

FIRST BIENNIAL REPORT

OF THE

STATE BOARD

OF

CORRECTIONS AND CHARITIES

TO THE

LEGISLATURE OF MINNESOTA.

FOR THE PERIOD ENDING JULY 31, 1884.

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## THE INSTITUTION FOR THE DEAF AND DUMB ,

has the handsomest public building in the State . Its industries are managed on a plan similar to that pursued in the Reform School, and with the same excellent result . We find but two deaf-mutes in the poor houses of the State , and hear of no deaf-mute tramps . The boys learn printing , tailoring , shoemaking or coopering ; the girls , dressmaking , sewing and house work . So far as we are able to judge , the instruction is thorough and efficient.

The shoe shop and tailor shop are in the basement , where they endanger the health of the pupils and expose the building to danger from fire . Separate shops should be provided.

The building is very inflammable , the interior being composed chiefly of wood . Two stone partition-walls run from basement to attic , but do not protect the building from fire , because there are no fire doors and the wooden roof unite the whole building . The same condition of things was discovered in the St . Peter hospital , several years ago ; brick walls were extended through the attic , to the top of the roof ; fire doors were put in and this precaution saved two-thirds of the building . A wooden door , covered with tin , in a brick wall , aided by a stream of water from the other side , saved a portion of the school for feeble-minded children in Ohio . It is found in practice that a tin covering on a wooden door has great power to resist heat .

We therefore deem it of the utmost importance that provision be made for dividing the building into three compartments in case of fire .

## THE SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND

is now well housed in its commodious new building . Owing to the building in progress , the school was considerably interfered with last year . Being now well equipped and furnished , and having an efficient superintendent and corps of teachers , prosperity and success are to be expected . The industries comprise broom-making for the boys ; bead-work , sewing by hand and on the machine , knitting , crocheting , etc. , for the girls . Music forms an important part of the curriculum . So far as we are able to judge , this school calls for no criticism nor any special legislation.

## THE SCHOOL FOR IDIOTS AND IMBECILES

has ceased to be an experiment . With its capacity increased to one hundred , and pupils ready to fill it , it is an established insti-

tution. No public charity is, in our judgment, more important or more beneficent than this. Anyone who has seen the lamentable condition of this class in county poor houses, their senseless gibbering, their loathsome appearance, their beastly feeding, their bantering or abuse by other paupers, will mark the contrast with the cleanliness, neatness and civilized appearance of the inmates of this school. If this gain were all, it would be much, but it is not the pauper class, nor, indeed, the children at all, who are most benefited. The chief blessing comes to the homes of respectable parents. An idiot child is a cause of continual sorrow and shame. Thoughtless children or adults ridicule or ill-treat the child, and the parents are embittered against their neighbors. Hence come quarrels and lasting feuds. A mother whose child is now at Faribault had not had a guest in her house for years, before the child was sent there. She could not for shame.

The legislature is now called upon to decide the future of this school. Is it to be confined to the more teachable class, as in the Kentucky institution, while less teachable idiots are rejected; or is it to receive all alike? On the former plan, the school will make a better showing; but the idiot class is the one from which society most needs relief. Shall a custodial department be provided, in which those unable to protect themselves, especially the females, shall be made permanent wards of the State? We do not hesitate to say yes. These weak-minded girls usually become the prey of bad men, and live only to multiply their kind; for their offspring are generally defective. There are now two sisters at Faribault, daughters of an imbecile mother, and having had several brothers and sisters who were defective. There is an imbecile woman in the Rice County poor house who has had several defective children and has to be watched constantly. There is a similar woman in the Nicolle County poor house. There is an idiot girl in Mower County poor house and an imbecile in Wabasha County poor house with whom it is probably only a matter of time when they will have offspring. These are but specimen cases. We believe that it is the highest economy for the State to take permanent charge of all such cases; therefore, we recommend that the request of the board of directors for an appropriation to build an additional wing and a separate custodial building, be granted.

The bills against these three institutions are rendered separately; the accounts are kept distinct by the steward, and sep-

urate statements made; but estimates have heretofore been made in gross by the board of directors, and appropriations have been voted in the same way for the three institutions. The two insane hospitals, although under the same board of trustees, dealing with the same class of inmates, have always had entirely distinct funds. The three institutions at Faribault deal with distinct classes of inmates, and are, of necessity, run on very different scales of expenditure. We see no good reason why the same rule should not apply as to the insane hospitals. We therefore recommend that distinct estimates and separate appropriations be made for each of these institutions.

We submit herewith classified comparative statements of the expenses of these institutions *per capita* for the past four years.

#### ANNUAL INVENTORY .

In all our State institutions there are large accumulations of movable property, increasing from year to year. This property is under the care of the superintendents and stewards. In the First Insane Hospital it has been customary to take an annual inventory; but since the first of 1880, no inventory has been published. In the Reform School a partial inventory is taken each year; but the practice does not prevail, so far as we are informed, in the other State institutions. An annual inventory enables both the superintendent and trustee to trace property from year to year, and affords an essential element in determining accurately the *per capita* expense. In ten years' time the First Hospital for the Insane accumulated nearly \$50,000 worth of movable property from current expenditures. In other words, the apparent current expenses were about \$5,000 a year in excess of the actual amount of material consumed. Such inventories are required and found useful in other states.

We recommend that the managers of State institutions and county poor houses and public hospitals be required by law to cause an accurate inventory to be taken of all public property on hand at the close of each fiscal year; real estate and permanent improvements being listed at their cost, as nearly as can be ascertained; movable property being listed at its actual estimated value.

#### PROPERTY ACCOUNTS .

Warden Reed, of the State Prison, has established a store-room, appointed a storekeeper, and organized a system of issue