

PRESENTATION TO THE LEGISLATIVE BUILDING COMMISSION  
BY THE  
MINNESOTA ASSOCIATION FOR RETARDED CHILDREN

SEPTEMBER 14, 1962

As an Association, we are impressed with the careful and thorough study of the Building Commission. We have followed your work closely and wish to thank you for your interest in the problem of mental retardation.

We feel that it is urgent that steps be taken to eliminate overcrowding in institutions for the retarded. It is also urgent that old, inadequate buildings be eliminated.

We know that you are very aware of these needs. Our recommendations, however, are not made with a view toward informing you but to reflect the genuine concern of parents of retarded and other members of our Association.

Except for the Building Commission and the Department of Welfare, no group has studied the building needs of these institutions more closely. We hope that our views are helpful to you as you pursue your difficult task.

As of June 5, 1962, the Faribault State School and Hospital was overcrowded by 33%; 3,317 beds were in use in dormitories or in the institution hospitals. This represents a total overcrowding of 820 beds (33%) based on minimum standards of 60 square feet per bed.

The Cambridge State School and Hospital reports 17% overcrowding, based on 60 square feet per bed (most states use 70 square feet per bed as a minimum). According to national health standards, Cambridge is 28% overcrowded.

The State Fire Marshall has stated that the present overcrowded condition makes it impossible for the attendants to get to the patient and render assistance in the event of a fire emergency. There should be a minimum of three feet between beds

Brainerd State School and Hospital reports no overcrowding at this time.

Overcrowding in the Minnesota institutions for the mentally retarded is serious and prevents adequate care of patients. Vigorous efforts should be made to improve this condition.

### Faribault State School and Hospital

While there are many buildings and facilities at Faribault State School and Hospital which are as good as will be found in any state institution, there are also buildings and facilities there so poor as to have no equal elsewhere in the state.

As early as 1956, the Faribault Superintendent presented a priority schedule for the replacement of inadequate dormitories. The buildings are all in use today with one exception. One of the three colony buildings mentioned caught fire and was so badly damaged that it was razed. The other two remaining colony buildings are fire traps and provide accommodations that are so primitive that committee members, viewing them, were shocked. These are scheduled for replacement if Amendment #2 passes.

The many details involved in establishing dormitory building priorities at Faribault State School and Hospital and elsewhere is beyond the scope of our organization. However, we are cognizant of the needs and wish to express deep concern that prompt consideration be given to the problems of inadequate housing.

In 1956, the Faribault Superintendent and staff expressed their concern over the kitchen and food distribution systems. In January, 1958, Mr. A. C. Avery, U. S. Navy, an expert on food handling and preparation, was invited to inspect and appraise their facilities. This report clearly defined the many shortcomings of their food service system.

Again in May, 1961, Mr. Avery surveyed the Faribault kitchen. In his report, he states, "In the opinion of the undersigned, this feeding system is one of the most outmoded, unsanitary and inefficient facilities that he has surveyed. What they have at Faribault is less than minimal and it is a travesty of what a fine state like Minnesota should be providing the dedicated personnel at Faribault to do a decent job. Faribault is riding a dangerous road along the ragged edge of disaster." He suggested a thorough survey be initiated, conducted by competent personnel.

The 1961 Legislature authorized an independent survey. Reports of the survey team indicate that they are in total agreement with Mr. Avery on the gross inadequacy of the facility and the need for a new food service building.

WE RECOMMEND THAT PRIORITY CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW FOOD SERVICE AND HANDLING BUILDING AT FARIBAULT STATE SCHOOL AND HOSPITAL, IN KEEPING WITH MODERN DAY PRINCIPLES MUCH APPLY TO SUCH A FACILITY.

### Cambridge State School and Hospital

Cambridge State School and Hospital's general building program represents genuine needs of the institution and should be given careful consideration.

### Brainerd State School and Hospital

The Brainerd State School and Hospital has not as yet developed a state of overcrowding in its dormitory buildings. Generally, requests for additional buildings in the years ahead are based on the systematic increase of its capacity.

### **Brainerd State School and Hospital (continued)**

The one critical building need of this institution that the committee observed was for a School and Rehabilitation Therapies Building. Testifying before the Governor's Advisory Committee on Mental Retardation, Mr. Peterson, the Superintendent, said, "This proposed building is nothing less than the Heart of this institution. The primary therapeutic functions of Brainerd State School and Hospital are handicapped and condemned to superficiality without it". The committee whole-heartedly agreed with this statement, therefore:

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT PRIORITY CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF A SCHOOL AND REHABILITATION THERAPIES BUILDING AT BRAINERD STATE SCHOOL AND HOSPITAL. THE TOTAL EDUCATIONAL AND THERAPEUTIC PROGRAMS OF THIS INSTITUTION WILL REMAIN AT A PRACTICAL STANDSTILL UNTIL THIS FACILITY IS COMPLETED.

### Owatonna State School

Owatonna State School's request for new buildings has been considered by the committee and it concurs with the Owatonna administration's recommended priorities.

NEEDED DORMITORY REPLACEMENTS FOR THE  
FARIBAULT STATE SCHOOL AND HOSPITAL

1956 Schedule

<u>REPLACEMENT SCHEDULE</u>	<u>BUILDING</u>	<u>NO. INMATES</u>
FIRST	Grandview - old men's dormitory (5 miles out - isolated - not fireproof, food supplies trucked out - a separate kitchen is maintained)	70 old men
SECOND	Three "Colony" buildings (very poor shape - in need of repair - not fireproof - day area and dining rooms in basement)	150 men
THIRD	Two buildings - Skinner Hall group (Daisy and Iris) - (old - very crowded, not fireproof)	120 girls
FOURTH	Hillcrest (old - not fireproof, frame building - dayroom in basement)	60 boys
FIFTH	Sunnyside (old - very crowded - very limited day space - very inadequate yard space)	300 boys and men
		<hr/> 700 Total