

SIXTH BIENNIAL REPORT
OF THE
STATE BOARD
OF
CORRECTIONS AND CHARITIES
TO THE
LEGISLATURE OF MINNESOTA,
FOR THE BIENNIAL PERIOD ENDING JULY 31, 1894.



ST. PAUL:
PIONEER PRESS COMPANY
STATE PRINTERS.
1895.

For a large proportion of them the farm presents the most satisfactory opening, for the reason that their infirmity interferes less with that occupation than with almost any other, but for others training in mechanical industries is indispensable.

THE SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND.

The School for the Blind grows slowly. The instruction in this school, both in music and literature, is efficient. The industrial problem is even more difficult to meet than in the School for the Deaf, for the reason that the avenues of possible self-support are so much fewer in number. The problem is attracting attention all over the world. The attempt has been made in Ohio and elsewhere to solve it by establishing industrial homes for the adult blind, in which employment is furnished to enable them to become, as far as possible, self-supporting, but these institutions have thus far attained doubtful success. It is very difficult to divest them of an eleemosynary character. The Ohio Working Home for the Blind, which was established in 1887, was destroyed by fire in October, 1894, and it is doubtful whether it will ever be reorganized, as the results have not realized the hopes of the legislature in establishing it. It is certainly most desirable that the blind should have opportunity to maintain themselves, if possible, and this problem deserves most careful study.

The School for the Blind was enlarged in 1884, but has now outgrown its accommodations. The board of directors desires to accommodate the need by building a rear wing to the main building. With this enlargement, the increase in the number of pupils can probably be met for four or five years to come.

The board of directors two years ago recommended an appropriation of \$4,000 to build a bridge at the School for the Blind, which would shorten the distance to the city and to the School for the Deaf and the School for the Feeble-minded a quarter of a mile, or possibly one-third of a mile. Both of these schools suffer considerable inconvenience from the detour which they are now compelled to make, and this improvement seems a desirable one. It seems to us, however, that this improvement would serve the convenience of the citizens of Faribault quite as much as the convenience of the state, and we would suggest that the legislature make an appropriation to cover one-half of this improvement, provided that the city of Faribault will undertake the other half.

THE SCHOOL FOR THE FEEBLE-MINDED.

The new building for custodial care of girls and young women was opened in 1893. This building has accommodations for about 150 inmates and is one of the best designed buildings in the State of Min-

nesota for the care of such persons. The building is attractive in its architectural appearance; the dining rooms, kitchens and day rooms are located generally on the first floor; the second floor is given up generally to dormitories. The building is beautifully lighted, and thoroughly ventilated by a system of fans. The staircases are fire-proof and the remainder of the building is well protected from danger of fire. No use is made of the basement or attics for living purposes and it is to be hoped that this condition will always prevail.

As years pass, we observe that the proportion of the inmates of the School for Feeble-minded who can be sent home for vacation, diminishes;—in other words, the population of this institution becomes more and more permanent; and this was to be expected. The wisdom of custodial care for the girls of this unfortunate class becomes more and more apparent. This department of the institution contributes directly to the diminution of our almshouse population and the prevention of untold misery and vice.

We are now able to provide for 450 feeble-minded persons in this institution, comprising about one-third of the feeble-minded population of the state. The pressure for the admission of children to the school is unabated. Numerous urgent cases are still on the books of the superintendent. The board of directors asks the legislature for means to construct a building for the custodial care of males similar to that already built for females. We are of the opinion that further enlargement of the humane and beneficial work of this institution is demanded, and that if the means at the disposal of the legislature will permit, the enlargement should be made.

In view of the increasing number of epileptics in this institution as well as in the hospitals for insane, we would suggest the question whether the time has not come for establishing a separate department for epileptics in connection with this school. A separate ward for epileptic girls has been opened in the new building, with benefit both to the epileptics themselves and to the other inmates of the building.

THE STATE PUBLIC SCHOOL.

The administration of the State Public School continues to be satisfactory. In our judgment no state institution is doing a more beneficent work. During the past two years the state agency force has been increased by the addition of a woman. This has been made necessary by the increase of the work. The school has now under its care 664 children in homes outside of the institution, besides the 180 children in the school. The agents find full employment in maintaining an efficient oversight over this large number of children who are still wards of the state and in investigating applications for children from those who are willing to offer them homes.