

SPEECH - CALEDONIA, MINN.

April 21, 1965

Mr. Chairman, Governor, and Mrs. Rolvaag,  
Mr. Speaker and Mrs. Duxbury,  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

On behalf of the Minn. Assoc. for Retarded Children, its over 4500 dues paying members, its 64 local associations, and on behalf of Minnesota's 100,000 retarded, over 6,000 of whom reside in our State Institutions, may I express our individual and collective heartfelt thanks for your being here tonight.

I am certain you would not be here tonight if each of you did not desire to help the retarded who live in both our communities and institutions receive the care, treatment and training which they so desperately need, so richly deserve, but now so woefully lack.

I am also happy to be here for two personal reasons:

- 1) It's my 41st birthday, and 2) for 20 years I have wanted to come to Caledonia and meet the parents of a young boy who was killed on Okinawa while serving in my machine gun section. He was a true friend and an excellent Marine.

The purpose of this meeting is FOUR-FOLD:

- 1) To describe our Minnesota's 100,000 retarded;
- 2) To describe how all can be helped;
- 3) To define the needs of the retarded in both our communities and institutions; and
- 4) To explain what our Association firmly believes the 1965 Legislature and Governor can and should do to help meet these needs.

FIRST: Who are Minnesota's 100,000 retarded? They range in age from babies to those over 65; they range in IQ from that which can't be measured to those having IQ's of 75 to 80; they are children and adults who have a permanent mental deficiency which can't be cured; most are not mentally ill; many have physical handicaps; most are some of the least fortunate members of our society, yet there is no such child or adult who cannot be helped; they were formerly called idiots, imbeciles and morons; today we call them profoundly, severely, moderately and mildly retarded; Approximately 70,000 are mildly retarded;

approximately 30,000 are profoundly, severely and moderately retarded; approximately 12,000 are under state guardianship, and over 6,000<sup>are</sup> in our state institutions. 1200

SECOND: It is exciting to know that today those profoundly and severely retarded, who 15 years ago were thought incapable of help can be taught to sit up, to walk, to feed and toilet themselves, and occasionally to talk, provided enough staff employees are provided; it is exciting to know that the moderately retarded can profit from special educational classes, sheltered workshops and be trained to be more independent and in a few cases to secure employment. It is exciting to know that the mildly retarded can be trained for independent employment and living; but it is equally frustrating to know that in each category, we are about 30 years behind in practice and experience from our knowledge. We need more action and services and fewer pilot projects. I favor astronauts going to the moon but if they get there before our institutionalized retarded receive no more than bare survival care, if that, or our community retarded are still denied any education, or training in activity centers and workshops, or vocational training, I for one will be most unhappy.

THIRD AND FOURTH: WHAT ARE THE NEEDS AND WHAT DOES OUR ASSOCIATION BELIEVE THIS 1965 LEGISLATURE SHOULD AND CAN DO TO MEET THEM?

A. COMMUNITY SERVICES:

1) EDUCATION:

In Minnesota we have special classes for 7,000 retarded; but there are 12,000 to 16,000 who are not, but should be served. There are 66 classes for the trainable who have IQs of 30 to 50. Yet, we have 3,900 more than the 500 now being served in trainable classes ... Thus we are recommending that this legislature increase the \$3600 ceiling on state aid to a ceiling of 4,800, in order that the 1957 legislature intent can be carried out to pay state aids of 2/3 of teachers' salaries. *we* also recommend that state aids of up to \$900 per child be voted to permit

rural students to be boarded and roomed close to home for such education.

- 2) DAY ACTIVITY CENTERS: These centers serve children who do not qualify for special classes of the trainable or educable type, yet are children who can live at home if such a center is provided. In 1953 Minnesota had 2 centers. In 1961, 9 centers; and in 1963, 26 center; In 1965 we had 23 centers receiving state aids and an additional 12 to 13 receiving no state aids; none of the 23 state supported centers received the 50% state aid required by law. Their known waiting lists totaled over 121 and their last year's budgets totaled \$258,000. There are 13 centers desperately needing but receiving no state aids. More will develop during the next 2 years. We are therefore recommending that this legislature appropriate \$525,000 for state aids; that rent be a matching item; that the 25 cents per capita assessment be removed because of the hardship on rural communities; and that the law be made clear that county funds may match state aids. There is no fat in this request.

- 3) OPPORTUNITY WORKSHOP IN MINNEAPOLIS is one of, if not the best vocational training and sheltered workshop centers in the nation, but Minnesota is lagging behind in this development. We need many more than 2 exclusively for, or 12, in which the retarded participate. State aids are needed now.... We recommend that this legislature pass the Sheltered Workshop Bill now introduced which will cost \$200,000.

#### B. INSTITUTIONS:

THE TOPIC OF MY SPEECH SHOULD BE, "WE ARE CONCERNED WITH OVER 6,000 HUMAN BEINGS, NOT 6,000 HOGS OR COWS.

You may feel that this statement and the following two statements are too strong or are unbelievable, but let me assure you, they are completely true.

- (1) 1) There are NO state institutions which are so grossly and inhumane understaffed as the institutions for the retarded at Faribault <sup>which serves</sup> ~~(which serves Houston County, in fact, Hennepin County,~~ and all of southern Minnesota), Cambridge, and Brainerd, nor as overcrowded as Faribault, with Cambridge a close second, nor any with as many old, firetrap, obsolete, inadequate buildings as Faribault.

(2) I have personally seen these institutions for the retarded many times during the past 13 years and all the institutions for the mentally ill last spring, while on Gov. Rolvaag's bus tours, and this is true beyond a shadow of a doubt. (The daughter of one of my dear friends lost her 9 year old daughter, who had chicken pox and a fever undiscovered for too long - a child severely retarded, blind and multiply handicapped. Some would say, "Was not this a blessing?" I say unto you, each child, each adult, you and I are God's children, and neither you nor I can say or pass this judgment on any of God's children.)

- 2) I was born in a farm area, and my relatives are farmers. I have nothing but the greatest respect for farmers; but do you know that our Minnesota dairy cows have a better ratio, in other words, more herdsmen than do our institutionalized retarded have staff or aids for our retarded. I recently checked with the Dairy Industry and the University of Minnesota, and they claim that an average herdsman can take care of 30 dairy cows; with a lot of mechanization, he can handle 40 cows. At the University of Minnesota Dairy School at Rosemount, 1 herdsman, 1 assistant herdsman, 2 milkers, and 1 laborer, not counting student weekend help, take care of 125 dairy cows. These employees don't feed or clean up the manure. Yet we ask our aids or technicians, <sup>MANY OF WHOM ARE</sup> ~~these sweet and~~ wonderful farmers and farm wives, to take care of 40, 50, 60, 80, 100 or 177 severely retarded children...I am sure the dairy farmer knows

what's best ... I am not critical of him ... But I know that no aid employed at our state institutions can possibly take care of that number of kids .. IF YOU OR I WENT HOME AND SAID TO OUR WIVES, HONEY, I THINK WE SHOULD HAVE 30, 40, 80 or 100 KIDS FOR YOU TO TAKE CARE OF ALL BY YOURSELF, SHE WOULD WALK OUT, SLAM THE DOOR, AND SERVE US WITH A SUMMONS AND COMPLAINT FOR DIVORCE THAT SAME EVENING ...

One Republican Senator from the Western part of the state recently said, and I am going to quote him correctly - I have misquoted him in the past as being a hog farmer instead of a cattle farmer -- "I went to Cambridge with one of my constituents to see his child. I saw a peaked boy who never got out of his dormitory because there was no fenced in play yard or enough staff to get him outside. I am a cattle farmer; I would not think of building a new cattle barn without building an exercise pen; we are dealing with human beings, not cattle. ....

Minnesota has 3 principal institutions for the retarded; Brainerd with approximately 1200 patients; Cambridge with approximately 2000 patients; and Faribault with approximately 3000, or a total of over 6200 patients who are retarded.

Do you know that of this total -

- 1) 51% or over 3000 receive medications daily
- 2) 34% or over 2000 are physically handicapped
- 3) 24% or approx. 1500 are not now toilet trained
- 4) 16% or about 1000 are not now feeding themselves; 20,180 are fed per week.
- 5) 10% or approx. 600 are not now ambulatory
- 6) 8% or approx. 500 are now bedridden.

Do you know that since 1957, dramatic changes have occurred in our retarded institutional population?

- 1) The mildly retarded have decreased from 1550 to 677.
- 2) The moderately retarded have decreased from 2375 to 1670.
- 3) The profoundly and severely retarded have increased from 1100 to 3401.
- 4) The institution population has increased from 4800 to over 6000, but had there not been an increase in education classes with enrollments from 3300 to 7400 and an increase in day activity centers from 40 to over 500 in our communities, the institution population would have increased to 7596, as opposed to a little over 6000.

Our Association has compared our staff ratios with Big Ten State Averages, National Averages, The standards of the AAMD, which is the equivalent of the AHA and the AHA, and our Minnesota shortage of staff is gross, and pitiful, in comparison.

~~WHAT AM I TALKING ABOUT?~~ About 6 weeks ago I saw Linden Cottage at Faribault, the newest and best. I saw 126 young boys, most of whom were in wheelchairs, most of whom were messing their pants, most of whom were not feeding themselves, and 30 of whom were bedridden. These children were there because their parents could not have them at home. They would drive the normal kids crazy. The parents could not afford lifetime care of \$30 to \$35. per day; no private hospital would take them; and they could not compete with their normal brothers and sisters and would be most unhappy at home. I asked Supt. Engberg why the 30 were in bed. He said, "The only reason is 'we don't have the staff' ". I then talked with one nurse on duty who had over 700 patients under her care. (HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF ONE NURSE IN ANY PRIVATE HOSPITAL IN YOUR COMMUNITY WHO HAD TO TAKE CARE OF 700 PATIENTS?) She and 3 aids told me that almost all of the 126 boys could learn to walk, to toilet, to feed themselves ... THIS IS SHOCKING...

DO YOU AND I WANT IT ON OUR CONSCIENCES THAT WE HAVE SENT THE RETARDED TO STATE HOSPITALS THAT ARE NOT ACCREDITED? THAT MAKE BED PATIENTS OUT OF CHILDREN WHO CAN WALK; THAT DICTATE A LIFETIME OF MESSED AND SOILED PANTS FOR CHILDREN WHO CAN LEARN TO TOILET; OR A LIFETIME OF BEING FED FOR THOSE WHO CAN BE TRAINED TO FEED THEMSELVES ..... I have personally felt too many wet bottoms (75 to 100); seen too many boils, fights, scars, wounds and deaths to not be concerned....Have you seen the cockroaches at Faribault? I have. Have you seen the retarded grasp your hand, touch you, give anything to talk to you because they are so starved for affection? I have. Do you know that the proposed solution for <sup>an</sup> affection-starved boy who bit people, was total extraction of his teeth? ~~No~~.

## HOW MANY EMPLOYEES DO WE HAVE AT OUR INSTITUTIONS FOR THE RETARDED?

1) Faribault with 3,000 patients has 766 employees, of which 439 are patient care workers.

2) Cambridge with 2000 patients has <sup>608</sup>559 employees, of which <sup>330</sup>177 are patient care workers. (Thus, we have 1704 employees, of which 946 are patient care workers)..

3) *Annand w/ 1200 patients has 330 employees of which 177 are patient care workers*

Our association took a survey Sept. 9 and 10, 1965, at each institution, and at almost every dormitory. For example, at Faribault there were only 88 patient care workers on the morning shift - 79 during the afternoon shift and 31 during the night shift for over 3,000 kids and adults. Remember, that it takes 3 8-hour shifts per day -- 7, not 5 days per week -- for 365 days per year and add sick leave and vacations, and you find it takes 5 to 6 people to fill one position.

Our survey showed conclusively that if we are to meet reasonable minimal standards, we need 2373 patient care workers, rather than the 946 we now have, or a total of 1434 more staff. *Just*

*must* ← The Dept. of Welfare and our Association have recommended that this legislature appropriate approx. 7 million for the next two years to hire 833 new employees, of which 540 would take care of patients, or in other words, 1/3 of the total needed. There is not one ounce of fat or frill in our legislative requests ... Thus, we say that Governor Rolvaag's request of 578 should be restored to our figure .... He has recommended more staff than any other Governor to my knowledge .. and has publicly acknowledged that he would support our figure, if the Legislature so provided.

*Indubitably*  
YOU MAY ASK, WHY ARE THE RETARDED TODAY OUR UNTOUCHABLES?

There are 5 basic reasons:

- 1) There is a general philosophy in our state and nation that we must do so much for so many who need so little help, and so little for so few who need so much help....
- 2) Before 1950 too many parents of retarded children would not admit they had a retarded child and were willing to settle for a bone for their child instead of a bone with a little meat on it ... Likewise, too many citizens and legislators have not really seen

our community services and institutions, or have, like many parents, developed an ostrich like attitude toward them and have erroneously concluded that the retarded can't be helped .. Likewise, for too many years our dedicated and fine employees of the Department of Welfare and institutions have lost too many legislative battles to now effectively advocate and fight for what they know is right for the retarded.

- 3) Modern medicine has substantially increased the length of life or life span of the retarded.
- 4) For our institutions there has been a substantial increase in the number of severely retarded and a substantial decrease in the number of mildly and moderately retarded, and there has been a substantial reduction in the number of the most capable retarded working patients.
- 5) Also, our institutional population has increased by 2000 without a corresponding increase in the number of staff...

THERE IS ANOTHER PROBLEM CONFRONTING THE INSTITUTIONAL RETARDED AND THAT IS THE COMPLETE LACK OF PRIVACY AND THE HERD LIKE OVER-CROWDING OF THESE LOVELY RETARDED PEOPLE ...

- A. There is no overcrowding at Brainerd.
- B. There are 400 to 500 children so overcrowded at Cambridge that no Iowa or Minnesota farmer would think of putting his cows so close together ...
- C. Faribault is much worse, it is like the difference between night and day ... There are 800 so overcrowded and an additional 695 living in buildings which would not be open today if operated by private enterprise, but would be closed by both the fire marshall and the Department of Health ... There are also a total of 750 patients on the hard core waiting list, or a total of 2750 beds needed now -- not 20 years from now ...

D. Our Association has recommended that this Legislature appropriate funds to build 900 new beds of the total needed of 2750.

Governor Holvaag has recommended 340 new beds and according to our latest information, the Legislature now intends to build 125 beds.

FOLKS - AT THIS RATE OF 125 BEDS PER SESSION, IT WILL TAKE

22 SESSIONS OR 44 YEARS TO MEET PRESENT BUILDING NEEDS .....

*is an early 200, not 100, for the state for the building*

We are asking for 525,000 for day care centers;

approximately \$2 Million for education; approximately 833 new employees for our institutions at a cost of \$7 Million for 2 years; and approximately 4 to 9 Million for construction of beds for the retarded, or a total of 13½ to 19 Million Dollars, or the equivalent of 13 to 19 miles of freeway, or the equivalent of a bottle of Bourbon per person for our State's population.

Can we afford it? I say, Yes .... Can we afford a mile of freeway? Can we afford a housewife to work a few months and draw unemployment compensation the rest of the year? Can we afford a Veteran to draw non-service compensation for life, or a farmer to receive payments to lime his fields, or subsidies for certain businesses, or foreign aid? OH YES, WE CAN AFFORD *these things*. The question is, "Do we have the will to *do the job for the handicapped?*"

Governor Holvaag, our legislators and citizens are more aware of the needs of the retarded than ever before in our history... We anticipate that the 1965 Legislature will make substantial progress for the retarded in both our communities and institutions....However, having worked for the retarded for 13 years, and having felt like Sonny Liston knocked out for the count, I do not plan to be unrealistic...

If you believe, like I, that the retarded can be helped -- if your eyes see the needs of the retarded -- then and only then will I be confident that we can achieve success!!!

But unless you and I will tell our legislators that we are willing to pay more taxes for the retarded, and unless the two parties will compromise on taxes, little, if any, progress will be made. *Just* ✓

(over)

10.

Do we have the Will?

Do we really believe what Jesus Christ said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these, my Brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Thank you.

Melvin D. Heckt.