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THIRD BIENNIAL REPORT

OF THE

STATE BOARD

OF

CORRECTIONS AND CHARITIES,

TO THE

LEGISLATURE OF MINNESOTA.

FOR THE BIENNIAL PERIOD ENDING JULY 31. 1888.



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fire there would be great danger of loss of life. Deaf children are more exposed to danger in this respect than blind children, for the reason that blind children are accustomed to find their way about in the dark, but deaf children are accustomed to depend upon their eyes. Should the building be filled with smoke it would be impossible to communicate with the children. The board of directors passed a resolution some years ago, ordering the attic dormitories vacated, but the order has been inoperative for lack of room. Any changes to be made at the present time should provide for vacating these attic sleeping rooms.

The board of directors ask for \$1,500 to provide hospital rooms for contagious diseases. The present room for that purpose is entirely unsuitable, being adjacent to the girls' sewing room and the employes quarters. It is a question, however, whether it would not be better to erect a cheap wooden building entirely detached from the school buildings.

SCHOOLS FOR THE BLIND AND FEEBLE-MINDED.

The school for the blind is efficiently managed. No considerable appropriations are asked for this school. The school for the feeble-minded has occupied its main building and the new south wing will soon be ready for use. During the past two years a large amount has been expended from the current expense fund in reconstructing the plumbing of these buildings. Some four or five thousand dollars have been thus expended. It is unfortunate that such extensive repairs should be necessary in a comparatively new building. The institution is having a rapid growth, which has necessitated a good deal of extraordinary expenditures from the ordinary expense fund. We believe, however, that the per capita of the past two years is excessive, having been \$287 the first year and \$262 the second year of the biennial period. Our estimate for the coming two years is at the rate of \$200 per pupil. In order to keep the expense within this amount, however, it will be necessary for the legislature to make a special appropriation for furnishing the new building, and a small appropriation for extraordinary repairs and improvements.

Experience with this building justifies the opposition which this board has made to the use of basements for domestic purposes in public institutions. A serious epidemic of diphtheria during the past two years has caused considerable anxiety. The

basement in the north wing is so damp that leather soon becomes covered with fungus, and the superintendent now recommends that a sub-basement be excavated and that a drain be extended around the whole foundation. This improvement is probably necessary as a sanitary precaution. The new south wing has a sub-cellar under the whole building, which is expected to prevent such trouble. The better plan, however, would have been to have avoided the use of the basement for domestic purposes.

The administration of this school is thorough and efficient. There has been a steady increase of the inmates of the custodial class. Experience proves that as the children grow up, very few of them can be restored to homes; the majority of them prove permanent wards upon the state.

The last legislature appropriated \$45,000 for a detached building for inmates of the custodial class. The board of directors sent Steward Barron to visit the schools for the feeble-minded, through the country. Mr. Barron returned fully convinced that the permanent provision for the custodial class should be in buildings placed at some considerable distance from the school proper, as is the case at the great institution at Elwyn, Penn. After looking the matter over, the board of directors decided to expend the \$45,000 appropriated by the legislature, in the construction of a south wing in two sections, to correspond to the north wing already constructed. This change of plan was brought to the attention of this board, and while it was unwilling to share any responsibility for such a change of plan, the board of corrections and charities did not feel called upon to enter any protest, believing that in the end the proposed change would be more to the interest of the state and the institution. The new south wing is arranged with reference to providing for the custodial class of girls, separate from the other children in the institution, and also with a view to the ready adaptation of this part of the building to the purposes of the school department, whenever in the future outside provision shall be made for the custodials.

In the summer of 1888, the secretary of this board prepared an elaborate report of the workings of the institutions at Faribault. This report was too full to be printed in our biennial report. In view of this report together with the personal observations of members of this board, the state board of corrections and charities respectfully recommends that the school for the feeble-minded children be placed under a separate management from that of the schools for the deaf and blind, and that there be

a board of five directors to control the schools for the deaf and the blind, and a board of five directors to control the school for the feeble-minded. The reasons for the proposed change are several. This board has elsewhere recommended legislation providing that in no case shall a majority of the board of management of any state institution, reside in the county where the institution is located. Four of the directors of the Minnesota institute for defectives are residents of Rice county. These gentlemen, from their long service in this capacity, have acquired experience which is exceedingly valuable to the state. The proposed change would admit of the continuance of all of these members upon one or the other of the two boards. In the second place the school for the feeble-minded belongs to a different class of institutions from the other two schools. The schools for the deaf and blind are distinctively educational in their purpose, while the school for the feeble-minded is distinctively charitable. The scale of expenditure and the details differ very widely. The tendency of associating this institution under one management in the past has been to increase the expense for the feeble-minded approximately to that of the other two schools. In the third place, with the rapid growth of the school for the feeble-minded, the work of managing the three institutions has reached a point where it is burdensome upon an unpaid board of directors. There is an immense amount of detail work which requires a great deal of time and attention. In the fourth place it is believed that there will be a gain in having an increased number of citizens of the state, who shall be intimately familiar with the workings of these institutions, and that thus the state will be profited by the proposed change. •

STATE SCHOOL FOR DEPENDENT CHILDREN.

The state school for dependent children exists under the legal title of the state public school. The last legislature made liberal appropriations for this school, amounting in the aggregate to \$84,000. With this appropriation a main building has been erected, containing offices, living rooms for superintendent, teachers and other employes, kitchen and dining rooms for the whole institution; there has also been erected a handsome school building, containing three school rooms and a kindergarten room, besides recitation rooms, at a cost, for the main building of \$20,000, school house \$7,600, a wooden hospital building