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Department of Charities and Corrections.

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REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE

ON PROVISION FOR THE
FEEBLE-MINDED AND EPILEPTICS, THEIR
EFFICIENT CARE AND TRAINING AND
RELIEF FOR THEIR HOMES
AND SOCIETY.

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- MADELEINE A. HALLOWELL, M.D.,
- DAVID FAIRCHILD WEEKS, M.D.,
- CALVIN N. KENDALL.
- E. R. JOHNSTONE, SECRETARY,

Fourth Report of Committee

January, 1913.

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Hon. James M. Fielder, Governor of New Jersey:

DEAR SIR—I have the honor to transmit herewith the report of the Committee on Provision for the Feeble-Minded and Epileptic.

The subject-matter of the report and the recommendations of the Committee are of vital and pressing importance. I therefore feel justified in urging them upon your attention to the end that the facts herein given may be placed before the members of the Legislature and the citizens of the State.

Respectfully submitted,

JOSEPH P. BYERS,

Commissioner of Charities and Corrections.

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January 24, 1913.

*To the Commissioner of Charities and Corrections,
Hon. Joseph P. Byers, Trenton, New Jersey:*

DEAR SIR—The Committee on Provision, Care and Training for the Feeble-minded and Epileptics has been asked to suggest a comprehensive plan, covering the field of their study, for the State of New Jersey.

THE PRESENT SITUATION.

Since our reports of 1910 and 1911, the situation has changed materially. Chapter 234 of the Laws of 1911 requires that each Board of Education in New Jersey shall ascertain what children there are in the public schools three years or more backward or below the normal grade, and that each school district in which there are ten or more such children, shall establish a Special Class or Classes for their instruction.

As a result of the working out of that law (only partially as yet), and from other sources, we now know that the number of mentally defective persons in the State is much greater than was supposed two or three years ago, and it is clear that we do not yet know the maximum.

Other States are facing a similar situation. Commissioner of Charities, R. W. Heberd, in an able review of conditions in the State of New York, published a few weeks ago, asserts that there are probably from 15,000 to 18,000 individuals in the State so defective, mentally, as to be a menace to society and unable properly to care for themselves, not yet provided for in institutions. He says that there is urgent need for the immediate enlargement of all the State institutions for mental defectives, so that each may reach its maximum capacity as an administrative unit and that at least two or three new institutions for these classes should be built without delay, in order to provide an aggregate capacity for the custody and care of not less than 15,000 or 16,000 persons. At present only about 6,000 are being cared for in the institutions, and many of them not adequately. The Pennsylvania Committee, now working on the problem in their State, estimates 16,000 feeble-minded needing care and custody.

The following facts were gathered in the spring of 1912 by "The Survey." (See issue of March 2d, 1912.)

State.	In Institutions for Feeble-minded and Epileptic.	On application Lists Awaiting Admission.	Other Recorded Cases.
Illinois	1,524	1,250	150
Indiana	1,391	810
Massachusetts	2,622	816	190
New York	5,563	965	1,069
Pennsylvania	3,141	3,253	1,642
New Jersey	1,108	493	*4,480
Total six states.....	15,349	7,587	7,531

With but little investigation we find at least as many defectives needing care as receiving it, and in the State of New Jersey are now known of at least five times as many.

In all of the above States, institutions for these defectives have been established for more than twenty years.

The following table shows the conditions in New Jersey, up to January 1, 1913.*†

	State Institution for F. M. Women.	State Village, Skillman.	Training School at Vineland.	Total.
Present number cared for.....	248	388	440	986
Number awaiting admission not in other institutions	20	164	136	320
Number of cases in other institu- tions who should be in these in- stitutions	705
Number of other cases not included above of which there is record..	45	790	3,371	†4,206
Number who can be accommodated in new buildings that will be ready for occupancy by April 1st, 1913	58	160	†0	218
Number who can be accommodated in new buildings for which ap- propriations have been made, but which will not be ready for occupancy until after April 1st, 1913	60	50	†0	110

* November 1st, 1912, there were 6,244 recorded cases. (This is not merely an estimate.)

*† The State Institution for Feeble-Minded Women and the Training School (this is not a State Institution) were established in 1888. The State Village for Epileptics was established in 1898.

† This number is made up from field workers' reports, reports from physicians, teachers, parents, &c.

‡ When the buildings at Skillman and at the Women's Institution are opened, the Training School will transfer men and women and receive children on the waiting list to fill their places.

THE PROBLEM.

The feeble-minded and epileptic members of society must have proper care, training and protection. They must be prevented from procreating, for their defects are known to be heritable and their numbers tend to multiply. It is apparent that the State of New Jersey must plan to provide eventually for the care of six to eight thousand of these helpless, but dangerous, classes. How can this be done?

THE PLAN OUTLINED.

Any plan for the care of such a large number of people must first be reasonably economical. It must be effective. It must prove satisfactory to parents and guardians as well as to the public generally. It must be capable of early application.

FEEBLE-MINDED CHILDREN IN THE LARGER SCHOOL DISTRICTS.

The constitution of New Jersey states (Art. IV, Sec. VII, Par. VI), "The legislature shall provide for the maintenance and support of a thorough and efficient system of free public schools for the instruction of all the children in this State between the ages of five and eighteen years."

In neither the constitution nor the law (see foot-note) are feeble-minded children excluded from this privilege; therefore suitable provision should be made for the education of all feeble-minded children (with the following exceptions) by the educational authorities of the State, in Special Schools and Classes as provided by law, up to the period of adolescence.

NOTE.—Chapter 183 of the Laws of 1912, says "Public schools shall be free to *all* persons over five and under twenty years of age * * * who shall be residents of the school district."

EXCEPTIONS.

- a. Idiots and those merely feeble-minded children who are dangerous, sexually or otherwise. (See foot-note.)
- b. Epileptics.
- c. Those living in rural communities and school districts where there are not enough children to form a Special Class, or where the schools are so scattered that it is not feasible to gather them into such a class.

The cost of housing, feeding and clothing this large number of children, who must be provided for in Special Classes in the public schools, will thus be borne by parents and guardians, up to the period of adolescence. The communities will pay merely for their instruction.

The kind of education adapted to feeble-minded children not too defective to be trainable, it is now clearly understood, is different from that which is now given to normal children. The training for the feeble-minded must be chiefly sensory and motor. The feeble-minded child has been abundantly proven to have little capacity for intellectual training and limited practical use for what little he may be able to acquire. The object to be sought in the education of the feeble-minded child should be the development of his capacity for useful and productive industrial work. For this training, it is considered necessary that the feeble-minded child should be separated as soon as possible from the normal, and even from the merely backward children, in the schools and classes.

Such experiments as have been made in employing the feeble-minded in systematic industrial labor, both outdoors and indoors, suggest the possibility of making this class, when segregated and under control, training and direction, contributory to their own maintenance to a degree greater than has yet been achieved or even attempted.

In their earlier years, no one but experts can distinguish between those children who are merely backward and those who are feeble-minded. Parents and even teachers often are unwilling to admit an actual condition of feeble-mindedness; even when it is pointed out to

NOTE.—It is necessary to emphasize strongly the grave sexual immoralities that are taught innocent normal children by the large defective boys and girls who remain in the classes with little children, but whose sexual instincts are stirring and are not controlled by reason, judgment or will. Every school superintendent can cite numerous cases.

them. At this early period, it is not especially important that the distinction be made, but as they grow older the difference will become more apparent.

These Special Classes will become the clearing houses. In them a careful study of the slowed mental processes should be maintained, and when a definite diagnosis has been made, as adolescence approaches, those who are permanently mentally arrested should be transferred to the State custodial institutions, except in those rare cases where adequate care and protection can be provided for them in their own homes.

After they enter adolescence, defective children become more difficult to manage. Some are inclined to be headstrong. Their misdemeanors appear greater. Their awkwardness is more noticeable. Their peculiarities are more marked. In the regular classes they try the nerves and patience of their teachers and interfere with the training of the normal children. They cannot get beyond the primary grades. On the streets they get into mischief, and at home they begin to interfere to a marked degree with the family life. Many of them crave notoriety, and do wrong because they can get attention in no other way. The sexual instincts are stirring and uncontrolled by will or judgment, they practice indecencies or worse. They become the big, awkward, misunderstood, pitiable and dangerous companions of little children.

As these conditions develop, which make it unwise for them to remain longer in the Special Classes, they should be transferred to the State's institutions.

FEEBLE-MINDED CHILDREN IN SMALLER SCHOOL DISTRICTS.

From those districts where there are not enough such children to form a Special Class, or where the schools in such a district are so scattered that it is not feasible to gather them into a class, the feeble-minded children should be sent to The Training School at Vineland until such time as the State has established its own Training School. Here they will be studied in every detail, and the results of and suggestions arising from such study will be made available to all public schools dealing with these children.

Experimental and demonstration work in training should be carried on with a view to determining the greatest possibilities in pro-

ductive activity of this class of children. Efforts must be made to discover those methods and ways by which they may be made most happy and at the same time able to contribute toward their own support.

The importance of tests for accurately determining the mental condition of children at an early age is becoming more evident daily. School Boards and Superintendents are frequently at a loss what to do when they suspect feeble-mindedness, but parents will not admit it. The psychologist must further perfect the Binet or some other measuring scale for intelligence. The neurologist, anatomist and biochemist must endeavor to find those conditions which apply particularly to this class.

In the institutions (which should have plenty of land, for these children as a rule are happier in agricultural pursuits than in any other occupation, excepting possibly housework), it is important that all training should be with the idea of fitting them for the lives they will really live in permanent custody.

In the summer most of the training should be in farming, gardening, floriculture, poultry raising, etc. In winter, the training classes should teach knitting, netting, weaving and the elements of most of the trades (carpentry, painting, masonry, printing, etc.), not the theory but the actual practice. A visit to any good, modern institution will soon convince one of the immense economic possibilities of such training, where under intelligent direction so much valuable work is done. In the industrial world there is neither the time nor the patience to make the most of these children. The completion of a job is uppermost. In the training schools, the profitable occupation of the child stands first.

It must be borne in mind that if not this year, at least in the near future it will be necessary for the State to establish a new Training School for feeble-minded children. The institution at Vineland is more than full and even when all of the men and women now there are transferred to the State Institution for Feeble-minded Women and the State Village at Skillman, the children from the smaller school districts cannot all be accommodated.

FEEBLE-MINDED FEMALES.

Accommodations should be provided at once at the State Institution for Feeble-minded Women for at least one hundred additional girls and women (not otherwise provided for) in the following order:

- a. Women of child-bearing age not now in institutions.
- b. Women of child-bearing age now in the children's institution, The Training School, the State Home for Girls, the Hospitals for the Insane, and other institutions not intended for the care and custody of this class.
- c. Girls under twelve years of age who cannot be provided for in the Training Schools, or in the Special Classes in the public schools.

An immense amount of profitable and pleasant occupation can be given these women. The lighter forms of agriculture appeal to them. Weaving, knitting, household duties of every kind, sewing in all of its branches, canning, pickling and all such things may be done, and, given the proper facilities, they may not only supply themselves with many necessities, but commodities may be exchanged with the other institutions of the State.

FEEBLE-MINDED MALES.

Feeble-minded boys who cannot longer be cared for in the Special Classes in the public schools or in the Training Schools, and all feeble-minded men, should be divided into two classes.

- a. Those capable of productive activity.
- b. Those who because of their physical or mental condition are unfitted for profitable employment.

The former should be provided for in Colonies, or at the State Village at Skillman.

Arrangements should be made at once for the development of Colonies on large tracts of uncleared land. Cheap but sanitary buildings should be erected, and the work of clearing, brushing and draining should be carried on. On suitable soil it has been shown that bricks and cement blocks can be profitably made.

Under the easily available assistance of the State's agricultural department, most efficient farming is and can be done, and many farm

products can successfully be raised, not only for their own use but for the benefit of other institutions. Rough, uncleared land should be used, for many of these men and boys are not capable of the better grade of farm work. The innate tendency to destroy finds a useful outlet in grubbing the land, cutting wood, burning brush, and gathering and breaking stone.

In winter, basket making, weaving, shoemaking, mat and mattress making, and many other lines of industrial work may be pursued. Tailoring, brush and broom making are profitable occupations, and stock raising and poultry farming will prove valuable.

A few feeble-minded men are soon to be provided for at the State Village under the provisions of Chapter 311 of the Laws of 1908. Here should be received all males who cannot be cared for as above.

Additional buildings should at once be planned for them and erected in the near future. Experience shows that many of the class, unfitted for profitable employment, are serviceable in many odd jobs, and as they are usually docile and pleasant tempered, their presence among other classes of defectives is not detrimental but the reverse.

IDIOTS.

All females should be provided for at the State Institution for Women at Vineland. All males at the State Village at Skillman.

THE EPILEPTICS.

All epileptics of every age and grade and sex should be cared for at the State Village at Skillman.

Provision should be made for epileptics in the following order:

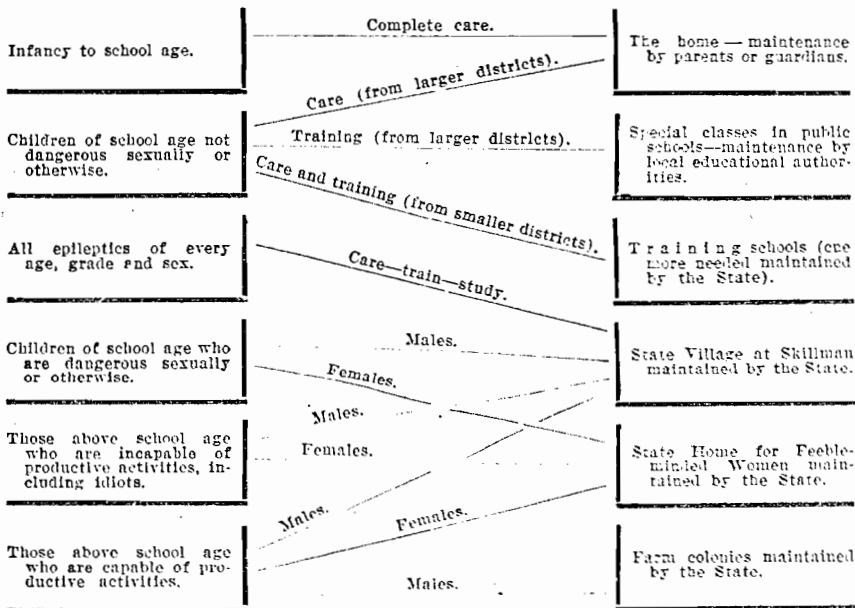
- a.* Females of child-bearing age.
- b.* Those of both sexes who because of their destructive or incorrigible tendencies are a real danger in their communities.
- c.* Males who have reached the adolescent period and who therefore may become fathers.
- d.* All other epileptics requiring State care.

It should be planned that just as soon as all in any one of the above classes who are not in institutions are provided for, the Village shall receive epileptics of that class from the other institutions of the State, where they now are improperly placed.

At the Village, comprehensive plans are already under way to give thorough study, care, occupation and training. More shops and schools should be provided. The best facilities for farming should be given, and there is no doubt that much of value may be learned and the cost of maintenance be reduced by the labor of the patients.

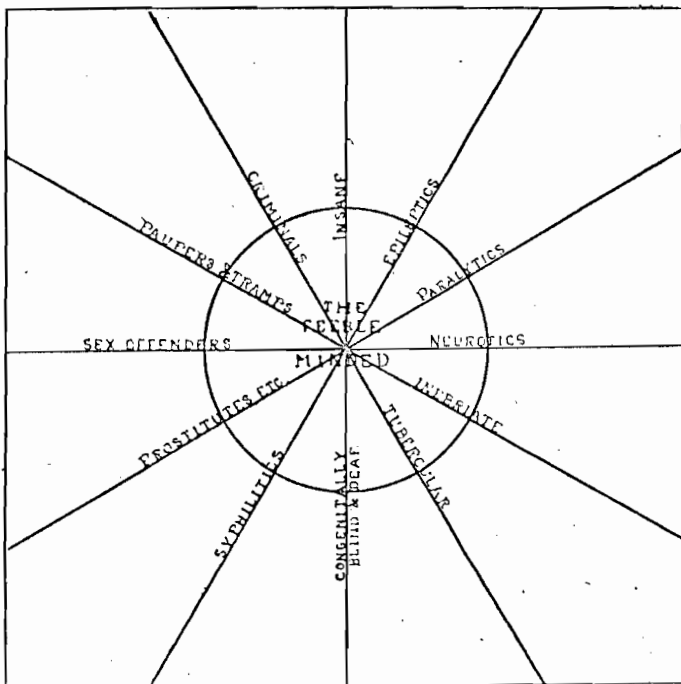
New buildings are urgently needed at the Village, and more land should be acquired at once, looking forward to the greatly increased population that should be expected here in the next few years. There should be at least one acre of land to each inmate in all of these institutions. Accommodations here should be largely increased within the next two years.

The above plan as outlined contemplates provision for all epileptics and feeble-minded (including idiots, imbeciles and morons) excepting those who can and will be sufficiently cared for and protected in their own homes.



RESULTS.

The carrying out of such a plan would tend not only to eliminate in the next twenty-five years a large number of the feeble-minded and epileptics from the community, but would also help solve many other social problems. We all realize the fact, although no one knows the exact percentages, that numbers of the epileptics, criminals, insane, inebriates, tubercular, neurotics, paralytics, congenitally deaf and blind, sex offenders, prostitutes, syphilitics, tramps and paupers are feeble-minded. These are the innocents—sinned against, not sinning. They are condemned and punished in our ignorance for crimes which they do not understand. Like the spokes of a great wheel, the hub of which is feeble-mindedness or epilepsy, these conditions radiate, having their centre in innocence and misfortune, but carrying disgrace, disease and death wherever they touch the normal line.



It is possible to make a considerable portion of the feeble-minded and epileptic, under suitable control, to some extent self-supporting, if as children they receive proper training for it. As we realize the great numbers of those who are in this class, the economic side of our problem becomes of the greatest importance.

Besides this, we should consider other important facts. The homes need relief from a burden that often becomes unupportable. The studies of the mental processes of these defective children furnish valuable lessons in the training of normal children. The departments of Justice will find their problem simplified. The children themselves will find comfort and happiness in an environment adapted to their needs. Surrounded by an atmosphere of understanding, expected to do only those things within their limited powers, cheered and encouraged by play and entertainment that they can appreciate, they will find in these "Villages of the Simple" a true haven of rest, and future generations will be to a great extent relieved of a burden, which, if the continued propagation of these defectives is not now checked, will become well nigh intolerable, threatening the progress of society, the nation and the race.

STERILIZATION.

New Jersey has a law (Chapter 190, Laws of 1911) providing for the sterilization of certain classes of criminals and defectives. What part is sterilization to play in this campaign against defectiveness and degeneracy? At present no one can answer. Responsible, thoughtful, professional men and officials realize that in this matter progress must be slow. The constitutionality of laws providing for compulsory sterilization has yet to be tested in several States. Scientific men are seeking to discover by laboratory studies and by securing a mass of first hand data, what direct or ultimate effects are produced by surgical sterilization in the individual, and upon society through the individual. Enough is already known, however, to warrant the belief that in a very restricted field of selection, this means of prevention of procreation may be used with safety to the individual and benefit to society. But much in the way of relief from the economic burden imposed by the necessity for immediate control, segregation and care of large numbers of these defectives is not to be expected by this method in the near future. Its ultimate possibilities will develop slowly and may be disappointing in the end.

SUMMARY.

The operation of the laws now providing for Medical Inspection (Chapter 92, 1909), Special Classes for Defectives (Chapter 234, 1911), and the Registration of Feeble-minded and Epileptics (Chapter 182, 1912) show us large numbers needing immediate care. Add to this the cases discovered by field workers or reported directly to the Commissioner's office by physicians, and we have—

In institutions of every kind.....	1,822 feeble-minded and epileptics.
Known cases not in institutions.....	4,422
Total	<u>6,244</u>

We therefore recommend—

1. The rapid extension of Special Classes in the public schools in the cities and larger school districts.
2. The transfer of the men and women from The Training School at Vineland as rapidly as possible, and that steps be taken looking toward the founding of a new State Training School. These Training Schools should receive children from outlying districts only. The State makes an allowance of \$500 per annum for every Special Class formed in those districts where there are enough to justify such a class.
3. Appropriations this year of at least \$100,000 for new buildings at the State Village at Skillman for the feeble-minded males.

Appropriations this year of at least \$175,000 for new buildings at the State Village for epileptic patients.

4. An appropriation of at least \$100,000 for new buildings at the State Institution for Feeble-minded Women.
5. An appropriation of \$25,000 in the Supplemental Bill and the same amount in the regular bill for the establishment of a farm colony for feeble-minded males capable of productive activities.
6. A very definite effort on the part of all who are interested, to inform our citizens of all facts relating to feeble-mindedness and epilepsy, so that all people shall understand and act, and thereby check this stream of inefficient.

As soon as normal people understand, they will put a new law in the moral code: *Just as none of you would now marry a brother or sister, so you must come to think of it as a crime and a sin—a sin against your race—to marry into a strain that shows feeble-mindedness or epilepsy in its past.*

Your Committee hopes that you will find it proper to bring this matter of prompt and adequate provision for these unfortunate classes, who, innocently enough on their part, are piling burdens upon society which are becoming heavier every year, to the attention of the Legislature with a suggestion of urgency for action.

Respectfully submitted,

CAROLINE B. ALEXANDER, *Chairman.*

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