INSTITUTIONAL LIFE FOR EPILEPTICS AND FOR INFIRM MINDS, AND THE NECESSITY FOR AMUSEMENTS,

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Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen:

If ideal homes, only, always had existed I think, or may assume, that there would be no occasion for public charitable institutions. If the best efforts of all people were applied to the idealizing of home, there would be much less occasion for public institutions than at present. However, the ideal condition never has existed, nor have the best possible efforts always been exerted to produce it. The sins of mankind, combined with ignorance of the ultimate laws of creation, together with man's baseness or indifference, are the essential causes of extreme puerility and of physical and mental disease. A noted writer on sociology has said, "If any social institution could stand alone, it would be the family. There are found all the elements for the satisfaction of individual wants and provision for the continuance of the human species. There are the most tender and sacred affections, most beautiful hopes, the most intense interests. But these citizens are nourished, protected, nursed in sickness, taught the five lessons in friendly cooperation, fitted for social life within the home. There is no other institution, and never can be, which so nearly can satisfy all the essential desires and affections of men as the domestic group."

The normal child responds to these influences. The foundations of his character, his mental and moral life, are securely laid. The school and the church and the thousands of contacts with and the observations of people and things complete the superstructure. The fact that there may be several children in the family does not tend to interfere with this educational process but rather to promote it. Last evening the members of the Conference listened to Mr. Hart's admirable presentation of the work of child-saving agencies, public and private, that bring homeless children into childless homes, and the beneficent results of institutionalism. It is a fact worthy of note that while institutions for homeless children began by providing institutional life for them, and then developed the idea and practice of minimizing the institutional feature and magnifying the home feature the experience of the last fifty years in the care of the feebleminded has reversed this history. The first movement for the feebleminded was to educate them in institutions and send them back to their homes at the end of a given term of years, as is done with the blind and deaf, while the more rational idea of today is the provision of permanent homes or colonies for them.

The importance of the normal home for normal children has not been overestimated, but the advent of an abnormal child into the home disarranges the whole domestic system and presents a new problem. The mother finds that it requires extra attention and care in infancy, and this increases with age, because of increasing physical growth and continued helplessness. Other family duties must be neglected because of the distractions required of the mother. Under the most favorable conditions the burden is very heavy. Under the usual conditions the care of other children is interfered with, and not infrequently the relations between the normal children and the abnormal child are mutually irritating and detrimental. If the child is physically strong and active it is the cause of even greater anxiety, and exacts even greater attention and supervision to keep the exercise of its energies within legitimate bounds. Special assistance must be called in, if the family can afford it, and if not either the child is neglected until the condition is disgraceful, or the mother must give up practically all other matters, domestic and social, and wear out her health and even her life in its interest and care without any other respite than the protection of a life, useless measured by human standards, and that satisfaction which the performance of a duty always brings to the conscientious soul. The state, therefore, recognizes the necessity of a new home adapted to the care of such abnormal persons. In so far as the child approximates or realizes physical or mental normality, it should have the advantages of all the best elements of the normal home. It cannot have the mother, but it can have the kind and loving care of those trained to stand in that relation to it, who are interested in its every want, who will substitute its needs, its hopes, its encouragement and guide its good ones, and sympathize in its every sorrow. The public institution cannot be an abnormal child all that a good, natural home is to a normal one, but may it is recognized as indistinguishable to the best interests of both the abnormal child and its natural home.

The feeble-minded child is a subject for the combined skills of the physician and the educator. The school with medical supervision is that supreme characteristic of an institution for feebleminded. The practically unchangeable fact, or the child whose possibilities for improvement are too small to justify the application of the full teaching facilities, is cared for in comfort, his simple wants supplied in a simple manner. Then, after all possible has been done for him, it must be remembered that his arrested mental development in a greater or less degree is a permanent handicap. Thus the number of feebleminded who are able to cope with the world alone is exceedingly small. From this fact has developed the idea of their permanent supervision.

The children from the training schools have literary ability about equal to that of the pupils in the fourth and sixth grades of the public schools, though there usually is a symmetrical development. The boys may become quite proficient in typing, care of stock, gardening, and various handicrafts, and the girls in housework, cleaning, laundrying, sewing, etc. In fact, the feebleminded persons acquire aptitudes in almost anything the performance of which depends chiefly upon repetition under the same or similar conditions. And yet they cannot readily adapt themselves to new conditions. The judgment merely above is poor, and the will usually...
weak about in proportion to the mental development. The social instincts are strong. The ethical and spiritual nature differs from that of other people by the greater lack of control and ability to discern. The companionship and the discussion of bits of news and gossip, athletic games, sports and contests, anecdotes and stories of travel such as children usually enjoy, and they love to attend church and Sunday school. They also love to earn money and thus obtain the things that money will buy, and to feel that they earn and purchase the things themselves. Thus we have a class of people with practically the same fundamental instincts and desires as other people, but for evident reasons not fitted to enjoy them in the general community; hence the idea of the village community, which shall afford the opportunity for the enjoyment of these legitimate desires under proper regulations, where the inmates' labor will produce its maximum results. This is the place where machinery and everything that tends to cheapen the cost of producing and preparing supplies, either for institutional consumption or on the general market, has its proper and legitimate place.

Epileptics as a class are very closely related to the feeble-minded and insane, because the disease in childhood prevents mental development and frequently produces insanity both in adolescence and adult life. In fact, as we all know, there are few cases of chronic epilepsy that do not exhibit marked mental deficiency or degeneration. As the great majority of epileptics are such from childhood and infancy; the great majority are feeble-minded, and both by virtue of the disease and the mental infirmity, are unfit to live in normal homes. The fundamental purpose of an institution for epileptics, as in the case of a hospital for insane, should be to care for the patient; hence medical influence and supervision must be the predominant influence. Experience shows that care of the insane are very rare, hence the village community idea is also applicable to patients with epilepsy. A community life is appreciated especially by the adult epileptics who seek a retreat from an unconsolable society.

As a large percentage of the patients of an epileptic community are children, they require educational facilities similar to those required for the feeble-minded, except that they are of lesser ability. While the medical supervision is of greater importance compared with the requirements for the latter class. Schoolroom work must be prescribed definitely for epileptics like courses of medical treatment, to suit the individual cases. While epileptics are social, there is one predominant character, with very few exceptions, among patients sent to public institutions, viz., an exaggerated egotism with irritability of temper. This condition is in part a direct result of the disease itself, and in part is due to the indulgence or misguided and excessive attentions of relatives. Introspection and self-interest are thus very likely to prevent the development of altruistic or benevolent feelings or considerations for the personal interest and comfort of others. Thus careful classification is a very important necessity, and this requires the organization of small groups to secure compatibility of temper and disposition.

The simple and the feeble-minded, on the other hand, live happily in larger groups. Thus we see in reference to both classes that the functions of a public institution are medical, educational and custodial. Both should have the privileges of a village community with its schools and shops, its farm, gardens and dairies, its social and religious opportunities. The differences in treatment are based upon the relative importance of medical as compared with pedagogical features and the difference in grouping and classifying.

Occupation is a fundamental requisite to happiness everywhere. The necessity for it and some of the suitable forms of occupation for institutional people already have been discussed. It is well understood that as far as possible occupation always should be pleasant. The philosophy of Tom Sawyer was good. Amusement, which is pleasant mental occupation, is not different in public institutions or among defective people from that among children or adolescents elsewhere, except that the limitations of institutional life and the lack of opportunity on the part of the inmates make it necessary that an abundance of amusement be provided. The teacher and the attendant must make a study of methods of employment that success to the mind amusement or pleasant occupation. The ability to arouse in a dull mind the desire for play—the awakening of that interest and spontaneous activity that are so essential to enthusiasm plays a valuable part of a teacher's art. A writer who studied feeble-minded children in a large institution observed: "Tell me one of these boys can play a good game of poker or that he is skilful at baseball, and I would rather hear him than that he can name all the states of the Union or locate their capitals." The power of the quickly, judging, acting, controlling, willing (needed above all things by these children), is necessary for playing certain games, and find a better field for development than in any other exercise ever mentioned in a school course." In our kindergarten room, the morning game out of doors is a part of the daily program, and the little folks come back to their more formal occupations and games of the schoolroom happy and in the best mental condition for the teacher to direct them.

With the intermediate grades, the teacher frequently brings a room full of "slow" children into good condition by improving a football field with the same hitches as a good, and two or three of the most energetic and noisy individuals as opposing champions in the unique contest, or perhaps the one who has the most pronounced ability for blackboard drawing will be called out suddenly and the whole class given an ample opportunity, usually made use of, to exercise their respective imaginations sufficiently to interpret the artist's intentions. The extemporaneous and earnest discussions become ideal mental amusements of educational value, besides exerting a moral influence in banishing the nervous and irritable feelings that had begin to appear.

In the day rooms during the evening, and at times when the tendency of the weather necessitates confinement in the house, the question of whether it shall be a happy, contented day or a discontented one with open indications of depression of morale, is determined largely by the ability of the attendant or nurse to devise attractive amusements. The boy with the floor paper is nothing but the greatest drudgery till it is suggested to him that he is a locomotive, when the activity that immediately is developed to waving that freight train to its destination, switching and returning it, is something surprising. Beam boys, basketball, or the simple games of blind man's
DISCUSSION.

D. President Dow: The whole matter of the foreman's work thus far is now open for discussion, and we shall be glad to hear from any member.

Dr. Yuleison, St. Peter, Mr. Chairman: Before beginning the discussion, I wish to highly commend the paper of Mr. Welch, and particularly the part of it which referred to the absolute necessity of having someone specially trained in order to instruct the insane. To anyone familiar with an institution for the insane, it is easy to realize how completely the time of the ordinary employees, nurses and attendants is occupied in the personal care of the patients, and the necessary housekeeping work; so that even if they had either leisure or inclination for other work, it would be practically impossible for them to find time to do it at any time when it could be done without much sacrifice, and that is the place to do it. Unfortunately, as Mr. Yuleison has already pointed out, all our institutions, especially those at St. Peter, are in that characteristic condition of public institutions for the insane, where there are many inmates where there is not only one, and the space that should be left for expansion or for moving about or getting some change in the daily life of the women is simply used to hold that many more beds to relieve the overcrowding which persists and continues in spite of everything, which seems to be done to prevent it.

I wish to speak first and particularly of the importance of occupation in its relation to the treatment of the recent case, rather than in the mere occupation of the insane. And Mr. Welch has rightly pointed out the importance of this occupation being creative work rather than mere manual occupation. In training one of the normal child, Dr. Rogers has called your attention to the abnormal one. It is found advisable that he should make something in which he exercises his own mental capacity. How much more necessary is this then to one who has not and yet reached full mental capacity or who, on account of disease, is going back.

In closing, let us have in mind with Openheim that: "The opportunity of having fun is one of the mainsprings of life, for it represents the possibility of the easy and pleasant discharge of the youthful energy, of the exercise of expanding capabilities." (P. 220.)

Even the strictest disciplinarian feels a sympathetic Amen as the excited schoolboys rush out doors at the close of the term with the observation:

"I am going to study.
For a good long while.
School is over.
Vacation's begun.
For most three months.
I'll just have fun."

-Child study, June 1609.
and it has not to be varied, they soon get tired. They have no intellectual desire in the matter and no intellectual interest in the entertainment. I give the novelty to take the place of it and stimulate in every way you can.

Mr. Walsh, the Training School, Red Wing: Mr. Childs, Ladies and Gentlemen: "Institutional Life for Epileptics: An Outbreak of Its Manifestations, and the unoffensive, full-day boy.

A very prominent teacher of mine was shot with them in the schoolroom. I know they will do good and work well, but nothing remains to them. They will not dance their simple figure, or with dumb-bells carry out some of the simple movements which can be learned and quickly taught, and it is astonishing what a change it will make in their general condition. They will sit down and work much more promptly afterwards, more satisfactorily, and they will talk about for several days, and each will be eager to talk of this experience. I have in this direction some eight or ten years ago. I think I have been with eight women who were regarded as chronically ill, and were chronically to some extent, in that they were mentally embattled, all of them more or less violent and destructive, one of whom was always impossible to keep in the room. I got them into a room. Someone left the door open, and I simply put them into the room and tried to follow them. They did; not only right round but all round the room and in all sorts of changes, turning somersaults, rolling over the floor, tripping each other, and all the rest. But they don't pay any attention to them, let them do what they pleased. The next day it took fifteen minutes of the time. The next day we took fifteen minutes of the time. The fifteen minutes were up they were walking in line, following me in single file around the room. The next day we tried some variation of the step, some counter-marching. The next step I gradually led them up until I got them standing in line then through the ordinary marching exercises of soldiers and from this to the dumbbells and from the dumbbells to the Indian clubs. Inside of a year, and for the second time recovery was complete, there were useful members of the hospital population ever since.

This illustrates two points with regard to occupation: First, what can be done in curing such cases. Second, what may be done in making people who are destructive, constructive, and making people who are uncooperative to work, and making useful members of the household.

Now one more point, and that is that we have always to consider in institutions the methods of the patient towards the environment. It must be understood that that is always an element of recovery. Even when the patient becomes demented there is always an attitude of recovery, feeling that he ought to be in the institution, that there is some misunderstanding, something is wrong. When I think that her husband had neglected her, his affection for her, the children, her friends, anyone that she ought not to have come, then she could have gone to the place otherwise. This is one of the greatest difficulties in getting the woman to do any work. She is the one that she does not want to do any work, the only reason she does not want to do any work is from some injury to herself to her work. It is described by putting something before them which will attract them, and therefore take advantage of them, which is the only way she can be used in this direction but we should proceed: and this entertainment must be of such a nature that it furnishes not only a stimulus to the patient but a novelty as well.
THE PURCHASE AND DISTRIBUTION OF INSTITUTION SUPPLIES.

BY H. W. WRIGHT, SECRETARY STATE BOARD OF CONTROL, ST. PAUL.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen:

The subject which has been assigned to me, "The Purchase and Distribution of Institution Supplies," is one altogether too important and extensive to be treated in a paper such as my limited time from other duties would permit me to prepare for this occasion. I shall not attempt to treat the subject other than in a practical way. All theories as to the kinds of goods which should be purchased, the object of charity which is to be furthered, and the duty and willingness of the taxpayer to provide liberally for the wards of the state, I am leaving for other papers and other discussions: I take it that what is expected of me is to outline, in a general way, what I believe to be a practical system for the purchase and distribution of the supplies required by a public institution.

The proposition in a general way concerns three classes of people: the merchants who furnish the goods, the institutions which use the goods, and the taxpayers who pay for the goods. The first must be considered the second must be cared for, and the third must be considered. Let me assure my hearers that I am not here at this time to recommend or even suggest a dietary for any institution. This paper will not be concerned with whether you have bread twice a day or once a month, whether you believe in the use of brown bread or the finest patent flours. Such questions can only be decided as the result of experience, considering the conditions of the particular class, together with the medical treatment given, and the results to be obtained.

In considering the question of the methods of purchasing the supplies, we are faced with the necessity of estimating the needs of the institution. Every superintendent present will agree with me that the preparation of an estimate covering the supplies required by the average institution for a period of three months in advance is by itself an easy task, and preparatory to discussing the estimate, let me say that every public institution for the care of dependents should have a dietary bill of fare prepared for a stated length of time in advance. This is desirable, not only in the line of treatment, but is absolutely necessary in order that the supplies required may be intelligently purchased in advance of the actual time of need. Such a dietary should be prepared to cover at least thirty days in advance. It is just as easy, and no more expensive, to purchase the goods required to carry out a well-regulated bill of fare as to purchase them without regard to quantity or use, because thought cheap.

When an institution with a slightly varying population has mapped out a bill of fare for a certain length of time in advance, it becomes comparatively an easy matter to estimate the supplies in the line of provisions which will be required by the institution for that length of time. It is presumed that every well-regulated institution is divided into proper departments, each with a competent person in charge for the carrying on of the duties of that department, subject only to the direction of the superintendent. These department managers should soon become acquainted with the line of supplies needed in their respective departments. When an estimate is to be prepared, these department managers should be given notice thereof, and instructed to prepare a list of the supplies which they think to be necessary for the carrying on of the work of their department. These estimates should be then brought together for the consideration and approval of the superintendent. Right here is where one of the dangers is likely to creep in, in estimating the supplies needed for an institution. The tendency of those preparing the estimate is to list articles which are not actually needed, but because of the uncertainty that they may not be permitted to purchase them when needed, they are put in simply to cover emergencies which they think may arise.

I believe that any system of purchasing supplies should be sufficiently elastic, to permit the institution to purchase emergency articles promptly when needed, and I am convinced that no institution caring for a thousand people can foresee all the emergencies likely to arise in three months, and should an estimate attempt to cover such contingencies, it would be loaded up with articles which, in fact, would not be needed, or only in small part. Here, then, comes the duty of the superintendent to know that the articles listed by the several department heads are such as may be reasonably required in the successful management of the institution. Perhaps in the preparing of the estimate for the provisions where an institution has a carefully prepared dietary, such estimate can be best prepared by the matron or house steward, acting in conjunction with the steward. The person passing upon the supplies should be in close touch with the stock on hand, and should be able to turn to the stock record and verify the amount of any article in the storeroom. The estimate when completed should be the combined judgment of each of the department managers with the final approval of the superintendent after a careful examination.

There are differing opinions as to the best method to be employed in the