

COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS  
ON THE  
OWATONNA STATE SCHOOL

The Owatonna State School was visited on October 19, 1954.

This is a happy institution. A great majority of the children were listening and watching television. A few of the boys were playing outside, several groups with footballs. There was no one in seclusion and no sullen expressions seen on any of the patients.

The visit was made with Mr. Henderson, a man who appears to have a good grasp on the situation and to be enthusiastically devoted to his work. The children appeared glad to see him and greeted him cordially.

Ward reports were made out on the following wards or buildings:

Cottage 17 is a modern building and is for girls. It has two 12 bed dormitories and 18 single rooms. The furniture is metal and attractive. Toilet rooms are attractive and adequate. There is a dining room in the basement with chrome metal chairs and tables. It is attractively decorated with many colored plates on the walls. The food is prepared in an adjoining kitchen which is equipped with stainless steel tables, etc., even a stainless steel potato peeler. Cooking is by gas. There is a serving room off the supply room. There is a seclusion room with toilet controlled from outside.

Cottage 18 is similar but houses boys. There is no dining room in this building as all boys in the institution eat in the congregate dining room. Therefore, the space corresponding to the dining room in cottage 17 is used as a rumpus room.

Building 12 was inspected. It houses 30 small boys.  
11 is for older boys.  
14 is for small girls.  
15 is for older girls..

These four buildings are good buildings and fire resistant. The boys go to the congregate dining room. The girls buildings, 14 and 15, have dining rooms and kitchen which are also used for the training of girls in cooking and serving. These four buildings are alike with the exception that 11 and 12 have open porches and 14 and 15 have glassed in porches.

Buildings 1-2-3-4 and 5 are old buildings. One is not used. All of these buildings have wooden interiors and have been condemned by the fire marshal. Each of the four buildings in use houses 25 boys. The superintendent would like three modern buildings of 34 beds each to replace these four now in use. The plumbing is said not to be capable of being repaired.

The Hospital Building is a good building of 46 beds. Food comes from main kitchen near by. All food is served on trays. It appears to be very efficiently run and has a dental office in the basement.

Building 16 is for 48 girls. It has 4-12 bed dormitories with mahogany colored square tubing beds and steel lockers. As usual, in a girls building, there is a kitchen and dining room. This is a fire resistant type building with even the stairs of terrazzo, toilet floors are of white ceramic tile.

## OWATONNA STATE SCHOOL

Page 2

Nursery or building 6 has 20 baby girls on the first floor. This floor and basement have automatic sprinklers. There are seven rooms for employees on the second floor. Babies are kept here until they can walk. They were receiving excellent care from people who loved them very much.

Building 8 houses 24 big boys who were eagerly watching television. There were 24 single rooms each with a bed, a chair and a bureau. The rooms had colored spreads as did all the beds and certainly were very comfortable.

### Personnel Requirements

1. A speech specialist.
2. An educational psychologist, who has specialized with children who have reading difficulties. This person could also make psychometric tests.
3. One person to relieve the two night watchers on their evenings off to check beds and fires.

### Construction Needs

The superintendent would like to connect the school building and the gym with a two story addition that would be used to teach girls home economics and how to keep house also to provide room for a musical department and an industrial department.

A new service building of modern design to replace the present kitchen, patients dining rooms and the cellar that is now used to house supplies.

An addition to the laundry and one tumbler dryer. The present carpenter shop is in the middle of the main group and houses paint, etc. A new one would remove this potential source of fire.

Iron removal equipment for the water supply.

Contract repairs to the roof of the big barn. The present crew is not set up for this work and does not have the equipment.

In conclusion, the new construction noted is desirable, but I would not recommend it at the present time. There are so many other buildings needed in the state and I consider the need greater for those in other institutions.

The 20 babies in the nursery building were neatly and attractively dressed in their cribs even to shoes. It was evident that they were happy and that they were receiving devoted loving care. The state can be very proud of this.

The striking thing to me about this institution was that no one is locked in, anyone could run away at any time, yet they stayed, which shows good judgment for a moron.

Harlan L. Paine, M. D.