as made special features of the city dailies.

Possibly these could be brought into the largest circulation through the "patent insides" supplied to the country press.

This would be the best kind of publicity and to secure it a capable person would have to give considerable time to the collection and preparation of the data and the direction of publication.

Mr. Rosing, I think, suggested this idea when he was a member of this board, and it always has seemed a perfectly feasible one if there were some one available to develop it.

Ralph W. Wheelock, State Board of Control: May I take a moment or two before we get away from the subject of publicity? I have been on the board a month only, so I cannot tell you quite all that there is to tell about state institutions, but I have had a little experience in publicity, both in promoting and in preventing it, and I think the thing to do is to take the newspaper men into your full confidence at the start. I have had experiences upstairs and in other relations where things that ought not to get out have been sealed up by telling the newspaper boys all about them and then asking them not to print the story until the proper time. If you try to keep a matter secret, they are bound to dig things up and get any old story.

I believe in a wider scheme of publicity for the whole range of these institutions. I think in that way you will fortify yourselves with the good will of the reporters and when an investigation is sprung of some matter that makes a good story, you will have a little cushion to fall back on. You can take the newspapers into your confidence and say: "Here is the situation up to this time. From the moment it developed to the time when it is safe to give it to the public, we are going to give you all there is, and up to that time, as a favor to us, we wish you would not spring it." If you put a reporter on his honor, he won't betray your confidence.

I believe the board ought to give out more news about the good things that are being done. I propose to prepare a little interview after I have seen all the institutions. I have seen six of them so far, and I have gone into all of them without prejudice and with a predilection for seeing the

good, for I knew the reputation of the different superintendents was excellent. I believe that, if you stop to study the matter from a psychological standpoint, you will see the good that a report on these institutions will do throughout the state.

Chas. E. Vasaly, Chairman State Board of Control: I had intended at some time in the near future to again bring up a matter along this same line of publicity, which I proposed about two years ago, but about which nothing was done. It has been done in other states, and I believe it would be wise to do it in this state. That is, to prepare a sheet every two months or Quarterly—what a newspaper man would probably call a broadside; a sort of statement of the constructive work that is being done by the various institutions under the jurisdiction of this board. As I outlined it at that time, these statements would come from the institution itself, to be of course authoritative and correct, and would cover the various phases of the work "that is being done, accompanied if necessary by photographs. These sheets should be sent at regular intervals to every paper in Minnesota. I am sure that at least ninety per cent of the country newspapers I will leave Mr. Wheelock to handle the situation in the cities would use the matter to a more or less great extent,

The insurance department, when it inaugurated the system of sending out a monthly statement regarding insurance matters as to what companies had been prohibited from coming into the state and general insurance news of various kinds—met with a response from the country press that was very gratifying. The larger number of the country papers used them every week. I think it spread a knowledge of that department throughout the state that never could have been obtained in any other way.

I do not see why it isn't possible for us to do something of that kind. You could get publicity in the very best sense of the word, as well as give the people of the state the information to which they are entitled.

Dr. G. O. Welch, Fergus Falls State Hospital: This same question was taken up several years ago at one of the quarterly meetings, before the time of any of the present members of the board. The discussion at that time, however, was confined principally to the best method of bringing the people of the state, through the newspapers, more in touch with the work that was being done in the state institutions for the benefit of the inmates. The suggestion that met with most favor was to have a short article written each month about each institution, and in order that such articles should be brought to the notice of as many people as possible, it was suggested that they should be incorporated with the plate matter that is sent to the country newspapers all over the state,

J. N. Tate, School for the Deaf: I think we ought to give some expression to our appreciation of the attitude of the governor toward this whole matter of state institutions. He is tailing at present and has always taken a manly stand with reference to the institutions, although I think he has not always had full credit for so doing. The views he holds in the matter of co-operation of the executive boards and the superintendents is one which should inspire the confidence of the people in the management

of the state institutions. I feel and I know we all feel like co-operating with him fully in the views that he has expressed of thorough co-operation in the matter of the management of these institutions. I believe it is very well for us to go on record as recognizing and appreciating the fact that he does take such a broad view, such a consistent view, and such a helpful view in this state. I think we never had a governor who knew so much about the general management of the state institutions as Governor Eberhart does, because he has taken the pains to visit other states, and he knows and he is therefore prepared to express expert opinions. I want him to know and the public to know that we, as subordinates, thoroughly co-operate with him.

Mrs. F. F. Morse, Home School for Girls: I want to say that I have always believed very thoroughly in supervision and an abundance of supervision in all institutions, whether public or private. But I feel that that supervision should come from the right authorities. I have always felt very strongly that the more the proper authorities could know the facts regarding an institution, the greater safety there would be for the administration, and that a thorough knowledge of facts by proper authorities precludes investigations which I think are most disastrous to institutions. Wrongs exist in every institution, but we superintendents know that these very wrongs are not the wrongs which are opened up by investigation. A knowledge of facts is a protection and strength—a sensational getting after things most devitalizing to the institution, from the superintendent down. If such a knowledge of facts must come from the various boards of visitors, all right; but I must claim the privilege, perhaps in opposition to the sentiment which Dr. Smith brought forward, of not disseminating too much my confidence, and the privilege of giving my first confidence to the Board of Control. I don't see why, as Dr. Smith suggested, that the Board of Visitors should be the first to find out what is wrong with an institution, or why I should go to that Board of Visitors for relief, which I might get so much more directly from the Board of Control. If there is anything wrong with the institution, if the superintendent has grievances, the Board of Control should be the first to know; if no relief from the board, then and not until then let it go beyond the board. I must claim the privilege of going to the fount which will give me the first relief. As I understand it, the Board of Visitors has only power to investigate. I don't see how the greatest source of relief could come through that board or why the greater confidence should be given that board.

I might say more about my one contact with the Board of Visitors, but that is unnecessary. I think it would hardly be safe to begin to talk on that subject.