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THE NEW JERSEY PLAN IN OPERATION

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*Commissioner of Institutions and Agencies of New Jersey.*

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## THE NEW JERSEY PLAN IN OPERATION.\*

By BURDETTE G. LEWIS,

*Commissioner of Institutions and Agencies of New Jersey.*

The chief characteristics of the New Jersey plan are its centralization of policy-making powers in the State Board of eight unpaid members appointed without reference to religious or political affiliations and its decentralization of administration in the hands of unpaid boards of managers of the several institutions and agencies subject to the jurisdiction of the state board. At the outset it may be well to say a word about the history of the organization of the present Department of Institutions and Agencies of New Jersey.

Early in 1917, a prison inquiry commission was appointed in the state of New Jersey pursuant to a joint resolution of the Senate and General Assembly "to investigate into conditions of the penal, reformatory and correctional institutions in this state, and also into what is known as the state use system and the employment of prisoners on roads, prison farms or in other capacities."

The governor, Walter E. Edge, constituted the commission so provided for as follows: William B. Dickson, chairman; Seymour L. Cromwell, Henry F. Hilfers, John P. Murray and Dwight W. Morrow. Some months later Mr. Dickson resigned from the commission, Mr. Ogden H. Hammond was appointed to fill the vacancy, and Mr. Dwight W. Morrow was designated as chairman.

The commission conducted an exhaustive investigation and under date of January 1, 1918 submitted a comprehensive report to the governor and the Senate and the House of Assembly, recommending the enactment of a new law which would centralize all responsibility for the conduct and management of the state charitable, correctional and insane hospital institutions, including the power of appointment of local boards of managers of these institutions, in the hands of a State Board of Charities and Corrections consisting of nine members, eight of whom were to be appointed by the governor and of which the governor himself should be a member.

It was further recommended "that such central board shall exercise its powers of administration and the supervisory powers which may be vested in it, through an expert commissioner of correc-

\*Read at the seventy-fifth annual meeting of The American Medico-Psychological Association, Philadelphia, Pa., June 18-20, 1919. Read at -Denver Conference of State Accounting Officers September 1922.

tion to be appointed by it and who shall be removable by it in its discretion, and that such commissioner shall have the power of appointing, subject to the approval of the central board, such expert deputies or bureau chiefs not exceeding six in number, as may be authorized to assist him in the administration of his office, as follows:

- (1) A Medical Director,
- (2) A Dietician,
- (3) A Director of Education,
- (4) A Director of Industries,
- (5) A Statistician,
- (6) A Chief Parole Officer."

Another special commission, with Mr. E. P. Earle, of Montclair, as chairman, was appointed by Governor Edge pursuant to legislation enacted in March, 1917 for the purpose of investigating into the conditions of the industries of this state which come within the scope or under the supervision of the Department of Charities and Corrections, other than penal, reformatory and correctional. That commission submitted a report to the governor and to the legislature, recommending the centralization of the authority over all state charitable institutions in the hands of the central board, which should be empowered to select a commissioner who should be the chief executive officer of the State Board of Charities. Thereafter the two commissions agreed to support a bill centralizing control over all state charitable, state correctional and state hospital institutions in the hands of the new State Board of Charities and Corrections which was created under Chapter 147 of the Laws of 1918.

The State Board of Charities and Corrections unanimously resolved to request the legislature at its last session to change the title of the board and of the department to the State Board of Control of Institutions and Agencies and the Department of Institutions and Agencies, respectively. In a special brief citing the reasons for amending the act it was pointed out that the original titles do not describe the work, functions and powers of the board, department and commissioner. State hospitals for the insane, for the tuberculous, Soldiers' Homes, the Commission for the Blind and the State Board of Children's Guardians, all under the control of the State Board, were listed as charitable institutions and non-institutional agencies. This is unusual. Further, in New Jersey the state hospitals receive private patients who pay for their treatment. The counties pay part of the cost of maintaining indigent patients.

It is unfair to call such persons "charity" patients. It is also unfair to call our Soldiers' Homes charitable institutions and so, legislation was enacted changing the titles in question.

The revised act now segregates the two classes of institutions under the jurisdiction of the State Board of Control of Institutions and Agencies. The first class, termed the correctional institutions of the state, include the New Jersey State Prison; Rahway Reformatory; Reformatory for Women at Clinton; Jamesburg Home for Boys and the State Home for Girls at Trenton. The second class of institutions now designated as charitable, hospital, relief and training institutions, not merely charitable institutions as formerly, includes the two New Jersey State Hospitals at Trenton and at Morris Plains; State Village for Epileptics at Skillman; Glen Gardner Sanatorium for Tubercular Diseases; Vineland Institution for Feeble-Minded Women; New Lisbon Colony for Feeble-Minded Males; Kearny Memorial Home for Disabled Soldiers; the Vineland Memorial Home for Disabled Soldiers, Sailors, Marines and their Wives and Widows; State Board of Children's Guardians, and the Commission for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Blind.

To return for a moment to the consideration which led the aforementioned commissions to make such recommendations, I may state that one of the principal considerations was the appreciation of the necessity for the strictest economy in the use of money and of man-power, including the expert staff of the central department and of the various state and county institutions, and for the wisest, most scientific and many-sided development of the functions of the various state and county institutions in order to serve directly the national interest in the maintenance of proper standards because of the serious economic and social changes brought about or impending in consequence of the world war, and in particular because of our country's participation therein, and for the establishment of the proper standards in all of them, so that they might serve the nation directly in furnishing hospital and rehabilitation service not only to the army and navy but also to the civil population of the state.

The administrative organization and functional plan of operation of the recently created department fulfills the purpose of the legislature when it enacted the new law, which provides for the cohesive development of a department with the institutions functioning as intergral divisions and not in isolation as hitherto.

New Jersey has not hesitated to centralize in the hands of a small board vast powers relating to charities and corrections, and has thus changed from a weak supervisory system to a strong, unified administrative system. Governor Edge did not hesitate to dis-

regard political and religious affiliations and has appointed a State Board of Charities and Corrections which is representative of the best interests of the state in every way. The first members of the board are: Mr. Dwight W Morrow, chairman; Mr. E. P. Earle of Montclair; Mr. Ogden H. Hammond of Bernardsville; Mr. Frank A. Fetridge of Newark; Mrs. Lewis S. Thompson of Red Bank; Mrs. H. Otto Wittpenn of Hoboken; Mr. F. Wallis Armstrong of Moorestown; Mr. J. M. Byrne of Newark.

The New Jersey State Legislature, acting upon the recommendations of the two commissions, recognized that the success of the new and enlarged Department depended for the most part upon the type of man chosen as Commissioner. In pursuance of this recognition it was provided in law that the commissioner should hold office at the will of the State Board, that he might receive a salary equal to that of the governor of the state and that in the selection of a commissioner the State Board should not be restricted to the residents of the State of New Jersey.

The State Board appointed a sub-committee of its members, whose chairman was Mr. E. P. Earle of Montclair, which recommended the appointment of the present commissioner. The State Board accepted the report of this sub-committee at its meeting on May 7, 1918.

It was argued with some force that the State Board should appoint a high grade medical expert as commissioner. However, it was the consensus of opinion in New Jersey, as it was in other states, notably in Illinois, that the possibility of a full measure of success in the administration of the various kinds of institutions and agencies would be more fully assured by the appointment of an experienced lay administrator. Experience shows that a medical expert as a successful administrator of all kinds and classes of institutions and agencies is an exception. The average doctor is a failure as an administrator. The kind we secure for institutional service are particularly so. I will agree that there are very notable exceptions. For example: Dr. S. S. Goldwater, former Commissioner of Health in New York City during the Mitchel administration, and Dr. David F. Weeks, Dr. Madeleine A. Hallowell, Dr. Owen Copp and a few others, who are exceptions as institutional administrators. It must, however, be admitted by all, that large scale administration is a profession in itself for which the highest training and wisest experience are necessary.

The state board realized this full well and within the first two months after it took charge of the institutions passed a resolution directing institutional boards to select trained psychiatrists and neurologists who were also trained administrators, as chief executive offi-

cers and as assistant physicians. The board felt that since the state had three superintendents who were of this character, it would not be impossible to find a few others of a like caliber to fill any vacancies that might occur or any new positions that might be created.

Of course, the efficient lay administrator realizes that he must have as one of his cabinet advisors a high standing professional expert, and in addition to that he must have the support of the very best and most experienced heads of institutions, medical directors and assistant directors. We found that there are all too few specialists to do the work of the medical expert; why, then, deplete the ranks of these few to make them administrators, when better administrators than they are at present may be found among trained lay administrators.

Upon my recommendation eight divisions of the department, which the new law, as amended, recommended, were established under the following titles:

- Division of Architecture and Construction,
- Division of Medicine and Psychiatry,
- Division of Labor, Agriculture, Food and Dietetics,
- Division of Education and Classification,
- Division of Parole and Domestic Relations,
- Division of Records, Reports and Information,
- Division of Administration of Institutions,
- Division of Inspection Public Institutions.

Also a Medical Advisory Board on Classification was created for the purpose of grading and correlating the physical age and mental age groups distributed throughout the correctional and special institutions of the state.

A bi-weekly conference of superintendents of the institutions, known as the Administrative Council and presided over by the commissioner, is held to discuss reports and various problems which may arise in connection with each and all of the institutions.

The most important problems confronting correctional institutions are the problems of discipline and of handling the refractory prisoner. Investigations and examinations have shown that the refractory prisoner is one who is either temporarily or permanently abnormal mentally. At initial meetings of the Administrative Council and at other times previous thereto as Commissioner of Correction in New York City, I outlined the necessity for transplantation of the routine and practices of the most modern hospitals for the insane, for the epileptics and feeble-minded to the correctional institutions. The Administrative Council afforded

me the opportunity of bringing this matter to the attention of all the superintendents of the institutions and agencies under the jurisdiction of the state board.

Other advantages of the conferences may best be illustrated by reference to the problem of discipline in the correctional institutions, special institutions for the insane and for the epileptic and for the feeble-minded for developing a routine method of handling difficult patients without undue use of force. The disturbed patient is given a therapeutic bath by means of a continuous bath equipment, which has been devised for such cases. Correctional institutions on the other hand have continued methods which were discarded in our best managed special institutions fifty years ago and have been apparently ignorant of the tremendous advances made in the handling of disciplinary problems in such special institutions and in particular, how to handle their refractory inmates without the constant display of clubs.

Another illustration of the advantage of the round table conference is afforded in the case of the conservation of clothing. Dr. David F. Weeks, superintendent of the State Village for Epileptics at Skillman, has probably developed the best system of clothing conservation of any institution in the state. After the superintendents of other institutions have heard him explain this system and have visited the institution and have observed it in operation, there is no excuse for them if they have failed to profit by the example.

We may illustrate the advantage again by referring to Dr. Madeleine A. Hallowell's development of military training for the feeble-minded women of her institution at Vineland. If the feeble-minded may be benefited by a system of military training and if it can be carried out with the signal success achieved by Dr. Hallowell in that kind of an institution, there is no excuse for a superintendent who makes a failure of military training in a correctional institution.

The presentation of the research work and treatment, which is now being done in the New Jersey State Hospital at Trenton by Dr. Henry A. Cotton, outlining the results of eleven years of careful, scientific experimentation, recording remarkable results flowing from the treatment of even chronic cases of insanity where the extraction of teeth, the removal of infected tonsils and the clearing up of the gastro-intestinal infection have brought about extraordinary recoveries, all of which is of special interest to all other institutions for the insane, feeble-minded, epileptic and other subnormals, at the very least suggests the application of similar methods of treatment in those institutions as soon as they become suf-

ficiently standardized to permit the medical and dental surgeons to make use of them.

The State Board, in order to bring the best expert knowledge to bear upon the work of correctional institutions, has engaged Lieutenant Edgar A. Doll, U. S. A., of Princeton University and formerly of the psychological unit at Camp Dix, to measure the intelligence of the inmates of the state correctional institutions by means of the army group intelligence test. Most significant results have already been obtained from the State Prison and the Jamesburg Home for Boys, where the tests have been completed and the latter compared with the results of the testing of the pupils in the Franklin School in the city of Trenton.

In the case of the prison, the scores obtained by the 700 prisoners tested show that over one-third of the men are illiterate in the sense that they could not read sufficiently to answer questions or comprehend instructions. This percentage of illiteracy, according to Lieutenant Doll, is about the same as that found in the soldiers of the draft armies. About one-quarter of the men obtained scores indicative of good average intelligence, that is, mental power above the mental age of 13 years, or the degree of intelligence in the classes of wage earners such as skilled workers and clerks. About 6 to 10 per cent of the men obtained scores equal to those made by average officers in the United States army. About 3 per cent of the men obtained scores within the highest range that was recognized for army purposes, and so for the first time an entire prison population was given the army group test. This was done in order to measure the physical and mental abilities of prisoners, so that they may be properly assigned to work which they are best fitted to do.

When the State Board became responsible for the administration of the state institutions on July 1, 1918, its most immediate problem was the introduction of the state use system, particularly in the State Prison where the abolition of private contracts had thrown four hundred men out of employment. It is most gratifying to report that organized labor is in sympathy with the plans of the State Board for the welfare and proper training of the offenders committed to the institutions of this state and has been most willing to help solve the problem of unemployment and of vocational training not only in the State Prison, but also in the State Homes for Boys and Girls and in the Rahway Reformatory. After conference, it was early determined to install at the State Prison a shoe industry, using the latest and best machinery; to employ as many as possible in the construction of roads and in work upon

farms, in particular, the clearing of the uncleared portion of the 1100 acre prison farm at Leesburg in the southern part of the state.

In order to develop as quickly as possible the state use system, with the approval of the State Board, I recommended to the War Department a plan for the utilization of the man-power of the correctional institutions of the United States. After discussion with that department, it was agreed that we should make a beginning of the plan in New Jersey. The road construction and shoe repairing contracts are the results of these conferences.

Contracts were drawn with the federal government under which sixty-five prisoners in the State Prison repaired one thousand pairs of soldiers' shoes per day. For this, the men were paid 20, 30 and 40 cents an hour. This agreement was made possible by the new law, authorizing the state board to do work for the United States, and by President Wilson's special proclamation, empowering the federal government to make contracts with managers of prisons and reformatories. The principles of this proclamation coincide with the provisions of the New Jersey law, which permits the employment of prisoners, provided fair wages are paid. The President determined in these cases that the prevailing rate in the locality be paid in wages, and the War Policies' Board has determined that 20, 30 and 40 cents per hour per man are the fair wages for shoe repair work.

The manufacture of auto license plates by convict labor has been carried on in the State Prison in Trenton for the past four years. This year thirty-five prisoners engaged upon this work manufactured 405,800 plates. The cost of installing and manufacturing auto license tags for the year 1919, exclusive of the payment of wages to prisoners doing the work, was 9 1/2 cents per plate. The contract price for the year 1918 averaged 28 cents per pair.

Large numbers of inmates at the Rahway Reformatory have been employed in road construction work at the prevailing rate of wages. Some of them work in the hospital and relief institutions of the state when it is impossible to obtain help from the free labor market.

The Union Printers' League, which is the state organization of the International Typographical Union, for the first time in its history has gone on record as being in complete accord with the plans of the state board for the welfare and proper training of the youthful offenders committed to the institutions of this state. The union has now informed the department that it will credit the course of study installed in the New Jersey correctional institutions, in lieu of the requirements for apprenticeship in the union, for all or any part of the five year regular apprenticeship course in the union successfully completed in the institutional printing shops.

A farm supervisor of institutional farms and a supervising steward, a trained dietician, were also employed as permanent officers assigned to the division of labor, agriculture, food and dietetics of the department.

A plan has been devised and put into operation for the unification of the farm management in all the institutions. It will aid in finding out what products are needed for food for inmates, patients and employees, and how they may best be produced, including a careful study showing the present year's crop plans to grow these farm products with the estimated increase in such products for the ensuing year.

Conferences were held in Washington with the food experts of the United States Department of Agriculture. The dietaries and ration tables formulated by the Department in New Jersey were approved as practical and scientific from the standpoint of food values, selected with due regard for the several classes of patients and inmates. Scientific dietaries and basic ration tables have been established in each institution. Each institution may utilize these tables to determine when it has enough food and this allows the central office to know that the food is being purchased, stored and served properly. Each pound of waste must be reported and accounted for under this system of food regulation.

The Department has formulated standards of clothing so that each institution knows just how much each inmate is entitled to and so that appropriations may be made intelligently. The Department after completing administrative studies of each of the correctional institutions established an administrative and parole system based upon a credit marking plan. This insures improvement in progressive stages. The system allows for flexibility and capitalizes the interest of officers and inmates to insure constant improvement. The detailed classification system, inaugurated at the State Home for Boys, Jamesburg, under the general direction of Mr. Calvin Derrick has also been extended to the New Jersey Reformatory with the necessary modifications. These procedures are readily transforming the Reformatory into a real industrial training school. The same system has produced remarkable results at the State Prison.

Under the new law the state board transmits the budget requests of every institution and of the central office to the State Budget Commission. In this way it is responsible for the finances of the department as a whole.

The State Board engaged Mr. Herbert R. Sands as examiner and certified Public Accountant to systematize the business and accounting methods of State Institutions under the control of this Depart-

ment. He inaugurated an administrative code for each Institution which included a definite written assignment for each institutional officer or employee. It was based in part upon a code I had prepared for the Central Department. The accounting system and the codes have been in force for three years. We recently had them reviewed by one of Mr. Sands' former associates who has found that very satisfactory progress has been made in this system. Each institution now reports to the Commissioner monthly its money expenditures from the standpoint of the funds utilized or expended and also reports consumption of goods or supplies from the viewpoint of quantities used. The report is so arranged that a twelve months report can be made up from any monthly report. This latter provision has limited the constant frictions and difficulties which arose when financial reports were made for the year only once a year.

As to the few of the more important details of the departmental organization, it may be worth while to dwell for a moment or so upon the business methods which have been adopted in the administration of the department's affairs.

A definite assignment of duties and responsibilities for each staff member of the department has been carefully worked out. It is a manual of organization and is similar to those of the departments of the federal government and of the largest corporations of the country. It outlines the duties and legal responsibilities of the members of the State Board; it defines the functions and assignments of each one connected with the department from the commissioner to the office boy.

A staff conference was next organized so that all chiefs of divisions could be kept in touch with the work that each was responsible for, and so that the commissioner could carry out intelligently the provisions of the law requiring him to direct the work as a whole.

In order to facilitate the work a system of progress reporting and of keeping daily logs was established. Each member of the staff keeps a brief statement of his daily work, which is filed with the commissioner once a week, and thus keeps him informed as to the work individually and collectively of the department.

In order that the members of the State Board, the staff members of the department and the public may be fully acquainted with the progress of the work in the institutions and agencies under the control of the state board, a system of progress reporting was established in accordance with which the superintendents report to the central office weekly the important achievements and results of effort in their respective institutions. These are compiled into sum-

mary form and are sent to the members of the board and are issued in the form of weekly bulletins to the press.

A serious problem is that of institutional extension. It is an urgent necessity not only for the construction of new buildings in connection with the present institutions, but also for the construction of new institutions. A special report was made to the Legislature formulating a construction program extending over a period of ten years, but presenting the immediate needs of the various institutions. The report was adopted by the Legislature and bills were passed providing for a referendum vote on an issue of bonds in the amount of \$14,000,000 to be used as needed. After a spirited campaign this bill was defeated at referendum. But the Legislature in its 1922 session passed a bill establishing a collateral inheritance tax, which is designed and expected to yield the \$14,000,000 in ten years. As there was no objection to the construction program itself or any denial of the actual needs, it is probable that the Legislature annually will set aside the required amount to carry forward the program originally determined upon.

The Legislature in its 1921 session abolished the State Department of Architecture established in 1917. Previous to 1917 the old State Department of Charities and Corrections had had an Architectural Division. Separation after 1917 never proved satisfactory. Inasmuch as most public building work was carried on in State Institutions the Legislature of 1921 empowered the State Department of Institutions and Agencies to conduct all state building operations except for training schools, which were under the State Board of Education. This new grant of power enabled the Department to build the type of buildings the state needs, at a great economy in cost and with many improvements in design and layout of construction. Since the Department was inaugurated about \$3,000,000 of buildings have been constructed for about \$2,600,000, a saving of about \$400,000.

The special committee of hospital superintendents presented to the state board a recommendation for the construction of a psychopathic hospital, to serve as a central research and treatment laboratory, to be erected in a large city readily accessible to those parts of the state most densely populated. Furthermore, upon the recommendation of the state board, the legislature at its recent session passed a law similar to the one I, in 1916, persuaded the legislature in New York to enact for New York City, empowering the State Board to establish clearing houses in any of the institutions under its jurisdiction, where sheriffs charged with the responsibility of transporting persons admitted or committed to state institutions are directed to deliver their charges instead of to the institutions

named in the admission or commitment papers. Such persons may be held in such clearing houses for a period not to exceed sixty days, for observation and classification. This permits the state department to carry into the fullest effect the very wide transfer powers lodged in the hands of the State Board and the commission.

It is of course, impossible, in the brief time allotted to me to touch upon all of the work of the State Board, and I have but indicated briefly a few of the salient points of the work of the Department of Institutions and Agencies, showing the New Jersey plan in operation. I must leave out of consideration the very wide powers of investigation, inspection, recommendation and report allotted with the State Board, which have for their purpose the gradual standardization and improvement of the administration of all public and private institutions and agencies.

In conclusion, let me say that one of the most important features of the New Jersey plan is the interposition of an unpaid, non-political board of citizens between the commissioner and the regular state officials, who change with each change in political control of the state. These officials may change, but under the law but three of the eight members may change during the term of any one chief executive of the state, and the chief executive under the New Jersey constitution is ineligible for re-election. It was the hope of Governor Edge and of the legislature which passed the new law in 1918 that a change in the personnel in the state administration would not bring an immediate change in the administration of institutions. New Jersey institutions have been relatively free from politics. The new system is meant to insure the continuity of administration, which all our states need, without perpetuating a system until it disintegrates because of dry rot.

The inquiry commission's reports stated that the most important thing was to secure a high-grade administrator, with a staff of high-grade expert associates. Under the law, the State Board chooses the commissioner, to serve indefinitely without term, during the will of the board, and he in turn chooses the expert staff with the approval of the State Board. It seems, therefore, that New Jersey has gone as far as is possible to eliminate petty politics, while at the same time insuring an administration responsive to the popular will.