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INSTITUTE ON MENTAL DEFICIENCY, UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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ST. CLOUD REFORMATORY ANNEX FOR DEFECTIVE DELINQUENTS

Ralph H. Rosenberger

"During the period from June 30, 1949, to June 30, 1951, a building or wing or portion thereof and the facilities thereat of the State Reformatory for Men located at St. Cloud, Minnesota, shall be designated and set apart by the Director of Public Institutions for the care of feebleminded or mentally deficient persons.

"All feebleminded or mentally deficient persons now institutionalized and who have been committed by order of a court of competent jurisdiction or who may be hereafter committed by such a court to an institution may be transferred out of such an institution for the feebleminded or mentally deficient to the State Reformatory.

"In general this site located at St. Cloud, Minnesota, will admit only adult males and those over eighteen years of age whose delinquency indicates the need of an institution from which escape is improbable and who are also in need of training and work suited to their abilities within such an institution are placed at the Annex For Defective Delinquents."

The above law enacted at the last session of the Minnesota Legislature states the reason for the Annex For Defective Delinquents at St. Cloud. To date the Annex has received 103 patients under this classification since July 1, 1945. Separate dormitory quarters are maintained for them and it is possible to arrange work placements for them in the vocational training units located at the Reformatory. Up to the present time it has been found that regardless of the mentality of these patients there is work which they can do. All of them are assigned to some form of useful activity.

The objective here is to develop in them those traits important in helping them make their way in society. Attempts are made to instill in them a sense of responsibility, well-ordered habits of industry, care of personal appearance, respect for authority and, in general, the ability to get along with people.

While the program at the Annex is primarily concerned with training and work habits, it is also compulsory for each patient to attend a class in mental hygiene one hour daily. In this class the teaching of the fundamental skills is secondary while the main objective is the awakening, training and strengthening of the patient's sense of social and moral responsibility. Although the emphasis is on those subjects which inspire respect for authority and the rights of others, it must not be concluded that reading, spelling, writing and arithmetic are ignored entirely. It is felt that these skills should be taught in conjunction with and become the outgrowth of citizenship projects. It is also felt that much of the success in retraining mentally retarded adults depends considerably upon the patience, understanding and imagination brought into every-day situations by the supervisors in charge.

We have been guided in organizing our retraining program for adult person with mental deficiency by the belief that the major objective of any plan designed primarily for the defective delinquent should be concerned with giving the patient insight and a broader and clearer conception of his relationship to society. All projects, discussions, and work placements, therefore, should deal with actual life situations and through proper guidance should arouse in the patient a healthy attitude toward such situations.