

A Picture of Minnesota in 1932

By

Blanche L. La Du

Chairman State Board of Control

St. Paul, Minn.

and

*President Minnesota State Conference
of Social Work*



Address Given at the
State Conference of Social Work
September, 1932

* HV 22
. MAG 215



A PICTURE OF MINNESOTA IN 1932

By Blanche L. La Du



WITH our constantly growing interest in public welfare and the stress that is being laid on municipal, county, state and Federal responsibility for welfare service, it seems fitting that we at this time discuss some of those phases of public welfare which are being brought so forcibly to our attention.

As most of you know the scope of the Board of Control's work is all embracing since it relates to every phase of the problems of human life from infancy to old age—from birth to death. These problems are not only educational, medical, economic and industrial but the human problem of adjusting the individual to life as he must meet it, and with his rehabilitation if he is unable to meet it. It is the duty of our Board to know the facts concerning social problems and social work in the various communities throughout the state in order to direct and stimulate the development of efficiency in welfare work, and the improvement of social conditions in general.

Minnesota has eighteen state-owned institutions concerned with hospital care for the mentally sick; schools for the feeble-minded and epileptics, schools for the blind, the deaf, the dependent and neglected child, hospital care and school for the indigent crippled child, institutions concerned with delinquent boys and girls; a prison and reformatories for the adult offenders and hospital care and treatment for those afflicted with tuberculosis.

Through other agencies and activities of the Board of Control the welfare of special groups in the state is being studied and promoted; the care of the delinquent, defective, dependent, neglected and illegitimate child; the welfare of the adult blind; of the ex-service man and his family; of the paroled insane, and the proper conduct of maternity hospitals and of private institutions and agencies caring for children; proper housing of adult prisoners in county and city jails; proper conduct of the county poor home or farm for the aged and infirm—in fact, the social welfare problems of the State.

We are anxious that the public should know not only of the care and treatment given the wards of the state, but that it should know that preventive and constructive work is fostered whenever possible, though the actual care and treatment require so much time that the preventive work does not receive the attention which it should.

Our department is facing a constantly growing burden. Every institution and agency is struggling to meet the increasing demands in its own particular field. The past biennium marks a greater increase in the number of dependents committed to the care of the state, in the period ended June 30, 1932, than in any similar period in the history of the Board. The increase for the biennium totaled 1,703 as against 990, the previous high figure. Much of the increase occurred during the last year, from July, 1931, to July, 1932, when 1,024 were added to the institution population. The total inmate institutional population is now 46,000. Appropriations granted the Board of Control in 1931 totaled over eleven and one-half million dollars.

We must build to care for the increasing load—not only in buildings for housing those who are committed to the direct care of the state, but in terms of better service, wiser leadership and more effective rehabilitation and to cooperate with and assist in every possible way all those organizations and agencies that are engaged in the work of prevention or other lines of welfare work.

The six institutions for the insane care for a large part of this increase. The insane now number 8,509, an increase of 255 since January 1, 1932—a period of six months.

The burden of the mentally diseased each year becomes heavier, the rate of increase being higher than that of the general population. No doubt there are several factors which contribute to this rapidly mounting number of mental cases—complexities of our modern civilization, especially during this period of economic strain and stress; the lack of psychopathic facilities for early diagnosis and treatment, and the inability of the family under present conditions to continue supervision in an already over-burdened home, or to assume such responsibility for the paroled patient who must for lack of home supervision and care remain longer in the hospital.

The largest institution under our Board from the point of population, the School for Feeble-Minded at Faribault, rose from 2,013 to 2,156 in the first half of the year. Lack of housing facilities keeps this increase low, but the number of commitments has steadily increased from 758 new cases during the biennial ended June 30, 1930, to 933 new cases during the biennial period ended June 30, 1932. At the Colony for Epileptics at Cambridge the population is 638.

The increase in housing facilities at Cambridge and the School for Feeble-Minded, at Faribault, made possible the care of some 300 additional patients during the past year. We will submit a request to the Legislature to furnish room for 300 more at the coming session. This will provide for the most urgent cases.

In a period of economic stress or under any unusual strain it is always the weakest who are the first to fail in making the necessary adjustments and who become an increasing burden upon the family and charges upon the communities or state.

Prison and Reformatories

In times of unemployment, prison populations increase. The great majority are sentenced to the penal institution for crimes against property when work is hard to find. Parole is delayed, increasing the number incarcerated because of lack of jobs to be had for paroled men. During the biennial ended June 30, 1932, 964 men were committed to the Prison at Stillwater, as compared with 811 during the preceding two year period, an increase of 153. At one time during 1932 the prison population was 1,382—the highest in the history of the institution.

During the two year period just ended the Reformatory at St. Cloud showed a total commitment of 1,145 as compared with 902 in the preceding biennial period—an increase of 242. The population reached its highest mark, 1,116, during 1932.

You will note from the figures that the increase of young men who are first offenders, committed to the Reformatory, is greater than the number committed to the State Prison. 1,145 new commitments at the Reformatory as against 964 at the Prison during the same period.

The members of our Board have felt for some time that a new Reformatory for young men—first offenders—should be built. This is to be built on modern scientific plans that would make possible the use of the present Reformatory at St. Cloud as a second prison. Such arrangements would make possible a much better system of classification and rehabilitation of the inmates. We request permission of the Legislature to purchase land for a site for this new reformatory in our budget to be presented next winter. We request this instead of enlargement of the present institutions.

Fifty-seven women were admitted to the Reformatory for Women at Shakopee during the biennium ended June 30, 1930, and seventy-one during the biennium just ended—an increase of fourteen.

The attitude of the general public toward work for prisoners is not so good during periods of depression. All available work is wanted for

so-called free labor, and even prison industries are frowned upon—forgetting the need of these incarcerated men for employment; idleness being the most vicious and demoralizing factor in prison rehabilitation and discipline.

Correctional Institutions

Reports are still contradictory as to the increase of juvenile delinquency in the United States. We are happy to say that the commitments to the Home School for Girls, at Sauk Center, showed practically no change in the number of girls committed during the biennium just passed, 258 and for the preceding two year period—256, and the State Training School for Boys at Red Wing, only showed a slight increase—1928-30, 423; while the new admissions for 1931-32, 431.

We attribute this to the successful work of the juvenile probation agencies in the larger cities and to the influence of the character developing agencies, as the church, the school, the community agencies with their organized recreational programs and to the changing attitudes in the home. Both parents are at home more of the time and are coming to a better appreciation of the real values of life.

I hope you have all read G. W. McMillan's article in the Survey of September 1st, "The Story of Boys on the Loose."

We know that many bright boys and girls have had to leave school with a life long handicap of lack of education—and that lack is a much greater handicap in these days of keen competition and specialized fields than it was a few decades ago. Working boys and girls have been thrown out of work in larger numbers than any other class of workers under sixty years of age, and the tragedy of it is that boys' and girls' clubs' and night schools are being closed to save light, fuel and teachers' salaries, libraries are also being closed, and these children, mostly the under-privileged are being turned into the streets.

It is doubtful if statistics will ever tell us in how many cases of juvenile delinquency the deciding factor is and was nervous tension in the home caused by unemployment, actual suffering and need, of being forced out of the home—not to work but to a life of idleness and eventful delinquency.

This spring a friend of mine was invited to speak at a High School Commencement—it being suggested that she should not speak on the depression. After some thought as to a subject for her address, she decided to let the students themselves suggest subjects. Through the coöperation of the teachers she secured 300 answers to her question—"What subject

would you like to have discussed if you must listen to a speech?" Here are some of the 300 answers:

115 suggested—Shall we go into trades or professions? Others were—

Shall we go to college?

What professions are not over-crowded?

How shall we get jobs?

How shall we start careers as writers?

What can we do to help disarmament?

Fifty suggested—What political party promises the most towards bringing relief to the country.

In spite of the fact that the youth of today is accused of being reckless, careless, pleasure-loving and irresponsible, these suggested subjects showed that the young men and women were thinking—and thinking seriously and to the point, of the conditions that confronted them. One could give little encouragement to some of their questions. How shall we get jobs?

What could one tell them when we know that experienced men and women are walking the streets of our cities and villages looking for anything that will give them a meager salary or even maintenance. Many of these boys and girls cannot go on with their education because of this depression and must suffer from this handicap for life—both work and school being denied them. Is it any wonder if they question the wisdom of their elders? They will need skill and wisdom in setting right the world which we have more or less messed up before handing it over to them.

Schools for Blind and Deaf

The population at our residential schools for the blind and the deaf at Faribault has increased during the last year. There are 115 enrolled at the School for the Blind this fall and over 300 at the School for the Deaf. This increase in attendance we believe to be the result of the high standards of care and training at the schools, and the increasing knowledge of the people throughout the state of the excellent free educational facilities provided by the State for its blind and deaf children.

Gillette State Hospital

At the Gillette State Hospital for Indigent Children total admissions were 656 patients during the two years ended June, 1930-32 and 504 during the biennium ended June, 1929-30, an increase of 152. During the past two years more children have been taken care of, more operations have been performed and more work has been done than during any previous biennial period.

State Public School, Owatonna

The increase in the number of neglected and dependent children committed to the care of the state is alarming and is a matter of grave concern for us all. In spite of our extraordinary progress in science, in medical practice, in public health, in improved standards of living, in increasing social service, in more wide-spread knowledge and development of an attitude of greater sympathy with the less fortunate, there is still an enormous annual increase in dependency among children.

Large numbers of children still suffer unrelieved in their own home, or are separated from their homes because of poverty. Thousands of families throughout the country have been affected by unemployment. Minnesota has not escaped this tragedy.

The great increase of children committed to the State Public School is an index of broken families and reveals a deterioration in the social fabric that if continued will be a menace to society.

Care of children away from their own homes is an abnormal condition and the best equipped institution or the most perfect foster home does not compensate for the loss of normal home life with one's own family.

Recognition of this principle that home life is the highest and finest product of civilization; that it is the great molding force of mind and character and that, except in unusual circumstances the home should not be broken up for reasons of poverty, is generally accepted; in proof of which the Federal Children's Bureau reports—"In 1929, the forty-four states which have had mothers' aid laws spent about \$30,000,000 keeping, by means of legislation, an average of some 300,000 children with their mothers. This number has no doubt been considerably increased during the past three years. Many thousands of these children, except for this aid, would have been taken from their homes to other types of care. A substantial majority of the mothers would have attempted to support their children under severe strain and poverty; the cost of which is paid for later in inefficiency, ill health, and personality and behavior problems which inevitably follow when a widowed mother, without resources strives to be both bread-winner and home maker for a family of children.

During the biennial period ended June 30, 1930, the State Public School for dependent Children reported—

First admissions	447	
Returned for replacements.....	333	780
<hr/>		
Placed in homes.....	735	
Average daily population.....	439	

During the biennial ended June 30, 1932—

First admissions -----	389
Reported awaiting admissions -----	278 667
Returned for placement -----	306
Placed in homes -----	575

Average daily population for 1931—491; for 1932—519. Capacity of school is 450.

Let us analyze these figures. The first admissions during the previous biennial, 447, exceeded admissions of the last biennial by 58. This was because the school was filled beyond capacity and fewer placements in foster homes were being made and the school could accept no more. Had we been able to receive all waiting admission, the new admissions during the biennial just ended would have numbered at least 667 instead of 389, an increase of 220 over the previous two year period. Placements have decreased in the last two years from 735 for previous period to 575, a decrease of 160.

The officials of one county alone reported recently 200 children whom they claimed should be committed to the care of the state. The very fact that the capacity of this school is limited may avert tragedy in hundreds of homes which might be broken because of poverty and dependency but which may be saved by direct relief instead of institutional care of children.

Institutions for Care of Tuberculosis

The number of patients at the State Sanatorium in 1931 was 270; in 1932—256, a decrease of fourteen and in the fourteen county sanatoria, the decrease was eighty-two during the same period—from 1,035 in 1930, to 952 in 1931. This decrease no doubt is due to financial conditions of the individual or family. We do not have figures for 1932, but we know that the waiting list at the Glen Lake Sanatorium has more than doubled during the past year. In viewing the needs of this class of patients for the next two years, we must remember that depressions of long duration, with their consequent hardships and wants, usually cause an increase in the number of cases of tuberculosis and deaths from same.

Agencies of the Board of Control

Division of Adult Blind

This Division shows an expenditure for direct relief and other forms of aid for the biennial ended June 30, 1932, \$143,176.10 as compared with \$97,110.18 expended during the previous biennium, an increase of \$46,065.92. Direct relief increased \$45,458.17 and the number receiving aid increased 115.

Division for Parole of Insane, and the Deportation of the Non-Resident Insane

The number of cases on parole have decreased somewhat, due to the inability of relatives of patients to assume the extra financial burden in the family when under normal circumstances they are constantly urging parole long before the patient's fitness to be returned to the community.

The deportation to their own state of 105 non-resident patients during the last biennial relieved the state of their care and made room for resident patients.

Soldiers Welfare Division

The work of the Soldiers' Welfare Division can be divided into four major activities, all of which are closely united and include the assisting of veterans and dependents of veterans in securing compensation, pensions and treatment from the Federal agencies and is by far the most important part of the work.

During the past biennium favorable allowances were secured on 2,274 claims which brought into the state initial payments of \$513,804.42; over a half million dollars.

The next is the handling of guardianship accounts.

The third, the providing of relief to destitute veterans and their families who are residents of Minnesota.

Fourth, the handling of appropriations for the activities of the two Veterans' Rest Camps.

Twice as many cases have been handled during the year just ended—9,594 cases in 1932, as compared with 4,938 in 1930—due to unemployment and to the contacts made with veterans throughout the state through the schools of instruction held in forty-nine different communities.

The Children's Bureau

This bureau is the agency of the Board with which most of you have direct contact. You are familiar with its organization and its responsibilities.

At the present time seventy-eight counties of the eighty-seven in the state have county welfare boards as compared with eighty-two in 1930. Three of the four counties that dropped their boards were affected by the economic depression, while the fourth chose to employ an agent appointed by the Judge of the Juvenile Court. Social workers are employed in twenty-two counties now as compared with twenty-four in 1930, and fifty-six counties with county welfare boards do not employ social workers. The fact that so few changes have been made in county welfare boards is very encouraging. Although the load has increased greatly during the past two years, the members of these boards are courageously carrying on at much sacrifice in time and health. It is to be regretted however that in this time of an ever increasing need of trained efficient service there is a tendency on the part of governmental units to drop some of their most constructive work. We agree that this is no time to create new agencies where any kind of social agency exists, but rather the existing agency should be strengthened. While the expense of maintaining a trained social worker in the county may seem unwarranted at this time, it has been demonstrated over and over that a county will more than save the expense of such a worker in an efficient administration of its county allowance to mothers and its poor relief, to say nothing of the many other benefits.

Every unit of government, the township, county, village, city and state is concerned primarily and chiefly with the problem of keeping down expenses, of reducing governmental costs. This is necessary if we are to continue to function and exist. These costs must be reduced, but if they are not reduced wisely the proposed remedies will result in greater evils than now exist. To abolish or cripple departments dealing directly with the problems of the health, education and social welfare of our children will affect the health and earning power of these children in the future and will increase the burden of relief for the next generation or more.

For the purposes of efficiency in administration and for closer coöperation and assistance to the county child welfare boards, the state has been divided into six districts—with a trained worker to supervise and assist in the work in each district. Reports from these field representatives only emphasize the figures and facts stated relative to the increasing financial burdens of the local government units and the increasing distress of the poor and the unemployed. Representatives of the Children's Bureau and of the child welfare boards indicate the need of a uniform system with state assistance to secure economy as well as efficiency.

Comparing the reports of these representatives county by county with recent financial reports made by the Department of Research in Government, University of Minnesota, we find the counties meeting their re-

sponsibilities generally in accordance with the county's financial ability—with here and there a county unwilling to assume its just responsibilities or unable to do so because of special calamity, such as drouth, floods, etc. There are other counties in the north central and north western districts which are absolutely unable to carry the load of poor relief because of low property valuation and high tax rate. An attempt to show the financial responsibility or inability and the welfare needs of each county in detail would be too long and too confusing for this paper. The following figures will give you some idea of how the depression is affecting the direct relief funds of the counties.

Of fifty-five counties having the county system of poor relief, ten have doubled or in some instances more than doubled their expenditures for the year 1932 as compared with 1929 expenditures. Two have trebled the amount spent and one has quadrupled expenditures. Only two counties have decreased their per capita expenditures; two made very slight increases while the majority of the remaining twenty-five counties have made substantial increases. These figures do not include the county allowances or aid to mothers.

County Allowances in Minnesota

Except Clearwater and Grant counties, which do not give aid, aid to mothers of dependent children is administered in Minnesota through the juvenile courts by grants called "County Allowances." During past year due no doubt to the depression twenty-seven counties reduced amount of county allowance; six remained about stationary; while fifty-two counties increased the amount.

Year	Amount Paid	No. of Mothers	No. of Children	Amount Per Year	Amount Per Child
1918 -----	\$315,374.86	1,659	4,685	\$67.50	\$5.60
1929 -----	1,157,053.23	3,795	11,401	101.50	8.46
1930 -----	1,190,165.95	3,905	11,786	100.98	8.41
1931 -----	1,249,541.88	4,136	11,696	106.83	8.90

Showing an increase of \$59,375.93 in 1931 over 1930.

The Federal Children's Bureau conducted a study of the amounts paid in June, 1931, as mothers' aid or county allowance, in the various states of the Union. In Minnesota we found that in June, 1931, \$101,325.81 was paid for the support of 9,990 children, or an average of \$10.14 per month or \$121.68 per annum per child. Comparing this with the amount spent for the full year of 1931 listed above, we find an increase of \$14.85 or fourteen per cent per child. If we accept for the purpose of an approximate estimate the increase of fourteen per cent for the years

of 1927, 1928, 1929 and 1930, we find there was paid, on an average, as aid to a mother of each child approximately \$115.00 per annum for each of said years.

Besides county allowance or aid to mothers, poor relief is still an important factor in the support of children in dependent families. Of the eighty-seven counties in Minnesota, thirty-two administer relief under the township system and fifty-five under the county system. Reports have been received at our office of relief paid by the various counties for maintenance of poor houses or farms, medical and hospital care and relief outside of poor houses of \$3,662,812 in 1931. This does not include disbursements by townships, nor does it include the \$1,249,541.88 for mothers' aid.

Placements and Adoptions

The Children's Bureau report 717 adoptions in two years ended June 30, 1932, and 706 in the preceding years—1929-30, an increase of eleven adoptions; while placements during the two years ended June 30, 1932 were 532 as compared to 630 for the two years preceding; a decrease of ninety-eight, which figures would support the State School findings of a decreasing demand for children in foster homes. These figures do not include a small group of cases which, however, will be of interest to Minnesota social agencies and state law enforcement groups. The group of forty-three children from out of the state, placed in Minnesota by hospitals and child placing agencies of other states; one agency contributing twenty-one of the group. It is true that often families looking for a "baby" for adoption are unable to find just the child they want in the child placing agencies in the state and go out of the state to secure the type or age child they desire. There are times, however, when such a procedure results in grief for the foster parents and an added responsibility for the state. With few exceptions these out-of-state agencies do not submit information regarding the history of the child. Later a family discovers it has a feeble-minded or other problem child and wishes state assistance in adjustment of the case. Just recently the return of two mentally defective children to the state of their birth was made after long and arduous work on the part of the Children's Bureau. Coöperation of the foster parents with the Children's Bureau representatives in securing the child would eliminate much avoidable trouble in such cases. Independent child placements by the mother, by physicians or other would-be-friends are of growing concern to the agencies interested in enforcement of laws regarding child placements. While many of such placements have proven satisfactory, yet there has been a distressingly large number where it seemed that the home and the child were not suited to each other. Children of low

mentality and unfavorable mental heritage have been placed in homes of high cultural levels and children of good heredity and high intelligence have been placed in homes of no opportunity.

The Child Born out of Wedlock

Our records show 3,171 unmarried mothers registered for this biennial as compared with 2,726 during the biennial ended June 30, 1930, an increase of 435 cases for two years, with an increase of 107 the last year as over the first; this increase being found chiefly in the rural counties. The amount collected for illegitimate children, 1930 biennial—\$315,723.84; for the biennial of 1932, \$232,863.12. This decrease of \$83,860.72 in payments indicates inability on the part of the father to pay.

Factors showing a very noticeable increase in the birth of illegitimate children as a result of depression are idleness, unrest, lack of jobs for men who put off marriage, the weakening of paternal authority; the increasing number of construction crews of highways, telephone and electrical lines, residing temporarily in a town, and migratory men, as farm hands and wandering agents.

The Child Unsuitable for Adoption

The Legislature in 1931 appropriated \$40,000 per annum for the care of children unsuitable for adoption. 615 children are wards of the state at the present time, not committed to a state institution. Of this number 169 have been committed as dependent and unsuitable for adoption. There has been reluctance on the part of some judges to commit, as the county is liable for one-half the costs. Funds were not sufficient to care for all; hence these children were divided into two groups—those who were in need of remedial care and whose condition could be improved, and those whose need was primarily a form of poor relief. Those in the first group in need of special care were given the preference in making selections.

Feeble-Minded and Epileptics

Admissions to institutions caring for the feeble-minded and epileptics are made through a division of the Children's Bureau. At the close of the biennial period, June 30, 1930, 523 committed cases to the School for the Feeble-Minded and the Colony for Epileptics were being cared for by outside supervision and 618 committed cases were awaiting admission to institutions; a total of 1,141 committed cases not in institutions.

At the end of the 1932 biennial period, 613 committed cases were being cared for by outside supervision; 652 committed cases were awaiting admission—a total of 1,265 committed cases not in the institutions, an increase of over 124 during the biennial period of 1930.

Labor conditions have kept reducing the number of mentally defective girls who have been living in state provided homes in Minneapolis, St. Paul and Duluth—called “Club Houses”—until it became necessary to close the home in Duluth, and the one in Minneapolis will be discontinued after January 1, 1933. There were some sixty girls living in these homes in 1930 whose total earnings amounted to \$22,028.69. The girls' earnings in 1931 amounted to \$13,117.47. The earnings for 1932 will be much lower as the number of girls securing jobs has decreased and wages paid the girls are much lower.

In its budget for the coming session of the Legislature the Board is asking for buildings to house 300 of this group. To my knowledge, no state's building program has kept pace with the increasing numbers in this group of defectives. It is necessary to consider the financial condition of the state and the need to reduce state expenditures in planning our building program. This increase in capacity will care for the most urgent cases.

The sterilization law has been operative in 448 cases of feeble-minded and 214 cases of insane—a total of 662.

The Research Bureau has made over 8,000 mental examinations during the past two years for county child welfare boards, for committing courts, for private agencies, public schools and state institutions.

County Child Welfare Boards constitute the organization through which the county administers most of its welfare program.

This administration through county organization provides prompt, near-at-hand service which is essential to good social work. It is more economical. It coordinates the various types of welfare service given in the community; thus avoiding duplication of efforts and waste of funds.

It makes possible a study of local conditions causing dependency and delinquency, such knowledge making a program of prevention more effective. The nearness of the problem makes it possible for the county welfare unit to give more attention to the correction of economic and social evils threatening family life. The county organization derives its support from public funds; thus putting upon the Government, and properly so, the responsibility of caring for public charges.

The Increasing Need of Trained Social Workers

The rapid expansion of county welfare activities has increased the difficulty of finding persons trained and experienced in social work who possess the personality, organization ability and leadership which the county development demands.

Placements of trained social workers in tax-supported agencies are increasing. Public agencies are recognizing the value of trained service and social workers are recognizing the possibilities in public service agencies. It requires more than a kind heart and a desire to serve to carry on the tasks of a community program of social welfare.

There has been an integration of interests and efforts, of private and public welfare agencies which indicates better understanding, better co-operation and coördination of efforts resulting in more efficiency in community welfare service; the social workers in each group becoming better informed as to the community program as a whole.

The White House Conference report on Child Health and Protection setting forth those safeguards of childhood which will assure to them health in mind and body and the happiness to which childhood is entitled, is given to the states as a measuring stick by which each state is to ascertain by careful study how it measures up to the standards set up by this group of some twelve hundred representative citizens specially trained in the various fields of child welfare.

Representatives of President Hoover came to Minnesota and enlisted the interest of Governor Olson in a follow-up study in our state. Committees are at work studying the various recommendations of the report as they apply to health, education and welfare of children; checking on what is being done; what is recommended by the White House Conference report; what ought to be done in Minnesota, and how to do it. The results of the study are not yet ready to present for general consideration, yet certain recommendations in the White House Conference report are clearly applicable to our general welfare program in Minnesota.

State Approval of Social Workers

The Federal Children's Bureau and the White House Conference report recommend that the executive secretary be employed by the County Child Welfare Board subject to the approval of the State Department of Welfare in accordance with recognized standards for social workers, and that state aid be given to each county maintaining a social service program approved by the Department of Welfare.

Poor Relief

Children of migratory parents are great sufferers because of limited and unsatisfactory laws within the state and the uncoördinated laws of other states regarding legal settlements. The township system of poor relief is not adequate in that the township is too small a unit to maintain a trained service for administration, or to be able to provide care in cases of great need. Also, poor laws are inclined to place more emphasis on the protection of the community than protection of those in need of care. Therefore, we would recommend:

(a) That the system of township poor relief in Minnesota be abolished and that the county be the only local unit employed to administer poor relief.

(b) That the system of township poor relief in Minnesota be the various counties and, further, because the child in the poorest counties is one of concern to the people in the wealthy counties, as he may in the near future, become a resident of and a social problem to such counties, or to the state, state aid on a graduated basis in proportion to wealth, population and need, should be given to poor counties which lack private resources and are unable to provide the necessary service from their own tax funds. *This principle is now recognized in Minnesota by supplementary aid to public schools.* This aid should include county allowances as well as poor relief and the local administration of both should be subject to state scrutiny and state supervision to promote efficiency and economy. For efficiency and economy in this endeavor, the county board of commissioners and the child welfare board should cooperate in the maintenance of a trained social worker in the administration of such funds.

(c) The care of migratory families should be the responsibility of the state rather than of the local unit. The state department should have power—

1. To advise and cooperate with the counties in the administration of poor relief; aid in the determination of legal settlement within the state; and pass upon the efficiency of administration of poor relief where state aid is extended.

2. It should assume responsibility for migrants who have no legal settlement in Minnesota or any other state. It should aid in the deportation of non-residents to the state of their legal settlement.

Unemployment Relief

Unemployment relief has over-shadowed all other phases of social work in the State today and exceeds in volume and in scope anything in our previous experience, and most states, including Minnesota are not prepared to meet this situation. Except for the Wisconsin law which has recently been passed and scattered experiments by a few individual corporations, there is no unemployment insurance to give the worker some measure of security in times of depression. This means that when jobs are unobtainable because of business conditions people out of work are thrown back on their savings, on the help of relatives and friends and finally on the regular organized forms of public and private charity.

This period of stress and unemployment has made us aware of some of the weaknesses of our state welfare program. There has been a growing tendency to recognize the fact that relief is a matter of public or government concern and responsibility. We are coming to recognize that the taxing power of the Government is the fairest and most secure method of securing funds for poor relief and other social welfare needs. Taxation fixes the burden on all in proportion to their ability to pay. This public responsibility has been recognized to some extent in our Minnesota Workmen's Compensation act for the industrially disabled and injured. Mothers' pensions, direct poor relief to families, etc., aid for the blind, for the ex-service man and his family, for county poor farms and hospitals, old age pensions, which are optional in Minnesota; five counties having adopted the law—not to mention care of its handicapped wards in state institutions.

Family case loads in both public and private agencies have been piling up for almost three years and as a result private agencies have become loaded with a task far beyond their capacity and their social programs which are needed as never before, are in jeopardy as relief threatens to absorb their entire budgets. Private contributions must be continued if these agencies survive.

An act of Congress known as the "Emergency Relief and Construction Act of 1932" makes available the sum of \$300,000,000 under terms and conditions set forth in the act, to the states in furnishing relief and work relief to needy and distressed people and in relieving the hardship resulting from unemployment.

No action has been taken yet by our state, although various municipalities and counties have indicated that they will be compelled to secure aid if they are to meet the present needs and those of the coming winter.

The Institute of Unemployment Research of the University, basing its report on conditions prevailing in the 560 industries in the cities of

Minneapolis, St. Paul and Duluth, found that in 1930 the three cities had a total of approximately 372,704 gainful workers, ten per cent of whom were owners or proprietor—leaving 335,634 wage earners. In November, 1930, the three cities registered 32,341 unemployed. In January, 1931, sixteen per cent or 53,700 were unemployed and from January, 1931, to July, 1932, there was another drop of about fourteen per cent, representing a working population of 39,470 additional unemployed; making a total of 93,171 unemployed in the three cities in July, 1932.

Taking five per cent as a natural seasonal slump for the winter months, this would add about 12,000 more to the list of unemployed, making an estimated total of unemployed in the three cities during the coming winter of 105,171. However, the present pick up in business, it was stated, might, if it continued, make a change in this estimate, reducing number estimated as unemployed next winter. There are indications that the upward trend is something more than a seasonal trend. A number of factories are now running only part-time—three to four days a week. Half of the industries have cut wages ten per cent since the first of the year. No doubt some have cut previous to this year. The number of unemployed in the three cities registers eleven per cent below what it was last year at this time. I was unable to obtain figures on the situation relative to unemployment throughout the state. While the state outside the three cities, as a whole, is not considered in quite such a bad condition, yet it is known that in certain cities as Winona, St. Cloud and some of the Range cities conditions are very bad.

Whatever the source of funds, the administration should be local. Traditionally it is the responsibility of the community to see that aid reaches the individual family needing help.

The most generally approved methods of administration of the present unemployment and emergency relief are through some existing public agency accustomed to administering tax funds or by existing family relief agencies disbursing funds secured through private subscriptions; in some instances supplemented by public appropriations, or by a newly created public agency to handle unemployment relief and administer tax funds.

While a newly created organization might do a perfectly fine administrative job, we must remember that this emergency need is an unusual and not a normal one; that this administration of greatly increased public relief funds is temporary—even the Federal funds available to states in need, is limited to a definite period. At the close of this period a temporary organization “folds its tents like the Arabs” and quietly passes away.

You can readily see how practically all of the necessary follow-up work, the saving of what had been builded into the social rehabilitation of the community, would be lost. Whereas, if the existing social agencies handle the emergency problems, with such additional trained assistants as the service demands, much will be gained in city and county from the experienced and efficient administration by agencies already familiar with the problems. After the actual need for emergency relief has disappeared there will be a need for the carrying on of our normal relief load and many family adjustments to be made.

But greater than the follow-up work necessary, after this emergency is over, is the need of an experienced permanent group with knowledge of modern social and industrial conditions and knowledge of our own inadequate system of poor relief, which has been little modified since colonial times, to recognize the weakness of our whole social welfare program and to plan wisely for the future that we may not be caught in a similar plight again. Legislation tending to make for security to the workman, and to the aged and infirm in times of stress—industrial insurance, old age pensions, uniform and efficient administration of public funds—in other words putting the problems of human welfare on a business basis and saving the country from another such universal calamity; is a sane and logical reaction to our present social policy of drifting, which is costly in money and in social values.

