

We are using the budget system of handling finances. Most of our women have been careless, extravagant, and utterly devoid of the sense of the value of money. Their incomes, honestly earned, are not in proportion to their expenditures, if they are given the initiative. They spend thoughtlessly, disregarding their earning capacity, and they have an abnormal desire for things which are entirely out of their reach socially and financially. We must combat these inclinations, and in this respect we find the budget system most helpful. Purchasing clothing on the installment plan is absolutely prohibited, for in many cases the girls have done this very thing prior to their commitment, and because of pressing financial obligations incurred in such a way, have used dishonest means for meeting these payments. Every paroled woman must save a certain amount of what she earns and deposit it in some savings bank. The bank book is sent to us regularly with the monthly report. Some feel this is a great hardship, but we insist, and we have never heard any regrets when their parole is over and they again become free, that they have some money on which they may begin their own activities without our supervision.

Those who are interested in continuing their school work are permitted to do so by attending night school.

We try to find suitable recreational outlets, but this seems to be one of our most difficult problems. While in the institution, the girls live in close contact with one another, all have had common experiences, and are therefore sympathetic associates. When they go out on parole, they miss this companionship, and for the first few weeks are very lonesome. Most do domestic work and as maids are not considered an integral part of the family. The stigma of the institution rests upon them and many are afraid to mingle with strangers for fear the intimate parts of their lives may become known. Some join Y. W. C. A. classes, others affiliate with their respective churches, and we encourage them to do so.

The time girls are kept on parole varies. The minimum time is usually a year, the maximum, as you know, is the expiration of sentence. It has been our experience that early paroles are desirable when circumstances permit, especially in the case of young offenders. In other words, for the younger women and those who have had no previous criminal records, we believe that a shorter stay in the institution and a longer parole period is more beneficial to the individual. The reason for the increase in the length of parole is to continue the restraining influence which apparently exists under parole supervision. To the person who wants to make good, parole is very easy, for the rules demand nothing more than living honestly, decently, temperately and law-abidingly. To the person who wants to put things over and who counts the days until her discharge, nothing is harder than parole, for she is moving about under a cloak of deceit, working under-handedly, with the vision of the institution glaring at her mockingly at every turn she makes. The old offenders do not look at parole favorably or zealously for that reason, so it is the younger violator who welcomes the opportunity which parole affords.

As might be expected we, too, have had parole violators, but none were ever involved in another crime and all were returned to the Reformatory because they had not observed the rules under which they were supposed to live.

It is said the success of a correctional institution is estimated by the percentage of so-called reformations achieved. What are these reformations? Are

they not the persons who have profited by their bitter, austere experience, and having come through the strenuous ordeal with a determination to turn over a new leaf in life, are actually putting their good intentions and constructive training into practice? Time alone will tell whether they are returning to old habits and associates or whether they are on the royal highway to a higher plane of living and thinking. Our own institution is still too new and immature to determine the degree of success, but we hope our efforts have not been in vain; but with no choice as to the reception of inmates, shall we be held wholly responsible for the subsequent careers of all released inmates?

The work among paroled women is not easy. It is an uphill task and at times it is very discouraging—without an almost unlimited amount of patience and confidence in human nature, we could do nothing. Our problems are indi-

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### FEEBLE-MINDEDNESS AS A PROBLEM FOR THE STATE

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In discussing the question of feeble-mindedness as a problem for the state, it will be necessary to discuss it also as a community problem and responsibility, since the whole question of feeble-mindedness must be viewed from the two angles. One complements the other. Just after choosing this subject I found an article of Dr. Kuhlmann's in which he said that the problem of the care of the feeble-minded was a community one. For a moment I felt that I had no support beneath me—that Dr. Kuhlmann, one of the greatest authorities on feeble-mindedness had made an assertion which proved my thesis untrue, even though I thought there was much to say on it. However, I soon realized he was then speaking from only one angle and was not implying that that summed up the whole truth. The two responsibilities exist, and each type is needed for the full completion of a comprehensive program. The community must know itself, and plan for the feeble-minded within its border. It cannot shirk that responsibility, heavy though it may be. However, to the state belongs the duty of formulating policies, of glimpsing a vision of the goal to be attained and then of marshaling all forces that will lead to that end. Until the state has done this, the individual community is working rather blindly at its local problem. The state must make the laws in order that the local communities may show uniformity in their methods of dealing with feeble-minded persons. This does not mean that the details of the manner of applying the law may not be worked out individually by a community, but that the basic conception of feeble-mindedness and the obligations it entails must be the same for all. If some community should repudiate its obligations, then the state alone could force it into line with the other communities, since the failure of one to function may seriously handicap others.

The State of Minnesota has grasped much of the vision already, as the laws concerning the feeble-minded indicate. Already there is a realization that a person with the mind of a child needs an understanding guardian, and machinery is in running order whereby such a guardian may be assigned in the person of the Board of Control. Assuming its proper responsibilities, the State yet realizes here that, though it cannot evade them, it must delegate to local persons the actual planning for and supervision of feeble-minded persons committed to its guardianship. It is here that state and county responsibilities dovetail in the creation of child welfare boards. The state has made the law according to which the commitment must be secured, but it is executed by county officials. After the commitment the State is the legal guardian, but it is the local representatives in the person of the welfare boards who must supervise. They have the authority of the State, but it is also because they are local persons, knowing local problems, and perhaps prejudices, that they are able to do so well. It is the welfare board which recommends whether a person committed should be in the institution or whether the board can cooperate with the family and supervise outside. The responsibility must be local even after the commitment.

But not only has Minnesota realized her responsibility in making possible official supervision for many where personal guardianship has been ineffective; it has also gotten a vision of the eugenic aspect, and we have a state law prohibiting the marriage of these persons. Again the State furnishes the machinery, but it must be locally operated. If local opinion does not force the clerks of court to feel the necessity of compliance, only their own personal attitude towards the question will govern their action.—So far the State seems waiting for public opinion to crystallize before making a law which carries with it a means of enforcement.

When I say that the State must wait for public opinion to crystallize before making a law, I am implying that after all the community is back of the law. Laws are worth little unless backed by public opinion. But sometimes a community does not quite approve of a law and so enforces it poorly. Would it not be better that a wrong law were passed to make known to the State the disapproval of the law? If your community really has exceptions to the law, then probably the law is wrong. Study and see whether what seem to be exceptions are really so. If study reveals that the law is wrong, fight it and not its application in your community.

The State has glimpsed the fact that this is a problem which must be recognized and dealt with before the age of marriage, and it has encouraged the proper education of feeble-minded children by adequately subsidizing special classes for their instruction, so that in proportion to population Minnesota today leads all the states in the Union in its education of the feeble-minded in special classes. Had this been left entirely to local initiative, what would be our status now? We all must realize that it is largely due to the fact that the state acknowledges its responsibility, though delegating the local school systems to carry out the project, that special classes have increased so wonderfully. This past year 45 cities or towns maintained classes with a total enrollment of 2,611 children. Minnesota has made the initial organization of special classes more of a state problem than most states. It is not left entirely to the judgment of local authorities whether or not they shall have a special class and who shall be enrolled in it. No community is required to have one, but neither may a community receive state aid for children enrolled unless approved by the Research Bureau maintained

by the State under the Board of Control. One of the main duties of this Bureau is to carefully survey school systems wishing these classes, and assist in selecting those who would profit by the type of instruction offered. This insures a scientific basis of judgment and equalizes standards. Is the time coming when the State will feel a deeper obligation to all these children, though they may live in a community which has not yet waked up to its obligations? Will it then make it obligatory upon communities to have their school systems surveyed and classes formed for special instruction when needed?

I am sure we all agree that the acceptance by the State of its obligation in this whole problem of the feeble-minded has made possible the progress towards its solution which has been made. And yet the progress has only been sufficient to make us realize what an enormous problem we are facing. Even with the cooperation of state and community we shall never reach the fountain spring unless the difficulty is sensed more clearly and machinery inaugurated by the State whereby further cooperation may become more effective. It is only natural that so far we have attacked definite problems which have presented themselves, and have waited to analyze the situation and provide means of dealing with it which will undermine its very foundation.

Last November Dr. Kuhlmann outlined a plan for a continuing-census of the feeble-minded. This was given at a meeting of the State Board of Control with its institution heads, and was worked out in detail. Briefly it contemplates giving mental tests to *all* children entering school in Minnesota, whether in the first grade or higher up, from outside the state. Those classifying as defective would be given proper instruction from the beginning. Really competent and permanent examining boards would be provided and every feeble-minded person who, because of environment or temperamental traits, had become a local problem, would have a court commitment to the Board of Control—not only because of poverty or delinquency, but because the existence of the low mentality, added to other conditions or characteristics, made this guardianship desirable in order to insure training and later prevent marriage. All names and necessary data would be on file, and the communities would be enabled to know their liabilities early enough to prevent the existence of many of the serious social problems they now have.

When we read figures showing the cost of caring for the feeble-minded in and out of institutions, does it not seem that the communities have a right to demand of the State a means whereby they may work more fruitfully to raise the levels of intelligence and accomplishment within their bounds?

The State has led and has gone far, but it must continue to lead still further, backed by the cooperation of every county in adequate care and supervision of its own feeble-minded persons. It is only the State which can see the problem with sufficient perspective to inaugurate a plan for adequate and economical care for the feeble-minded at the present time, and for a decrease in numbers, if not actual elimination, in time to come.