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while we recognize that there is perhaps need of some central control over our charitable institutions, yet, to give one person a financial control alone, that separates it from the work and purposes of the institution. There is danger that an officer having simply financial control may have little sympathy with the work and purposes of the institution and that is the reason why I think, as we have a state board of charities which has a certain amount of control and supervision over the institutions, the financial control should also be vested in the same board, or in someone working in harmony therewith, because we know that the State Board of Charities has sympathy and interest in our work and purposes. Otherwise it may be simply a matter of dollars and cents and to make a showing of a saving for the department. Another thing, the fiscal supervisor, in his financial authority over the charitable institutions, stands in a little different relation than does the Commission in Lunacy, from the fact that the commission has under its jurisdiction only hospitals for the insane, whereas the charitable institutions vary materially in their character.

Such is the system: if you are anxious to have it adopted in your states, send your legislators to the state of New York for plans and specifications.



THE BOARD OF CONTROL SYSTEM

BY A. C. ROGERS, M. D., FARIBAULT, MINN.

In compliance with the request of the program committee, I will outline system of institution management as exemplified by the Minnesota State Board of Control with whose methods I am most familiar.

The spirit characterizing any particular governing body will depend largely upon the relative value placed by them upon good work and inexpensive work. It must be assumed, of course, that the individual members of any controlling board are selected with reference to their fitness for the position. If we do not assume that much it does not make very much difference what form the organization is, it will be a failure from the standpoint of the best interests of the institution, and of the tax payers. You can always calculate safely that if you have an irritating system it is because somewhere there has been some abuse at some time and it has led to an over-restriction by legislative action.

The western states, as a rule, have started with separate boards for the several institutions, as has been the case pretty generally throughout this country, and I think, so far as Minnesota is concerned, that the change to a central board was caused largely by the lack of uniformity in administrative methods in different institutions of a similar nature. The state authorities were astonished at the variation in prices of articles bought and the lack of uniformity generally in the systems adopted. It was not brought about by any special feeling that there was graft or dishonesty. So far as I have ever heard, Minnesota has been pretty free from anything of this kind. However, the time came when it was felt that the state of Minnesota was large enough to purchase its supplies at wholesale prices and under competitive bids. It had had a State Board of Charities which supervised institutions and did most excellent work, and this, of course, helped to enlighten the people in regard to the work of the state

institutions. The hospitals for insane had one common board. The School for the Deaf, the School for Blind, and the School for Feeble-Minded, had one common board. All of the other institutions had each its one board.

The law as finally passed and as since amended provides for three members, each serving for six years, one vacancy occurring every two years. The member whose term expires first is always chairman. These members are appointed by the governor with the consent of the senate. They are removable for cause. They cannot hold any other elective office, and must give their entire time to the work of the board. The board appoints its secretary, purchasing agent, all necessary office force, a state architect, and the superintendents and wardens of the institutions of which they have executive or financial control. There are three classes of institutions. Those over whom they have executive control are the three hospitals for the insane, the two asylums for chronic insane, the school for feeble-minded and colony for epileptics, the state prison, reformatory, and industrial school. In addition they have the financial control of the schools for deaf and blind and dependent children. They have charge of all the building construction of these institutions, the State University, which includes the agricultural college, and the five normal schools. They also have financial control of the sanitarium for tuberculosis.

There are separate boards for the schools for deaf and blind, and the school for dependent children, who have special responsibilities concerning salaries and wages.

The board has power to remove the executive officer of an institution for misconduct, incompetence, or neglect of duty upon preferring written charges and offering an opportunity to be heard. They have authority to secure and compel the attendance of witnesses and examine them under oath, and to order the production of all books and papers for examination. They have power to make all reasonable rules for the management of the institutions and the administration and discharge of inmates not otherwise provided for distinctly by statute. They control the purchases of all supplies. We make our estimates for supplies

quarterly, basing our prices upon any information we can obtain either by correspondence or prices prevailing in previous contracts. The estimates simply give the board an approximate idea of the expenses for the ensuing quarter. As soon as the estimates are received they are immediately scheduled and classified by the clerks and each schedule is sent to the people interested in that particular classification. Bids are received by the board. Many bids are received from outside the state. The board accepts, as a rule, the bid which is the cheapest for the entire schedule, but not necessarily. They reserve the right to reject any or all items. If the superintendents are careful to specify accurately what they wish, the board always take that into consideration, and as a rule seek to secure what is wanted, even though it may cost more. They advise with the superintendents, and if something can be obtained for a less price than the estimate that will serve the purpose, this is agreed to. All goods are to be shipped at the convenience of the institution and the superintendents are instructed to receive nothing that is not up to standard. The estimates for employes are made monthly and are based on a schedule fixed by the board.

We also have quarterly meetings of the board. All the superintendents of the state institutions are present and the first day is devoted to reading of papers and discussions upon same, and other general and scientific matters pertaining to work of the institutions. Through these meetings the board are kept in touch with what the superintendents consider especially essential to the welfare of the institutions. The second day is devoted to the examination of goods and samples that have been sent in with the bids for supplies, and as a rule the superintendents select a great many articles at this time. Then there are usually many articles which the board instructs the superintendents to buy, noting upon the approved estimate what are to be ordered under contracts by the board and what the superintendents are to purchase. This mutual understanding is, to my mind, one of the very best things in the system. The board and the superintendents are absolutely in touch all the time. The board give a good many contracts outside the state. All things being equal

the state gets the preference. There was considerable criticism of this for some time, but the public are satisfied that is the right and just thing to do and we do not hear anything about it any more.

Of course there might be trouble if the board were to become a political body, but the present law protects that pretty thoroughly. An ex-governor said at one time that if he was on a board of control and he wanted to own it politically he could do it. I have no doubt there are ways of doing it but with a strong public sentiment in support of a non-political board, it is going to be pretty hard work for one or two men to make a political machine of such a board, and it could not be done in Minnesota without a radical change in the law, and this would mean legislative discussion and such publicity that would make such a step impossible at present. There is a little tendency at times for unscrupulous contractors to work off a low grade of goods. That is the most serious thing we have to contend with. After the contract is made, once in a while some one ships an inferior article and if it comes in sealed packages of any kind a steward may not find it out until a good many weeks afterwards when the packages are opened; but of course the remedy is to reject where possible and when this is impossible, to notify the board, when that firm will find it pretty hard ever to get another contract.

We have no local treasurer. When the pay rolls are certified by the board of control they go directly to the state treasurer, and the state treasurer sends the checks by mail to the superintendent who simply distributes them. All the bills for supplies are checked up and vouchers made in the institution, signed and acknowledged by the contractors, approved by the steward and by the superintendent, transmitted to the Board of Control, and upon being certified by the Board of Control the abstract is sent directly to the state treasurer and the checks are mailed to the contractors.

In regard to the direct administration of the institutions, the board holds each executive entirely responsible and he must select his own helpers and control them.

SYSTEM OF CASE RECORDING AT IOWA INSTITUTION FOR FEEBLE-MINDED

BY A. R. SCHIER, M. D., GLENWOOD, IOWA

There being no subject assigned him for presentation to this society, the writer has chosen to describe briefly the manner in which the case records of the Iowa Institution for Feeble-Minded Children are kept, trusting that the subject might prove of some interest. No doubt there are case-recording systems in use at other institutions much superior to ours but we believe there are, perhaps, certain good features to our method which could be used in other institutions of like character.

That one of the prime essentials of the successful business management of an institution is an accurate record of all its financial transactions will doubtless be granted by all. Recognizing the importance of such records they have been given the necessary consideration, but the same careful attention is not given, or at least has not until recently been given to the records of the cases entrusted to us for training and care. In some instances the case record was so brief as to make it practically useless; in others, the history was kept in such a manner as to make it difficult to find certain information concerning the case without considerable searching, entailing much time; again, in others, much of the history was valueless and in some there was much useless duplication. Some system to properly record and keep all information relating to our cases is required. By system is not meant the use of innumerable blanks, forms, cards and books, but less of them, doing away with much cumbersome and unnecessary work.

Like most institutions of its kind, the Iowa institution had a small beginning, reaching its present size only after years of growth. In the beginning, when there were enrolled as inmates but a handful of children, it was a comparatively easy task to keep a record of each child's history. As the population increased it became more difficult, with the result that where at first