

Minnesota Institute for Defective Children.

FOURTH BIENNIAL REPORT

OF

THE DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS

OF THE

MINNESOTA INSTITUTE

FOR DEFECTIVE CHILDREN:

1. SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF.
2. SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND.
3. SCHOOL FOR THE FEEBLE-MINDED.

LOCATED IN FARIBAULT,

TO THE GOVERNOR OF MINNESOTA,

FOR THE TWO YEARS ENDING JULY 31st, 1886.



TRANSMITTED TO THE LEGISLATURE OF THE TWENTY-FIFTH SESSION:
BEING THE FOURTH BIENNIAL SESSION.

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MINNESOTA HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

SCHOOL FOR FEEBLE-MINDED.

REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT.

SCHOOL FOR FEEBLE-MINDED

OFFICERS AND TEACHERS.

1884-5.

1885-6.

SUPERINTENDENT.

GEORGE H. KNIGHT, M. D.

A. C. ROGERS, M. D.

ASSISTANT.

JOSEPH MASSEY.

JOSEPH MASSEY.

MATRON.

MISS LOTTIE HELMER.

MISS NAOMI PINCH.

TEACHERS.

MISS M. E. POWERS,

MISS LAURA BAKER,

MISS HATTIE WILSON.

MISS MINNIE GILMORE,

MISS JULIA GILMORE.

REPORT.

To the Board of Directors,

GENTLEMEN: In presenting the fourth biennial report of the Minnesota Training School for Imbeciles, as I have been personally familiar with its affairs during only eleven months of the biennial period, I shall (1) refer to matters pertaining to this time; (2) submit such statistical data as I have been able to obtain, and (3) present the scheme of classification which we have adopted, with (4) an analysis of the work being done by the children.

In taking charge of the school Sept. 1, 1885, no change was made in the plan of organization, and my one purpose was to maintain and develop to greater usefulness the work already so well begun. One teacher was added to the school force, and the routine of duty was performed in a very satisfactory manner, with the household enjoying excellent health during the first four months, when we were so unfortunate as to be visited by an endemic of diphtheria, which seriously interfered with our work and compelled us to assign to a smaller space an already over crowded population.

With the details of the management during this depressing period of nine weeks, including January and February, 1886, you are already thoroughly familiar, as you are also with the fact that we had more than our proportion of sickness immediately following, viz.: during the months of March and April; also, that we instigated a careful inquiry, with the aid of expert medical counsel, to ascertain the source of the contagion, and it only remains for me to summarize briefly for this report as follows, viz.: (1) The circumstances pertaining to the outbreak of the disease led to the conclusion that the contagion was introduced at Christmas time by means of some article of clothing; (2) that while twenty-five children and four employes were attacked by diphtheria, only one died, four or five made long,

tedious recoveries, and in the remainder of the cases the disease appeared in a more or less mild form;—(It should be mentioned that in two of the apparently mild cases paresis followed in one, and the general health of the other, an employe, was so impaired that she has since been compelled to abandon her position as children's attendant);—(3) the favorable hygienic conditions of the school undoubtedly assisted to modify the virulence of the endemic;—but (4) the additional crowding of a household already assigned to the minimum amount of room which a regard for normal hygienic requirements would permit, to furnish accommodations for nursing the sick, lowered its general standard of health and power to resist disease; hence the severity of the sickness following, from which four children died.

The total number of deaths which have occurred in the school since its organization is twenty-three, and they have occurred by years as follows, viz.: in 1881, 2; 1882, 2; 1883, 2; 1884, 3; 1885, 7; and in 1886, 7. The corresponding population has been approximately, 22, 30, 37, 45, 78 and 78 (considering the average for this year to November 15th). While I believe the above rate of mortality is higher than it would be generally with this class of children, owing to (1) the crowded condition of the buildings, and (2) the fact that the first children received into an institution of this kind are apt to be those of a weaker physical organization than the average, yet it must be remembered in considering this subject that when the privileges of the institution are extended to all grades as it is in Minnesota, and, as we believe, wisely, with no line of distinction or basis for selection, hospital care will always form an important feature of the work, and the mortality list will always be larger than with other defective children.

Observation shows that over one-half of feeble-minded children are predisposed to phthisis and scrofulous diseases,* and hence not only are their powers of nutrition feeble, rendering them easy prey to any debilitating influences, but they are especially susceptible to diseases of this character, provoked often by very slight exciting causes.

An analysis of the deaths here shows that about 70 per cent have been from diseases of a tubercular nature and 9 per cent

* *Kerlin*, 56 per cent; see proceedings Association of American Institutes for Feeble-minded, June, 1880.

Ireland, 61 per cent; "Idiocy and Imbecility," page 24.

Fish, 50 per cent; proceedings, etc., page 335.

Brown, 40 per cent of sickness, and 50 per cent of deaths, page 218.

from epilepsy, leaving 21 per cent to be about equally distributed between various causes incident to normal people. To realize the best results, our children must have *plenty of pure air* in their dormitories, sitting and school rooms, and at the same time they must be protected from *sudden and extreme changes of temperature*. No amount of care and watchfulness will insure these conditions unless the buildings are constructed with them in view.

We are almost entirely free from diseases of the skin and eye, which so often embarrass the medical attendants of public institutions.

STATISTICS.

	Male.	Female.	Total.
Applications received (to July 31, 1886)	142	74	216
Admissions (to July 31, 1886).....	105	49	154
	—	—	—
Leaving of the above not admitted	37	25	62
Deducting those rejected, etc	3	4	7
	—	—	—
There are on file requesting admission, July 31, 1886..	34	21	55
To correct the above to date, November 15th, add.....	9	6	15
	—	—	—
Total asking admission at this date.....	43	27	70

It is hardly necessary to present any further evidence, that the pressure for admissions exceeds the growth of accommodations.

It is very difficult to form any reliable estimate of the probable demand which will be made upon the institution except from its history so far, and the history of those in other states. Taking the Federal census of 1880 as a basis, and this, with all its imperfections, is undoubtedly the best authority we have ever had in this country on this matter, there are probably about 1,500 feeble-minded persons in Minnesota at present. It would be out of place here to discuss the various reasons why all census returns bearing upon this class are very imperfect, as they are, but it is sufficient for our purposes to know that only a very small per cent of the very young are reported, and it is the youngest which the school will benefit the most.* (See foot note.) As an illustration of this point, the state census for 1885, corrected by deducting all names from Rice County and such as the records of the school show have ever made application for admission to it, shows 292 feeble-minded persons in the State. Of this number only 20, or less than 7 per cent, are under 10 years of age, and 85, or 29 per cent, between 10 and 20 years, while 185, or 64 per cent are over 20 years of age. These returns have to do principally with those persons that are well known in their respective neighborhoods, while our work has largely to do with those children whose afflictions are not, as a rule, very much known outside of the family to which they belong. It is almost as certain as a demonstrated fact, that the institution will continue to be asked to accommodate children more rapidly than the State can make provision for them until at least three or four hundred are provided for, when, in all probability, further growth will be more commensurate with the growth of the commonwealth. The establishment of an institution for feeble-minded in any state is the opening of a safety valve for the relief of an under pressure, after which it requires some time for the social forces to regain their normal equilibrium.

I estimate the average attendance for the next two years will be one hundred and fifty.

* This refers to the *School* part of the institution. The custodial department will have to do especially with adults, and one of the most useful functions which it will perform for society will be caring for adult females.

CLASSIFICATION.

The distinction inaugurated by my predecessor as to classification, which we believe to be the correct one, has been as rigidly maintained as the accommodations would permit. Those who seek the institution naturally group into two classes, which in the main are quite distinct and require different kinds of care and training. Each should have its own building constructed with special reference to the special requirements of its inmates, and the classification is made upon the basis of these requirements rather than from any scientific distinctions. We speak (1) of those who belong to the "*school and industrial*" department, or, better, the "*training school*," and (2) those who belong to the "*home*," "*custodial*" or "*asylum*" department. In the former are placed (a) improvable imbeciles and (b) cured epileptics or those who have passed several months without convulsions.

THE SCHOOL AND INDUSTRIAL DEPARTMENT.

as its name implies, is a "*training school*." In this are found that great variety of children in whom mental development has been arrested, but who are susceptible to improvement. A large percentage of this class is capable of becoming self-supporting when the means of instruction are adapted to their comprehension. I assume that you are already familiar with the details of our school methods, and present herewith an analysis of the

SCHOOL WORK

performed by the children at present in school, viz.: sixty-three; forty-three boys and twenty girls. (This analysis includes three children formerly in school but now in the other department, and one temporarily absent, making sixty-six.)

49 read some, of which number —

- 17 know words only;
- 9 know simple sentences;
- 13 read in primer;
- 10 read in school readers.

56 write some, of which number —

- 19 copy words or simple forms on slate or blackboard;
- 21 write words;
- 6 copy sentences or write some from dictation;
- 3 write letters from dictation;
- 7 compose and write letters alone.

65 know something of numbers —

- 18 only distinguish one from more than one;
- 13 count under 10;
- 17 count under 25;
- 7 count under 100;
- 5 add two digits and carry;
- 5 add indefinitely;
- 2 subtract;
- 4 count time on clock.

37 know something of geography —

- 19 know points of compass;
- 13 know town, county and state, and other rudiments.

49 know colors —

- 20 recognize primary ones;
- 11 know names of one or more;
- 18 know names of all the primary colors.

In my opinion, the best results from training feeble-minded children can only be obtained by combining

INDUSTRIAL TRAINING

with the work of the school room. Our children can only be occupied at one thing profitably for a short time, and as the work of the teachers is largely individual, a number of children in each school room are constantly unemployed. It is our rule to have as many as possible of these children detailed at such industrial training as we have been able to provide for them, thus alternating between the school room and the work room

during school hours. In this way the teacher can give more undivided attention to each recitation, whether individual or class, while the noisy, restless children who would otherwise increase her care are unconsciously receiving physiological training and developing character and self-respect in the production of tangible results of handicraft. The joy which the child manifests when it discovers its power to articulate some sound at which it has made repeated efforts, is only excelled by the pleasure it feels when some simple design has been cut out by the scroll saw or hammered in brass. It may be shy and reticent about exhibiting its newly-discovered vocal accomplishments, but every one it sees is shown its handiwork, while its eyes beam with delight and satisfaction. Our industrial opportunities have been rather limited, but we are able to present the following statement:

27 hammer brass (boys and girls) —

- 2 very well and work alone;
- 4 very well under supervision;
- 14 fairly well under supervision;
- 7 do some.

8 run scroll saw (boys) —

- 3 very well;
- 2 fairly well;
- 3 somewhat.

2 boys do laundry work.

A sewing training class is taught during the day, composed of such girls of the school department as can do but little or no house work; the brightest girls joining the class only one hour in the evening, four evenings in the week. As will be seen, this is organized for training rather than accomplishing quantity of work, yet during their first four weeks they hemmed 66 towels, 64 table napkins and 4 blackboard cloths; made 10 aprons and 5 pairs of suspenders, and pieced 90 quilt blocks ($\frac{1}{2}$ yard each). Of the 14 who are in the regular sewing classes —

- 1 runs a machine;
- 5 hem well;
- 5 hem some;
- 13 sew "over and over;"
- 4 "gather;"
- 2 do fancy work well;
- 2 do fancy work some.

9 girls are detailed regularly to do house work, being engaged at this between their school recitations, as well as before and after school.

- 2 do chamber work well;
- 5 assist to do chamber work;
- 4 assist in dining room;
- 7 assist in the kitchen;
- 1 assists in the bakery.

The farm will become the leading summer industry for the boys as the school becomes older. As our boys grow up who have no homes, they will find their most suitable occupation in assisting to raise produce for the support of the school, and in this way their work will be of great value. Under a competent supervisor, the farm work can *all* be done by them. During the school year but little can be done on the farm by the school class of boys, though during the spring and autumn, we have employed a detail of from ten to fifteen during two hours in the afternoon after school, planting, hoeing and gathering crops. The boys did all the husking of our little crop of nine acres of corn this year. One boy works with a team during the whole farming season.

It is truly gratifying to see how few children prefer remaining idle in their sitting rooms to engaging in something useful. Two of our boys last winter asked for wood saws, voluntarily went to work at a pile of cord wood belonging to the school, and sawed regularly every day until they had transformed the whole into stove wood, about thirty cords.

IN THE HOME DEPARTMENT

are placed (a) idiots; (b) unimprovable imbeciles; (c) juvenile insane; (d) epileptics under treatment, and (e) adult imbeciles too old to be profitably employed in the training school, *especially adult females*. As a general statement, it can be said that the children of the home department require motherly care and nursing. Attention should be paid to habit training, medical treatment administered to the epileptic, the noisy insanoid and the juvenile insane given ample scope for the relief of the exuberance of their spirits without injury to themselves or others, and the adult imbecile taught to assist in care of the household. The claims of the epileptic were brought to your attention most eloquently two years

ago; the knocking and earnest pleading at our doors for the admission of idiots tell their own story, and what two years ago was foreseen and requested, is now most emphatically needed, viz.: a *detached custodial building*, and I sincerely trust you will endeavor to secure from the coming legislature an appropriation for this purpose. A building of this nature should be situated near enough the school so that a proportion of its inmates could enjoy the privileges of the entertainments and exercises given by the school children. It has been found that this feature, together with some regular concert exercises, with even this class, is very valuable as a means of discipline. While the main features of the two departments are distinct, and the classes of children composing them are in general quite different, there must necessarily be many individual cases of transfers. Such epileptics as are cured or very much improved are placed in the regular school, as are occasionally excitable children of lower grades, who are rendered quiet and easily governable by this course. Those who are found to be unimprovable are taken from the school. Some children are transferred back and forth frequently, and are found to be benefitted by it. Two epileptics have been placed in school during the past year.

Among our thirty-one boys belonging to the home class (not in school), there are four boys who have shown quite an aptitude for braiding mat rope, one of them never having manifested any ability for anything before. We also find that employment has a valuable moral and hygienic influence upon our epileptics, who are deprived of the regular school drill.

CHANGE OF OFFICERS AND TEACHERS.

Some change followed in the personnel of the organization with the retirement of Dr. Knight from the superintendency. Miss M. E. Powers, who served as principal of the school for three years, whose ability and devotion to the work was recognized by all who visited the school, resigned at the close of the school year 1884-5, to resume her former labors as instructor in elocution in New York City. Miss Hattie Wilson also resigned her position as teacher to enter upon the study of decorative art.

Miss Laura Baker, a teacher of experience in the school for feeble-minded in Iowa, was selected to lead the school work, and the Misses Minnie and Julia Gilmore, of Faribault, were added to the corps of teachers.

Miss Naomi Pinch of Ripon, Wisconsin, was engaged as matron a few months previous to my taking the school, and entered at once upon her duties with commendable zeal and faithfulness.

Mr. Joseph Massey continues to perform the varied duties of assistant instructor and boys' supervisor with his usual ability and fidelity.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

I take pleasure in extending thanks, on behalf of our household, to the many people who contributed so liberally to make Christmas a happy time for our children in 1885. We are indebted to the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul, Minneapolis & St. Louis, Minnesota & Northwestern, Chicago & Northwestern, Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba, St. Paul & Duluth, and the Northern Pacific Railroad companies for special rates, and the courtesy and assistance extended by their employes to those in charge of our children while traveling on their lines.

To Dr. George Knight, my predecessor, for valuable counsel and assistance in taking charge of the work; to the citizens of Faribault for their intelligent interest in, and uniform courtesy to, the school; to Doctors Wood and Rose, and Mattocks, of this city, for their valuable medical counsel, and for numerous gratuitous services rendered; to the officers, teachers and employes, for their hearty co-operation, especially during the endemic of diphtheria, when their duties were particularly onerous and trying; and to you, gentlemen, for your cordial support, I am especially grateful, and is largely due the credit for whatever success may have attended the school during the last year.

Respectfully submitted,

A. C. ROGERS,
Superintendent.

MINNESOTA TRAINING SCHOOL FOR IMBECILES,
Nov. 15, 1886.

SCHOOL FOR FEEBLE-MINDED — *Circular.*

TERMS OF ADMISSION.

Every imbecile and idiotic child and youth who is now an actual resident of the State, and has resided therein for one year next preceding application, of suitable age and condition, may be admitted to the institution upon the recommendation of the superintendent and approval of the board of directors. Blank forms for making applications for admission can be had by addressing the superintendent.

EXPENSES.

A deposit, not exceeding forty dollars (\$40) per annum, is required, in advance, for the clothing and traveling expenses of each child. Relatives of children not supported by the county are required to file with the superintendent a duly and properly executed bond for the subsequent payment of funds for clothing and traveling expenses, as may be required, not to exceed forty dollars (\$40) per annum.

When the parents or legal supporters of the child are not able to pay the clothing and traveling expenses, application should be made to the county, through the commissioners or judge of probate, and a certificate from the county, signed by the judge of probate and a majority of the commissioners, guaranteeing the payment of said expenses, must be filed in lieu of a bond. For further information address,

Dr. A. C. ROGERS,
Superintendent, Faribault, Minn.