

SEVENTH BIENNIAL REPORT

OF THE

STATE BOARD

OF

CORRECTIONS AND CHARITIES

TO THE

LEGISLATURE OF MINNESOTA,

FOR THE BIENNIAL PERIOD ENDING JULY 31, 1896.



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plan. Schools of this class are necessarily expensive, owing to the necessity of employing teachers of special training and the amount of individual attention required.

THE SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND.

This school continues to maintain a high standard. The attendance has fallen off during the past year, which is a testimony to the faithfulness of the managers of the school. There is a strong pressure for the admission of adults to the school for asylum care, and many such cases make a strong appeal to the sympathies. It would be easy to increase the numbers and decrease the per capita expense of the school by admitting such persons; but the school is not an asylum, and its use for that purpose would doubtless interfere seriously with its proper work as an educational institution. We believe, therefore, that the action of the directors and superintendent should be sustained.

The accommodations are sufficient for the present number of pupils; but any large increase in the attendance will call for further increase of accommodations. An appropriation is asked for a stable, which ought to be built, as the present stable stands in front of the institution and is little better than a shanty. They ask, also, for an appropriation to connect the superintendent's cottage with the heating plant, which is a desirable change.

THE SCHOOL FOR THE FEEBLE-MINDED.

The new custodial building, for which appropriations were made by the last legislature, has been completed and is being rapidly filled up. This building increases the capacity of the institution to about 600 inmates, and a sufficient number of applications is already on file to fill the building. The number of inmates Nov. 30, 1896, was 515.

The wisdom of providing custodial care for the inmates of this school, especially for the young women, is manifest to the most casual observer. Secretary Ernest Bicknell of the Indiana Board of State Charities read a paper at the Minnesota State Conference of Charities and Corrections in November, 1895, which exhibits a startling array of facts. Mr. Bicknell has collected statistics concerning 887 children of feeble-minded parents in Indiana, belonging to 218 families. Of these 887 persons, 562, or 63.2 per cent, were mentally deficient, and in 100 of the 248 families the history of feeble-mindedness has been found extending through more than one generation. A very large portion of the feeble-minded population is necessarily a charge upon the public, either in almshouses or state

institutions. Those who are a public charge are likely to be such for an average period of at least, twenty-five years, at a cost to the public of not less than \$100 per year. Those who are not dependent upon the public are usually dependent on their friends, and the cost of caring for such persons, either in institutions or at home, cannot be less than \$100 per year. The census records in 1890 showed 1,451 feeble-minded persons in the State of Minnesota, whose maintenance must have cost at least \$140,000 per year, the income at five per cent of \$2,800,000. The economy of preventing this kind of dependency is manifest, to say nothing of the misery which may be prevented both to these unfortunate people and to their parents and friends.

The board of directors, several years ago, established a separate ward for epileptic girls, and they have now made arrangements to establish a similar ward for epileptic boys. A considerable number of epileptics drift into the School for the Feeble-Minded, and the establishment of separate wards is a great benefit both to the epileptics and to the feeble-minded. The board of directors now ask the legislature to provide a building for the special care of epileptics, having become satisfied from the experiment thus far made that there is need for such special provision. This request opens up the whole question of provision for epileptics. It is only very recently that institutions for this class have been established. The first one was opened at Gallipolis, Ohio, in November, 1893. It already contains 600 inmates, and there is an increasing pressure for admission. The State of New York opened the "Craig Colony for Epileptics" at Sonyea in 1805, and the institution is having a rapid development. Propositions are on foot for similar institutions in other states. Michigan is now building an institution at Lapeer to be known as the "Home for Feeble-Minded and Epileptics/"

There is no doubt that the opening of a special department for children of this class will meet a public want, and it will undoubtedly increase the pressure for admission to the institution. We have probably not less than 1,000 epileptics in the State of Minnesota, of whom many would be glad to avail themselves of such an institution. A large proportion of these epileptics are able to contribute to their own support *by* labor and are glad to do so. The number of employes in the Ohio institution for epileptics, with 600 children, is reported to be only thirty-five, and one large ward is conducted by the inmates with the supervision of a single man,

We think that the legislature should now consider distinctly whether *they* are prepared to enter this field, for the reason that

this action will definitely commit the state to a large and important work. If the state is to undertake this great work, we think that it will be the best policy for the state to establish a new and distinct institution.

We recommend that the legislature investigate thoroughly the institutions already established in other states before entering upon so large an undertaking.

THE STATE PUBLIC SCHOOL.

The work of the State Public School has been seriously impeded during the past year by the prevalence of an epidemic which prevented both the reception and the placing out of the children. The number of children discharged or temporarily dismissed during the year ending July 31, 1896, was 239, as against 302 for the year ending July 31, 1895; and the number of children admitted during the year was only 130, as against 224 for the preceding year. The school employs two agents, who are constantly employed and are doing good work. Rigid quarantine regulations have been established for all children now received until their health and conditions have been demonstrated. It is believed that this will prevent epidemics hereafter.

The board of control ask for an appropriation for additional buildings. This enlargement this board hesitates to recommend. We are of the opinion that it will be possible to do the work of the school with its present facilities, if it is not interfered with by epidemics. The school is accumulating a considerable number of crippled children who cannot be readily placed in homes. We are inclined to favor the experiment of paying board for such children temporarily in families, as is done in Massachusetts, in the hope that homes can be found for them with those who will keep them.

THE STATE TRAINING SCHOOL.

The State Training School continues to increase in population. The number of inmates Nov. 30, 1896, was 376, as against 366 on Nov. 30, 1896; 349 Nov. 30, 1894, and 338 Nov. 30, 1893.

The school is now full, and the board of managers ask an appropriation to construct an additional cottage to accommodate fifty boys.

The establishment of the state agency by the legislature of two years ago has resulted very satisfactorily. The board of managers appointed Miss Grace Johnston as agent, and Miss Johnston has shown extraordinary capability and efficiency. As a result of her work, the board has been able to place discharged children much

The commission recommends that the legislature make a sufficient appropriation to build the administration building and the four hospital wards, steward's office, store building, boiler and engine room, kitchen, bakery, laundry and barn. These should be entirely completed before a patient is admitted into the institution.

The cost of these buildings will be \$313,044.

THE STATE SOLDIERS' HOME.

The trustees of the State Soldiers' Home ask for no special appropriations aside from the usual appropriation for extraordinary improvements and repairs.

THE MINNESOTA INSTITUTE FOR DEFECTIVES.

School for the Deaf.

For new smokestack	\$2,000
For deep well, pump, tank, pipe and connection	4,250
For engine for machinery	600
For shop machinery	250
For trades building and gymnasium for girls	18,000
Total	\$25,100

School for the Blind.

For barn for stock, wagons and hay "es."	\$1,000
For extending steam heat to cottage "es."	800
For finishing hospital "es."	500
Total	\$2,300

School for the Feeble-Minded.

For epileptic custodial building—furnishing, lighting, heating and water complete "es."	\$80,000
For stock and storage barn, for sixty cows, horses, hogs, storage for hay, grain and farm machinery "es."	5,000
For shop and training rooms	20,000
For dynamo and power "es."	3,500
Total	\$108,500

The board of directors say, in their biennial report:

Two years ago we presented the necessity of additional room for this department, urging the building and equipment of an additional custodial building, a central heating and lighting plant, and the completion of an unfinished wing of the girls' custodial.

The legislature responded in full to our estimate, which, with the strictest economy, proved sufficient for the work.

The most urgent applications for admission to this department still continue to be made, many of which are most pathetic and distressing in their nature.

It is impossible for us to receive them without further room. We have now present 514 inmates and on file 185 applications, some of which will be admitted in a few days.

In providing additional room it is planned to make another important classification, and provide for the epileptics in separate quarters. We have now the school and administration building where the educable children live and are taught and trained; the two custodials, one for the boys and one for the girls, where the low grade imbeciles are cared for. With these latter are now mingled epileptics of the milder type; and in the south wing of the school building is kept a colony of our worst cases of epilepsy, numbering about forty. In providing additional quarters we propose a building similar in size and equipment to the custodials now occupied, for a colony of epileptics, which might properly be called the hospital department. The difference in the necessary treatment of these classes would thus become easier, more systematic and less expensive per capita, and relieve many of our simple-minded children from the fright incident to witnessing painful convulsions.

The financial stringency now prevailing makes us timid in asking the funds which we need to meet the special wants of the several schools under our charge, but the law requires us to report our limitations, and the legislature must assume the responsibility of giving or withholding the means for the enlargement of the work.

We insist that none of these items have been padded. We cannot agree to provide any one of them for less than our estimate. Second, that those marked "es." we deem essential—the rest important.

THE STATE PUBLIC SCHOOL.

State Agency,

For the year ending July 31, 1808, including the continuous annual appropriation of \$1,500.....	\$5,000.00
For the year ending July 31, 1899, including the continuous annual appropriation of \$1,500.....	5,000.00

Extraordinary Repairs and Improvements.

For the year ending July 31, 1898.....	1,800.00
For the year ending July 31, 1899.....	1,800.00

Equipments and Buildings.

For a schoolhouse and cottage residence, including heating (which will require one new boiler), lighting, sewer, plumbing and furniture.....	25,000.00
For changing the present schoolhouse into a cottage.....	1,500.00
For library.....	800.00
For additional land (eighty acres).....	3,500.00
Totals.....	\$44,400.00

Supt. G. A. Merrill writes as follows:

The following supplementary statement concerning the special appropriations recommended by the board of control for the State Public School is offered:

State Agency.—The sum of \$500 per year has been added to the amounts heretofore appropriated for the state agency, for the reason that the board desires to have more personal work done in investigating the homes of applicants for children. The sure way of doing the best work in placing children in homes is to personally visit and investigate the home of every applicant before allowing him to take a child.

Equipments and Buildings.—The board recommends the erection of a new schoolhouse and the conversion of the present schoolhouse into a cottage for boys. The present school building contains four rooms and has seating capacity for 140 pupils. The average daily attendance of children of school age during the past two years was 176. The need of this building was felt two