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## MINNESOTA STATE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

496 LOWRY MEDICAL ARTS BUILDING

SAINT PAUL 2, MINNESOTA

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April 16, 1947 RECEIVED AT

JUN 12 1947

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE

A REPORT BY

THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE APPOINTED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE MINNESOTA STATE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION  
 AT THE REQUEST OF GOVERNOR EDWARD J. THYE

TO: THE HONORABLE LUTHER W. YOUNGDAHL  
 Governor  
 State of Minnesota,  
 State Capitol  
 St. Paul, Minnesota

RE: STATE SCHOOL AND COLONY FOR THE FEEBLEMINDED AT FARIBAULT, MINNESOTA.

At the request of Governor Edward J. Thye under date of August 8, 1946, the Council of the Minnesota State Medical Association authorized the appointment of a special committee to make an investigation of the charges made in affidavits made public during the last primary political campaign relative to the State School and Colony for the Feeble-minded at Faribault, Minnesota.

Since its first meeting on October 11, 1946, this Committee has met several times and has studied carefully the affidavits and charges in question. It was found that much criticism was directed toward the maltreatment or mishandling of patients. To prove or disprove such charges is a very difficult matter for any investigating group. It was found, however, on personally interviewing present and past employes that their accusations were frequently based merely on hearsay.

The Committee has tried to be thorough, objective and constructive in its investigations. It has interviewed some of the former employes and many of the present employes who now hold responsible positions at the Institution.

Two meetings were held at the School and Colony. The first was in the nature of a lengthy interview with the Superintendent and other employes and a conducted tour of the physical plant. The other was an unannounced inspection of the entire institution.

The Committee respectfully presents the following summary of its findings:

BUILDINGS 1. The present population is approximately 2600 and there is a waiting  
 GROUNDS & list of approximately 1,000. The institution is badly overcrowded.  
 EQUIPMENT The full capacity according to national accepted standards should  
be between 1800 and 2100.

2. Some of the buildings are fairly adequate, notably the hospital, but others are woefully inadequate, poorly equipped, obsolete and unsafe.
3. There is no provision at present for separate housing for professional and nursing employes. This inadequacy of housing has made it very difficult to obtain trained personnel.
4. The main kitchen in which all food is prepared for the patients and employes is especially inadequately equipped. The present facilities for the preparation and distribution of food are such that it is impossible to supply, prepare and serve a balanced and palatable diet. It is impossible, for example, to serve a piece of toast, a fried egg or hotcakes with the type of equipment the institution has.
5. The fire alarm system was out of order and apparently had not been working for several years. At Hillcrest, a door to a fire escape was locked. Some fire instructions are posted but there are no fire drills.
6. In all buildings, except the main kitchen, cleanliness was satisfactory. Baths and toilets were clean.

## PERSONNEL

The Institution was found to be greatly understaffed in all departments, including medical, nursing, attendants and other personnel, with only approximately 350 employes on the premises. Salaries were found to be far below those paid elsewhere for similar workers. As would be expected many employes were evidently lacking in training and background for the work asked of them.

## DISCIPLINE

In one building, at least one-third of the patients were in restraints, the reason given being that there was not enough help to permit the children to move about without them.

About a dozen children were observed to be tied on toilets to prevent them from falling off. If there were sufficient attendants this practice would be unnecessary.

RECREATIONAL  
VOCATIONAL &  
EDUCATIONAL  
PROGRAM  
LACKING

Provisions for vocational, recreational and educational training were vague and inadequate due to lack of trained personnel.

- a. Since the transfer of the higher grade mental defectives to Owatonna in July 1945, together with vocational personnel and facilities, there has been a deterioration in the vocational supervision and training possible. Some increase in simple training of lower grade defectives now present would be possible with more employed teachers.
- b. There is no recreational director responsible for an over-all recreational program.
- c. There is no School Department principal on the premises.

MEDICAL  
CARE

Medical care is not adequate because of lack of personnel. According to accepted standards there should be five full-time physicians instead of two as at present.

MEDICAL CARE  
CONTINUED -

In the hospital there were only four registered nurses and sixteen other personnel caring for 140 patients. We understand that the patient census often runs higher.

From a pediatric standpoint, one ward alone consisting of children up to five years could well occupy the time of more than the total of four nurses.

## CLOTHING

Children, particularly the younger ones, were inadequately clothed.

DIET INADEQUATE  
AND POORLY  
PREPARED

1. Lack of proper kitchen equipment requires that all food be either steamed or boiled except for one day a week when the bakery baking ovens are available.

2. Food is prepared in the central kitchen two to three hours before it is served and becomes thoroughly chilled and there are no facilities for reheating in the patients' buildings.

There should be steam tables, which are lacking in all except the hospital building, and hot plates, and small stoves and serving units such as are found in any well-equipped hospital, in order that warm and palatable food could be served.

3. Present equipment does not permit any satisfactory food transportation service to outlying buildings.

4. Diets for patients are poorly balanced, but are more adequate for employes. The committee is of the opinion that the superintendent is compelled to feed the employes a better diet in order to retain the inadequate staff he has. We understand that the food budget runs 60.83 per year per person according to the latest figures, and that the expenditure per meal per person (including employes) is 0.0952.

5. It is essential that a dietician, who has not been available since 1943, be employed to supervise the planning and preparation of food. Menus should not be planned by chief cook as at present.

NOTE: The Committee will furnish further detailed data if needed to clarify or supplement the above summary.

CONCLUSIONS:

1. The physical plant of the institution is in many respects obsolete, inefficient, unsafe and inadequate. It is badly overcrowded. The equipment for preparation and distribution of food is particularly inadequate.
2. The institution is greatly understaffed in all departments, and the training and background of the employes is inadequate.
3. Because of the above, the care of patients is not satisfactory in some respects:
  - a. The diet is inadequate and not well balanced.
  - b. The children, particularly younger ones, were inadequately clothed.
  - c. The patients, especially the most handicapped younger children, have too little individual care for their physical needs.

CONCLUSIONS CONTINUED -

- d. The program of recreation and education is vague and inadequate.
4. The Committee wishes to state that, while defects were noted in administration, it is of the opinion that with personnel gravely limited both as to training and numbers, with equipment seriously inadequate in many respects, and with inadequate funds on which to operate, the superintendent has been severely handicapped, and the institution is being conducted as well as can be expected under the circumstances.
5. Salaries for all personnel in state institutions are governed and limited by grades under present civil service regulations. Under present classifications, physicians, nurses, attendants and other personnel with proper training and background cannot be secured within the salary limitations set up by state civil service.
6. The Committee feels that there can be no appreciable improvement in the conditions found until the physical plant can be made adequate, and more especially, until the employed staff has been made adequate in number and training, and until an adequate operational budget has been furnished. This is a serious responsibility of the people of this State.

THE COMMITTEE RESPECTFULLY MAKES THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The Legislature should be urged to provide a much increased budget not only for rehabilitation of the physical plant, but also for proper care and feeding of the patients. To this end
  - a. A firm of kitchen engineering consultants should be sent to this institution to survey the needs for adequate equipment for the proper preparation and distribution of food so that warm and palatable servings can be given. This is an immediate and urgent need.
  - b. The per capita budget for food should be at least doubled and should be sufficiently flexible to cover rises in the costs of foodstuffs. (Present expenditure per meal per person (including employes) at present is 0.0952).
  - c. The budget for payroll should be sufficient to provide the number of properly trained employes recognized nationally as necessary; the salaries paid should be sufficient to meet the competition of salaries paid elsewhere for similar employes; proper housing should be provided for employes as an essential part of such a program.
2. The Legislature should revise the Civil Service Law and Regulations to permit the hiring of adequate professional and attendant personnel at salaries which present competition demands.
3. When reasonable funds have been appropriated for this (and other institutions for care of the unfortunate wards of the State) efficient administration but not unreasonable economy should be demanded.

The committee believes that a check should be made on how much money was turned back to the state treasury from all state institutions last year and how much from the

REPORT

RE: STATE INSTITUTION FOR THE FEEBLEMINDED AT FARIBAULT

April 16, 1947 - Page 5

RECOMMENDATIONS CONTINUED -

institution at Faribault during the last biennium. It is shocking that children are compelled to eat the quality of food and the way it is prepared because of lack of funds to provide cooking facilities if money has been turned back for any reason.

Respectfully submitted,

*Theodore H. Sweetser*

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