**Vermont Eugenics: A Documentary History.** This document is: *Study of Committed Individuals at the State School at VergennesUnpublished report of the mental survey of inmates at the Vermont Industrial School*, National Committee on Mental Hygiene. August 17, 1927.

**STUDY OF COMMITTED INDIVIDUALS AT THESTATE INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL AT VERGENNES**

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Tables I and I‐‐A show that of the 232, 178 were Vermont born, while 29 were born in other states, making a total at 207 who were American born. Sixteen were Canadian born. One each was born in England and Austria‐Hungary.

Table II shows Mental Diagnosis and Environment. Two hundred and three are from urban districts, and 31 from rural. In this Table, a group of 120 were found to be essentially normal (superior, normal and dullard). A subnormal group (borderline and mental defective) numbered 112. Thus the number of mental defectives at this school is virtually equal to the number of normals.

Table III shows Mental Diagnosis and Sex. There are 160 boys and 79 girls, or approximately twice as many boys as girls. The boys are about equally divided between the normal and subnormal groups, whereas among the girls 44 are of the normal group as compared with 51 who are subnormal.

Table IV shows Mental Diagnosis and Physical Condition. Sixty‐eight percent were found to be in good physical condition. Twenty‐four percent were in fair physical condition. Only 15 of the total enrollment of 239 were in poor physical condition. Of those in good physical condition, 93 were of the intellectually normal group as against 67 of the subnorma1 group. Of those in fair physical condition, there were 22 in the normal group whereas 38 were of the subnormal group. Ten of the 15 in poor physical condition were of the subnormal group. Therefore, it would seem either that physical defect bears some relationship to mental defect, or that the intellectually normal individuals tend to show less physical defect.

Further examination as to specific defects lends plausibility to the above conclusion.

Table IV‐A shows Mental Diagnosis and Somatic Disease and Defects.

Eighty‐one of the total 239 are without gross defect.

Tables V and V‐‐A show Mental Diagnosis and Somatic Disease and Physical Defects. According to prevalence, physical defects number 12 and are arranged according to frequency present. Comparing the intellectually subnormal group with the normal group, there are only three of this list of 12 defects or disease conditions, in which the incidence is not greater among the subnormal group than in the normal group. These three conditions are; "overweight", "defects of the eye", and "defects of the skin".

It was observed by the survey staff that in the presence of severe discipline or use of corporal punishment, the mentally defective child was reluctant to complain of minor ills, such as sore throat or tooth ache. It was noted previously in the public school and the Brandon statistics that hypertrophied tonsils and carious (decayed) teeth were numerous. That this should be so, even in institutions where the services of specialists are available is an arresting observation. One explanation might be that all the feeble‐minded, extra‐ or intra‐institutional, tend to hygiene neglect by parent or self, or that the mentally defective child suffers less acutely from pain or is more resistant to it. But for the institutional cases as seen by the staff of this survey, it was felt that the continuation for much of the prevalence of hypertrophic tonsils and carious teeth was dependent upon fear stimulated by severe discipline and corporal punishment. It also may be conjectured that the presence of some of the other physical defects found in the institutional cases is influenced by the same factors – eye and ear defects furnish a good example.

As to the height‐ weight ratio as based upon age was interpreted according to A.C. H. A. standards (10% underweight and 15% overweight), it is noted that overweight is almost equally divided between the intellectually normal and subnormal groups at this institution. A truer estimate is reached in Table V‐A, Mental Diagnosis and Weight Upon Admission, where its is observed that out of 218 cases (The total number is 236, but height and weight notes on admission are incorrect or unrecorded in 18 cases) there were 112 within normal weight limits for age and height. Of the remaining 96 (218 minus 112) on admission to the institution, 20 were overweight, while nearly four times as many were underweight (76). This underweight distribution was divided between the intellectually normal and subnormal groups, about equally. However, after a period of residence in the institution, it is noted that the frequency of overweight increases and underweight diminishes (See Table V).

**ACADEMIC WORK ‐‐ EFFICIENCY OF SCHOOLAS CONDUCTED AT TIME OF SURVEY**

The school day is of four hours in duration five days per week. The customary holidays are allowed as for the public school. Yet in many cases the attendance is more irregular than would be permitted in the public school. Temporary "detail" assignments and seasonal work interfere with the regularity of attendance by the more robust. The school work covered is from the Primary Department to the 9th grade inclusive. The Principal stated that the grade work was closely related to that of the public school system but that one half would not be qualified to do the work of a corresponding class in a public school. Therefore, each class must be considered a "special class," using "special class" in its specific technical meaning. There are six teachers, one acting as principal. The enrollment is approximately 130. This should give an average of 20 pupils to each teacher, but actually the classes are of wide variation ‐ one having an enrollment of 38. The Principal, in addition to handling administrative and department problems, is intimately associated with the teaching of arithmetic and algebra to 61 pupils. Since the school population divides itself approximately into two equal parts, the intellectually normal and the subnormal, and since the classes average over 20 per class, and also since numerous behavior problems frequently arise, it is apparent that for the time given for class work (4 hours daily) and the very limited time for outside study, the school in the institution cannot correspond as equivalent in scholastic grading to the public schools.

It is pertinent to note the application of this inadequate school routine to the individual. For the two year period, July lst, 1924 to June 30, 1926, referring to the biennial report of the Department of Public Welfare, the Vermont industrial School Superintendent's report, it is noted that 16 children from the institution were in attendance at the Vergennes Public High School. In the same paragraph a statement is made, "The graduation class this year, however, from our Junior H. S. is the smallest for some time." Reference to this statement will be made later since it implies that those eligible for Senior High School are fewer than customarily planned for. Either the type of individual committed to the institution is lower in intelligence than heretofore or the type is essentially the same, but the policy of the school has changed.

One hundred and thirty‐four children are enrolled in the institutional school, while 86 are not enrolled. Twenty are unascertained as to school attendance. Many have been committed to the Vergennes Industrial school for "delinquency", but the real and major problem in some of these cases was truancy or difficulty in school. "Difficulty in School" is a broad term and was found to include theft of books, theft of a teacher's pocket book, writing obscene words on a schoolhouse wall, and breaking a string of beads while being "cuffed" by a teacher. Even truancy is broadly interpreted. In the rural district where teachers were intimately acquainted with the economic conditions of the homes, they universally made allowances for these and were loath to report absence or truancy promptly when the roads were bad or crops were to be harvested. Also a truant officer of the isolated sections is oftimes a neighborly person and realizes the hardship he my inflict on a farmer who tills a barren place of land when the letter of the law is too closely adhered to, thus depriving the impoverished renter of the services of a rugged son or daughter. Sometimes a truant comes to the Vergennes School as a plain "delinquent", but often as not he also comes as a delinquent plus dependency, plus "incorrigibility", plus petty larceny or plus numerous other captions. It is noteworthy then that of the 134 enrolled in the school 26 were truants before entering the Industrial school. Twenty‐three of these 26 should be in school. As it so happens they are, but two are doing poor work in school, one is over 15 years old and in the first grade, and the other nearly 13 years old, with a chronic inflammatory condition of both eyes, was not able to do third grade work before admission and had repeated the first and second grades many times.

But of the 86 not enrolled in school at the institution, there are 18 whose primary difficulty before admission was with the public school authorities. In other words, these eighteen entering with public school difficulties succeeded in continuing those difficulties within the institutional school to a degree where school attendance no longer was insisted on by the officials. The ways and means devised by these eighteen (as well as certain others who were not originally school problems) for "getting out" of attendance at the institutional school, were as varied as they were interesting. For example, one girl volunteered that she first learned all the prohibitions of the institutional school and then proceeded to break them until "expelled". "Teasing the teacher" was sufficient for a majority of the boys, while "flirting with boys" was a gratifying excuse for any of the girls to be released from distasteful school attendance. "Glad I was strong and called for 'detail'", was also a not infrequent excuse.

The study of truancy or of "delinquency", their causation and their correction calls for a study, first of the boy or girl who is truant or delinquent. This means a study of individuals as such and not merely a study of truant groups. Until this is done the present system at Vergennes will likely continue unsatisfactorily both to the institution and to the pupils.

Associated with the foregoing situation there is another problem calling for detailed analysis. Of the 85 not enrolled in school, 33 state they do not want to continue school, or are indifferent to re‐entering. Of this 33, 27 are over 16 years of age (chronologically), and only three have had school work above the 8th grade. The remaining 6, (those under 16 years of age) of the 33 who are out of school and indifferent to, or do not want to continue in it, have intelligence quotients ranging from 52 to 42, and express their aims: "to work out", "to housekeep", "to help mother", "to farm", "to clerk", and "to be a farmer". Each of these requests is for a type of training that may be taught by the Institution.

But, and more pertinently, while 53 of the 85 not enrolled in school state they do not wish to continue, 52 others of the group express a desire to go to school. Though all of the 52, by one device or another had successfully gotten themselves out of the institutional school, they now want to return to it. Appropriately the question may be raised "Do they really know what they do want?" It would seem that some at least do. Many frankly admit their conduct was disturbing to the teachers. Some were disturbing only in school; some only to one teacher, and some only to classmates. Many, however, admit that after having experienced the daily monotony of hard work, they now want an education. For example, a thirteen year old boy with borderline intelligence (S.B.77) and in poor physical condition had repeated the third grade for "fooling" and later was taken out of the 5th grade for "detail". He was doing good work, and was nearly at the head of the arithmetic class. He now expresses a commendable sense of rivalry when he says, "I want to go back and be at the head of arithmetic".

A 17 year old girl in good physical condition and of normal intelligence ran away from the Institution. Her subsequent discipline included the withdrawal of school privilege, which at first greatly pleased her. Now, however, she is anxious to be re‐enrolled. She extends to the Institution all credit in aiding her to control a violent temper. She recalls vividly the acute cardiac suffering of her deceased mother. Her father is a cripple and unable to give her a home. It is not an unnatural desire on her part to want to be a nurse. She has the health, the personality and the intellect, but the hospital of her selection for training has a minimum educational requirement for admission to its nurses' training school. Her punitive deprivation of school attendance for running away will thus tend to handicap her much more than it is intended by the administrative authorities.

There is yet another condition that serves to reduce the efficacious work of the school. Previously in this discussion of the school, reference was made to one of the factors that tended to foster "the smallest class for some time" in the Junior High School. This factor is the situation that, without specific questioning, 46 students, or a third of the school enrollment, name a particular teacher as unsympathetic, unfair or self‐contradictory. Analysis of the natures of complaints by pupils of this teacher lends substance to their probable genuineness. However, every institution of this type has one or more persons on its staff who are temperamentally unfitted for their work. The amount of friction and disorganization such individuals can provoke is in direct ratio to the amount of authority carried by the position they occupy. Thus, an unhealthy personality in a teacher usually is reflected in many of the pupils coming under her jurisdiction. In such circumstances, the only possible improvement in the situation is the assignment of a more stable personality to the teaching position.

In summarizing then the foregoing data the outstanding factor appears to be, that without individual attention to each individual case, and without a knowledge of previous home conditions, as well as physical, intellectual and personality equipment of the pupil, the State Industrial School cannot function at its best. It would seem that a specially trained person in psychiatry or in mental hygiene should aid in supervising the academic course of these delinquent or "problem" or "mentally defective children.

So far as vocational training is concerned, the institution again may be made even more of an asset to the State. Quoting from the Biennial Report of the Department of Public Welfare of the State of Vermont for the year ending June 30th, 1926, of Vermont Industrial School ‐‐ Superintendent's report on page corresponding to 23, it is stated:

"The regular work and repairs of the institution furnish us with abundant opportunity for the training of the boys and girls placed in our various departments. The work, however, falling to the carpenter department makes it impossible to give the detailed instruction in the class that would seem advisable for the proper background.

Our last farm report shows the most profitable year in the history of the farm, and the poultry department is fast rounding into a proposition that will need the attention of a full time employee."

The Superintendent's report is conservative and modest in its plea for added and much needed facilities for training in the trades. It is true that the amount of regular work and repairs furnish abundant opportunity for training. It is equally true that the farm is profitable. The livestock give an opportunity to many for training in farming and kindred work. The attitude, however, of the pupils is that the training available is one of "detail" only. The lack of an organized or systematized course of training in any one trade branch for any one individual seems largely responsible for this attitude. Obviously the superintendent cannot give the study necessary in each individual case. Yet, to adequately train a girl for housework her intellectual and personality equipment must be considered as well as to offer her experience in the multiple duties of housework. So too, farm training for the boys should be proceeded by a consideration of the individual boy's physique, his intellect and personality, before he is given practical experience in stock raising, crop planting and harvesting, or in dairying and fruit growing. To boys and girls both facilities for such training are at hand in the Industrial School and yet any one individual seldom receives a broad experience in the allied duties of a given vocation. Whatever course is devised it ought primarily to be practical and uncomplicated. For an organized plan to succeed it is essential that the reasonable desires of the individual in regard to vocation should be given consideration. In this respect, over 40 of the boys want to be farmers and 10 more want to be "farm hands". Twenty others want to be mechanics (auto, radio, etc.), machinists and engineers, and 18 others want to be carpenters. At the present time facilities at the School for training mechanics or carpenters are inadequate for a group one‐quarter this size. Training in printing, plumbing and tin‐smithing is all provided for, both in organization and equipment to meet the desires expressed. For girls, housework, cooking, sewing and laundry correspond practically as farming does for boys. Fifteen of the 79 girls would like to be nurses. Of these, 12 as far as intellect, health and personality are concerned, might well be nurses and could receive practical although uncredited training at the Industrial School. Ten others of the girls want to be teachers and may receive at the school the prerequisite studies for this. It is not recommended that all the aims expressed should be gratified, though the majority seem reasonable. It is suggested, however, that aims compatible with the pupil's endowments ought to have personal study given them, as well as facilities in the way of trained instructors and equipment placed at their disposal. It would be well be organize a course of study to co‐operate with outside industries in so far as possible along the practical lines worked out in St. Johnsbury and Springfield public school systems.

Table VI shows Mental Diagnosis and Personality. Of 54 intellectually normal there are 11 who display outstanding difficulties in personality. Of 58 dullards, there are 21 with personality difficulties. Of 62 borderline cases with intellectual endowment modified or less than dullards, one‐half have personality difficulties, while only about 13 or nearly a quarter of the definite mental defectives are without personality difficulties. Although it is a credit to the mental defective within the Industrial School to show one‐ quarter of them with favorable personalities, it is apparent nevertheless that the institution must be in the truest sense a training school for those with personality handicaps. Primarily the aim of the institution is to treat and retrain the individual delinquent. But in practice this aim is subordinated to the necessity for pupils to perform routine work. It is not improbable that a delinquent with limited intellect and inadequate personality is more difficult to train than the average. This means a longer sojourn within the institution, and it falls therefore to this type of pupil to do the monotonous work. Except for the seriously handicapped and those whose influence is unwholesome for others, it is true that the Industrial School with special study of the individual may serve with benefit the community and the individuals. On the other hand, those who are markedly defective in intelligence, or who are mentally deteriorated, should be transferred to the school for the Feeble‐minded at Brandon. This survey considered as such.

Table VII gives Mental Diagnosis and Behavior. Practically a third (70) of all (239) do not show delinquent behavior. These as a class are dependents, or from "broken homes"; that is, one or both parents are not in the home. Over a third (97) have undesirable sex tendencies. The majority of these 97 are so classed by their own statements of masturbatory activities. Many of them say that this activity was begun in the institution, a situation not unlike that met with in similar institutions elsewhere than in Vermont. Thirty‐two admit to promiscuous sexual intercourse. It is noteworthy that 16 of those 32 are of normal intelligence, while 16 are subnormal. Five of the 32 have been incestuous. Two are dullard and 3 borderline. To live wholesomely when segregated by sex is nigh impossible even for the normal adult anywhere. It is abnormal for subsequent social development for the healthy adolescent to long delay his or her adjustment to the opposite sex. Modern psychiatry and especially mental hygiene supports this view. How much greater then is the need for the abnormal adolescent, on who is unstable in personality make‐up, limited in intellect and physically robust, to be assisted personally and scientifically in this adjustment? The Industrial School is handicapped by its present personnel, organization and study given to this major problem. It is advocated that self‐expression in music, art, athletics; work with a primary interest and hobbies go far toward expediting an individual's adjustment to sex desire. Institutional life practically precludes all of these except athletics and even this is modified for many. Some need for this sublimating purpose not only one but several interests. This is prohibitive in an institution with limited personnel and equipment. The girls' activity class and a somewhat similar scheme for the boys do much in the way of group self‐expression. But individual self‐expression is curtailed in that the institutional routine has been joined and linked‐up with the play program. Moreover, segregation by sex within the institution prevents boys and girls from learning to get along with each other in amicable or healthy social relationships similar to those obtaining in the community. It is suggested, therefore, that under adequate but not too close supervision, a certain measure of play activity in and out of doors be extended to mixed groups. It is felt that post‐institutional adjustment to sex activity would tend less to be a problem than heretofore supposed if this were accomplished. To bring about full benefit to the individual generous counsel in time and science should be made available, to him. Over fifty of the 239 boys and girls in the institution requested on their own initiative such counsel from the survey staff, the members of which were strangers to them, and among them approximately only two weeks. Five sought subsequent interviews specially upon this question. Several were thwarted in so doing.

In Table VII, stealing is a behavior difficulty with 81 of the 239. Many more admitted petty theft which are unrecorded. Punishment appears to deter but few in this. Instead wariness and artfulness are augmented and in this the institution lays down a pattern for subsequent behavior easy to follow and which finds its counterpart in activity akin to that of the criminal. Many steal without discoverable purpose, some steal impulsively and others steal selfishly, but all seem unaware of the true nature of the motivating force in each instance. Prolonged and penetrating study is necessary in each case of stealing. As with regard to the control of undesirable sex activities in the absence of individual study, so can the institution do little about stealing except to prohibit it, unless careful investigation of motives is made in each instance. The effect of stealing in the individual is seen nearly always by the institution, but seldom the cause. To be effectual, prohibition must come from within the individual and not from without. The treatment of stealing in every case should be guarded by those well‐versed in abnormal psychology. Such a service is not available at present to the Industrial School.

Pugnacity is variable and appears in Table VII as noted from the institutional records. much larger number state they "fight" frequently, but in numerous instances these "fights" appeared to be little more than rough horse play. Pugnacity includes "detail" fights, quarrels with playmates and display of antagonism to parents and teachers. Sporadic group "fights" likewise occasionally occur within the institution. Since, however, pugnacity is regarded as a personality trait depending for stimulation upon aggressiveness, restlessness, apprehension, persecution and other inciting causes, real or fancied, displays of such behavior have been included elsewhere in this report, (Personality and Mental Diagnosis) and cannot per se be evaluated from this table. Therefore conclusions are not drawn.

Also in this Table VII, lying is noted in only one mental defective. In the absence of surprise or reprimand, practically all the inmates of the institution, the feeble‐minded included, appeared to be able to differentiate between important and unimportant lies. Also, in a large number, lying was regarded as justifiable in the presence of threats of corporal punishment. A dislike of one person permitted many to lie to that person. On the other hand, repeated displays of reliance and trust, in many of them, produced honesty even in the presence of punishment.

Table VIII shows Mental Diagnosis and Reason Committed. Earlier in this report Delinquency and Truancy have been discussed. Dependency in this table is also a factor in many of the other Reasons Committed", and therefore is not truly differentiated. Sex Offense is recorded in this table only in those in whom it was a major reason. Larceny, breaking and entering, stealing, theft and burglary comprise a total of 67, or a group next largest to those labelled under Delinquency and Incorrigibility. The need of treatment is again made imperative by the fact of the number of this group ‐‐ a quarter of the total in the institution. Thirty of this 67 (or nearly one‐half) also are intellectually subnormal thus making the need for adequate treatment additionally acute. Also in Table VIII, 62 of the intellectually normal group are Delinquent or Incorrigible, as well, and 66 subnormals are also Delinquent or Incorrigible. It is a debatable question, if a question at all, which group (normal or subnormal) needs treatment more than correction. It may safely be said that over one‐half of both groups are in need of study and guidance in regard to Delinquency and Incorrigibility. In reference to vagrancy or running away (previous to admission), it is noteworthy that 4 are of the normal group whereas only one is of the subnormal. This small number cannot be considered as suggesting that the feeble‐minded, (as will be pointed out in the section of this report discussing the feeble‐minded at Brandon), are essentially non‐aggressive and endure hardships rather than to escape therefrom. It is, however, noteworthy. The small numbers of forgery, involuntary manslaughter and arson cases do not call for a statement. Their presence in this report indicate only the range of the heading "Reason Committed".

**FACTS IN REGARD TO ATTEMPTS TO ESCAPE FROMTHE INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL.**

The following outline gives the number examined during this Survey, who have escaped from the institution:

Total, 50 have escaped

14 Girls 6 normal 8 subnormal (1 returned of her own accord)

36 Boys 18 normal (3 returned of own accord) 18 subnormal (5 returned of own accord)

Of the 50, there have been 15 boys (4 normal and 11 subnormal) and 3 girls (1 normal and 2 subnormal) who have made more than one attempt. Those who have escaped within the first month after their admission are 20 (18 boys ‐ 12 normal, and 6 subnormal; and 2 girls ‐‐ 1 normal and 1 subnormal). Five others have escaped approximately on their first anniversary date of admission. The tendency to escape in pairs or groups is small. For example, a normal and a subnormal girl escaped together. Two subnormal boys escaped together. A normal and a subnormal boy left together. Also one normal boy escaped with 4 subnormal boys. Another fact elicited was that of the 50, twenty‐five had unstable or otherwise faulty personalities. Many of the escaped were impulsive acts. A few mere planned in order to avoid censure or punishment for minor infraction, of rules, distasteful "details", difficulties in school and irksome routine. The normal in intellect tend more to run away soon after admission than do the subnormal. The subnormal in intellect tend to return of their own accord. Since approximately one‐third of all make more than one attempt; since the tendency to escape is related to adjustment to institutional life early in their sojourn; and since the attempts are largely impulsive acts, it would appear that the institutional policy of hair‐cropping for run‐aways might be abandoned. This policy is a trademark of the penitentiary and to the impressionable youth it suggests revenge and a not‐altogether unwelcome martyrdom in the eyes of their less courageous cottage mates. Fear, or strangeness on admission, and later dissatisfaction may well be reduced by an intimate personal interview with a sympathetic and discerning executive, not too closely allied with disciplinary measures.

**SOCIAL SERVICE DEPARTMENT AS CONDUCTEDIN THE INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL**

There is one full time worker in this department. her duties include giving psychometric tests to those committed to the institution, as well as making home visits. Also, she corresponds with paroled cases and personally addresses and sends out the publication of the institution paper, ‐‐ "The Echoes". Further, she types her own records. Aside from the clerical work, her duties are manifold when it is considered that home visits include new cases, pre‐parole and paroled cases. For a new case she seeks interviews with the Town Clerk, the Judge, the school, the home and the neighbors. For pre‐parole and paroled cases there are additional interviews with employers and associates. A review of a 46 day period shows that this one social service worker, in additional to institution duties made 212 calls in 45 different towns. Exclusive of clerical work and psychometric testing, the territory to be effectively covered calls for the services of another trained worker.

A summary of the visits to the homes of the 239 boys and girls in the institution reveals the following facts. The home situation in 56 cases have been unascertained except as 15 were reported by the Vermont Children's Aid Society, 19 by the Public Welfare Department, and 1 by the Eugenics Survey. The remaining 185 homes are thus reported:

1. Visited prior to admission ‐‐ 6 (4 of those wore visited between one to nearly four years prior to admission) 2. Visited after admission  
(a) less than 3 months ‐‐ 67 (b) 3 months to l2 months ‐‐ 73 (c) 1 year to 3 years ‐‐ 36

It should be mentioned that the delay in visiting the 36 homes in group (c) is the result of the Socia1 Service Department having been in existence in the institution only with the appointment of the present worker. However, group (b) above indicates that nearly a third have been in the institution more than three months without reliable home information. This naturally defers adequate evaluation of the individual needs in these children. It is unfair both to the institution as a training school, and to the delinquent as an individual. Also, it prevents any corrective measures being applied and tried out in an unfavorable home far enough ahead to be made permanent, prior to the incumbent's return there on parole. As a result, with but few concrete facts as to the individual's equipment, (i.e. physical condition, institutional training gained, personality and aim) this one worker is relied upon to place properly in good environmental conditions a paroled case from the institution. It likewise is evident that the heavy demands made on the social worker preclude her giving as much attention as is needed to the essential service of proper parole placement as to home, work and recreation.

Handwritten annotation:  
[The social worker there at time of survey had been there only 1 1/3 years ‐‐ previous worker had been there between 2 and 3 years‐ ]

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**ACADEMIC WORK ‐‐ EFFICIENCY OF SCHOOLAS CONDUCTED AT TIME OF SURVEY**

The school day is of four hours in duration five days per week. The customary holidays are allowed as for the public school. Yet in many cases the attendance is more irregular than would be permitted in the public school. Temporary "detail" assignments and seasonal work interfere with the regularity of attendance by the more robust. The school work covered is from the Primary Department to the 9th grade inclusive. The Principal stated that the grade work was closely related to that of the public school system but that one half would not be qualified to do the work of a corresponding class in a public school. Therefore, each class must be considered a "special class," using "special class" in its specific technical meaning. There are six teachers, one acting as principal. The enrollment is approximately 130. This should give an average of 20 pupils to each teacher, but actually the classes are of wide variation ‐ one having an enrollment of 38. The Principal, in addition to handling administrative and department problems, is intimately associated with the teaching of arithmetic and algebra to 61 pupils. Since the school population divides itself approximately into two equal parts, the intellectually normal and the subnormal, and since the classes average over 20 per class, and also since numerous behavior problems frequently arise, it is apparent that for the time given for class work (4 hours daily) and the very limited time for outside study, the school in the institution cannot correspond as equivalent in scholastic grading to the public schools.

It is pertinent to note the application of this inadequate school routine to the individual. For the two year period, July lst, 1924 to June 30, 1926, referring to the biennial report of the Department of Public Welfare, the Vermont industrial School Superintendent's report, it is noted that 16 children from the institution were in attendance at the Vergennes Public High School. In the same paragraph a statement is made, "The graduation class this year, however, from our Junior H. S. is the smallest for some time." Reference to this statement will be made later since it implies that those eligible for Senior High School are fewer than customarily planned for. Either the type of individual committed to the institution is lower in intelligence than heretofore or the type is essentially the same, but the policy of the school has changed.

One hundred and thirty‐four children are enrolled in the institutional school, while 86 are not enrolled. Twenty are unascertained as to school attendance. Many have been committed to the Vergennes Industrial school for "delinquency", but the real and major problem in some of these cases was truancy or difficulty in school. "Difficulty in School" is a broad term and was found to include theft of books, theft of a teacher's pocket book, writing obscene words on a schoolhouse wall, and breaking a string of beads while being "cuffed" by a teacher. Even truancy is broadly interpreted. In the rural district where teachers were intimately acquainted with the economic conditions of the homes, they universally made allowances for these and were loath to report absence or truancy promptly when the roads were bad or crops were to be harvested. Also a truant officer of the isolated sections is oftimes a neighborly person and realizes the hardship he my inflict on a farmer who tills a barren place of land when the letter of the law is too closely adhered to, thus depriving the impoverished renter of the services of a rugged son or daughter. Sometimes a truant comes to the Vergennes School as a plain "delinquent", but often as not he also comes as a delinquent plus dependency, plus "incorrigibility", plus petty larceny or plus numerous other captions. It is noteworthy then that of the 134 enrolled in the school 26 were truants before entering the Industrial school. Twenty‐three of these 26 should be in school. As it so happens they are, but two are doing poor work in school, one is over 15 years old and in the first grade, and the other nearly 13 years old, with a chronic inflammatory condition of both eyes, was not able to do third grade work before admission and had repeated the first and second grades many times.

But of the 86 not enrolled in school at the institution, there are 18 whose primary difficulty before admission was with the public school authorities. In other words, these eighteen entering with public school difficulties succeeded in continuing those difficulties within the institutional school to a degree where school attendance no longer was insisted on by the officials. The ways and means devised by these eighteen (as well as certain others who were not originally school problems) for "getting out" of attendance at the institutional school, were as varied as they were interesting. For example, one girl volunteered that she first learned all the prohibitions of the institutional school and then proceeded to break them until "expelled". "Teasing the teacher" was sufficient for a majority of the boys, while "flirting with boys" was a gratifying excuse for any of the girls to be released from distasteful school attendance. "Glad I was strong and called for 'detail'", was also a not infrequent excuse.

The study of truancy or of "delinquency", their causation and their correction calls for a study, first of the boy or girl who is truant or delinquent. This means a study of individuals as such and not merely a study of truant groups. Until this is done the present system at Vergennes will likely continue unsatisfactorily both to the institution and to the pupils.

Associated with the foregoing situation there is another problem calling for detailed analysis. Of the 85 not enrolled in school, 33 state they do not want to continue school, or are indifferent to re‐entering. Of this 33, 27 are over 16 years of age (chronologically), and only three have had school work above the 8th grade. The remaining 6, (those under 16 years of age) of the 33 who are out of school and indifferent to, or do not want to continue in it, have intelligence quotients ranging from 52 to 42, and express their aims: "to work out", "to housekeep", "to help mother", "to farm", "to clerk", and "to be a farmer". Each of these requests is for a type of training that may be taught by the Institution.

But, and more pertinently, while 53 of the 85 not enrolled in school state they do not wish to continue, 52 others of the group express a desire to go to school. Though all of the 52, by one device or another had successfully gotten themselves out of the institutional school, they now want to return to it. Appropriately the question may be raised "Do they really know what they do want?" It would seem that some at least do. Many frankly admit their conduct was disturbing to the teachers. Some were disturbing only in school; some only to one teacher, and some only to classmates. Many, however, admit that after having experienced the daily monotony of hard work, they now want an education. For example, a thirteen year old boy with borderline intelligence (S.B.77) and in poor physical condition had repeated the third grade for "fooling" and later was taken out of the 5th grade for "detail". He was doing good work, and was nearly at the head of the arithmetic class. He now expresses a commendable sense of rivalry when he says, "I want to go back and be at the head of arithmetic".

A 17 year old girl in good physical condition and of normal intelligence ran away from the Institution. Her subsequent discipline included the withdrawal of school privilege, which at first greatly pleased her. Now, however, she is anxious to be re‐enrolled. She extends to the Institution all credit in aiding her to control a violent temper. She recalls vividly the acute cardiac suffering of her deceased mother. Her father is a cripple and unable to give her a home. It is not an unnatural desire on her part to want to be a nurse. She has the health, the personality and the intellect, but the hospital of her selection for training has a minimum educational requirement for admission to its nurses' training school. Her punitive deprivation of school attendance for running away will thus tend to handicap her much more than it is intended by the administrative authorities.

There is yet another condition that serves to reduce the efficacious work of the school. Previously in this discussion of the school, reference was made to one of the factors that tended to foster "the smallest class for some time" in the Junior High School. This factor is the situation that, without specific questioning, 46 students, or a third of the school enrollment, name a particular teacher as unsympathetic, unfair or self‐contradictory. Analysis of the natures of complaints by pupils of this teacher lends substance to their probable genuineness. However, every institution of this type has one or more persons on its staff who are temperamentally unfitted for their work. The amount of friction and disorganization such individuals can provoke is in direct ratio to the amount of authority carried by the position they occupy. Thus, an unhealthy personality in a teacher usually is reflected in many of the pupils coming under her jurisdiction. In such circumstances, the only possible improvement in the situation is the assignment of a more stable personality to the teaching position.

In summarizing then the foregoing data the outstanding factor appears to be, that without individual attention to each individual case, and without a knowledge of previous home conditions, as well as physical, intellectual and personality equipment of the pupil, the State Industrial School cannot function at its best. It would seem that a specially trained person in psychiatry or in mental hygiene should aid in supervising the academic course of these delinquent or "problem" or "mentally defective children.

So far as vocational training is concerned, the institution again may be made even more of an asset to the State. Quoting from the Biennial Report of the Department of Public Welfare of the State of Vermont for the year ending June 30th, 1926, of Vermont Industrial School ‐‐ Superintendent's report on page corresponding to 23, it is stated:

"The regular work and repairs of the institution furnish us with abundant opportunity for the training of the boys and girls placed in our various departments. The work, however, falling to the carpenter department makes it impossible to give the detailed instruction in the class that would seem advisable for the proper background.

Our last farm report shows the most profitable year in the history of the farm, and the poultry department is fast rounding into a proposition that will need the attention of a full time employee."

The Superintendent's report is conservative and modest in its plea for added and much needed facilities for training in the trades. It is true that the amount of regular work and repairs furnish abundant opportunity for training. It is equally true that the farm is profitable. The livestock give an opportunity to many for training in farming and kindred work. The attitude, however, of the pupils is that the training available is one of "detail" only. The lack of an organized or systematized course of training in any one trade branch for any one individual seems largely responsible for this attitude. Obviously the superintendent cannot give the study necessary in each individual case. Yet, to adequately train a girl for housework her intellectual and personality equipment must be considered as well as to offer her experience in the multiple duties of housework. So too, farm training for the boys should be proceeded by a consideration of the individual boy's physique, his intellect and personality, before he is given practical experience in stock raising, crop planting and harvesting, or in dairying and fruit growing. To boys and girls both facilities for such training are at hand in the Industrial School and yet any one individual seldom receives a broad experience in the allied duties of a given vocation. Whatever course is devised it ought primarily to be practical and uncomplicated. For an organized plan to succeed it is essential that the reasonable desires of the individual in regard to vocation should be given consideration. In this respect, over 40 of the boys want to be farmers and 10 more want to be "farm hands". Twenty others want to be mechanics (auto, radio, etc.), machinists and engineers, and 18 others want to be carpenters. At the present time facilities at the School for training mechanics or carpenters are inadequate for a group one‐quarter this size. Training in printing, plumbing and tin‐smithing is all provided for, both in organization and equipment to meet the desires expressed. For girls, housework, cooking, sewing and laundry correspond practically as farming does for boys. Fifteen of the 79 girls would like to be nurses. Of these, 12 as far as intellect, health and personality are concerned, might well be nurses and could receive practical although uncredited training at the Industrial School. Ten others of the girls want to be teachers and may receive at the school the prerequisite studies for this. It is not recommended that all the aims expressed should be gratified, though the majority seem reasonable. It is suggested, however, that aims compatible with the pupil's endowments ought to have personal study given them, as well as facilities in the way of trained instructors and equipment placed at their disposal. It would be well be organize a course of study to co‐operate with outside industries in so far as possible along the practical lines worked out in St. Johnsbury and Springfield public school systems.

Table VI shows Mental Diagnosis and Personality. Of 54 intellectually normal there are 11 who display outstanding difficulties in personality. Of 58 dullards, there are 21 with personality difficulties. Of 62 borderline cases with intellectual endowment modified or less than dullards, one‐half have personality difficulties, while only about 13 or nearly a quarter of the definite mental defectives are without personality difficulties. Although it is a credit to the mental defective within the Industrial School to show one‐ quarter of them with favorable personalities, it is apparent nevertheless that the institution must be in the truest sense a training school for those with personality handicaps. Primarily the aim of the institution is to treat and retrain the individual delinquent. But in practice this aim is subordinated to the necessity for pupils to perform routine work. It is not improbable that a delinquent with limited intellect and inadequate personality is more difficult to train than the average. This means a longer sojourn within the institution, and it falls therefore to this type of pupil to do the monotonous work. Except for the seriously handicapped and those whose influence is unwholesome for others, it is true that the Industrial School with special study of the individual may serve with benefit the community and the individuals. On the other hand, those who are markedly defective in intelligence, or who are mentally deteriorated, should be transferred to the school for the Feeble‐minded at Brandon. This survey considered as such.

Table VII gives Mental Diagnosis and Behavior. Practically a third (70) of all (239) do not show delinquent behavior. These as a class are dependents, or from "broken homes"; that is, one or both parents are not in the home. Over a third (97) have undesirable sex tendencies. The majority of these 97 are so classed by their own statements of masturbatory activities. Many of them say that this activity was begun in the institution, a situation not unlike that met with in similar institutions elsewhere than in Vermont. Thirty‐two admit to promiscuous sexual intercourse. It is noteworthy that 16 of those 32 are of normal intelligence, while 16 are subnormal. Five of the 32 have been incestuous. Two are dullard and 3 borderline. To live wholesomely when segregated by sex is nigh impossible even for the normal adult anywhere. It is abnormal for subsequent social development for the healthy adolescent to long delay his or her adjustment to the opposite sex. Modern psychiatry and especially mental hygiene supports this view. How much greater then is the need for the abnormal adolescent, on who is unstable in personality make‐up, limited in intellect and physically robust, to be assisted personally and scientifically in this adjustment? The Industrial School is handicapped by its present personnel, organization and study given to this major problem. It is advocated that self‐expression in music, art, athletics; work with a primary interest and hobbies go far toward expediting an individual's adjustment to sex desire. Institutional life practically precludes all of these except athletics and even this is modified for many. Some need for this sublimating purpose not only one but several interests. This is prohibitive in an institution with limited personnel and equipment. The girls' activity class and a somewhat similar scheme for the boys do much in the way of group self‐expression. But individual self‐expression is curtailed in that the institutional routine has been joined and linked‐up with the play program. Moreover, segregation by sex within the institution prevents boys and girls from learning to get along with each other in amicable or healthy social relationships similar to those obtaining in the community. It is suggested, therefore, that under adequate but not too close supervision, a certain measure of play activity in and out of doors be extended to mixed groups. It is felt that post‐institutional adjustment to sex activity would tend less to be a problem than heretofore supposed if this were accomplished. To bring about full benefit to the individual generous counsel in time and science should be made available, to him. Over fifty of the 239 boys and girls in the institution requested on their own initiative such counsel from the survey staff, the members of which were strangers to them, and among them approximately only two weeks. Five sought subsequent interviews specially upon this question. Several were thwarted in so doing.

In Table VII, stealing is a behavior difficulty with 81 of the 239. Many more admitted petty theft which are unrecorded. Punishment appears to deter but few in this. Instead wariness and artfulness are augmented and in this the institution lays down a pattern for subsequent behavior easy to follow and which finds its counterpart in activity akin to that of the criminal. Many steal without discoverable purpose, some steal impulsively and others steal selfishly, but all seem unaware of the true nature of the motivating force in each instance. Prolonged and penetrating study is necessary in each case of stealing. As with regard to the control of undesirable sex activities in the absence of individual study, so can the institution do little about stealing except to prohibit it, unless careful investigation of motives is made in each instance. The effect of stealing in the individual is seen nearly always by the institution, but seldom the cause. To be effectual, prohibition must come from within the individual and not from without. The treatment of stealing in every case should be guarded by those well‐versed in abnormal psychology. Such a service is not available at present to the Industrial School.

Pugnacity is variable and appears in Table VII as noted from the institutional records. much larger number state they "fight" frequently, but in numerous instances these "fights" appeared to be little more than rough horse play. Pugnacity includes "detail" fights, quarrels with playmates and display of antagonism to parents and teachers. Sporadic group "fights" likewise occasionally occur within the institution. Since, however, pugnacity is regarded as a personality trait depending for stimulation upon aggressiveness, restlessness, apprehension, persecution and other inciting causes, real or fancied, displays of such behavior have been included elsewhere in this report, (Personality and Mental Diagnosis) and cannot per se be evaluated from this table. Therefore conclusions are not drawn.

Also in this Table VII, lying is noted in only one mental defective. In the absence of surprise or reprimand, practically all the inmates of the institution, the feeble‐minded included, appeared to be able to differentiate between important and unimportant lies. Also, in a large number, lying was regarded as justifiable in the presence of threats of corporal punishment. A dislike of one person permitted many to lie to that person. On the other hand, repeated displays of reliance and trust, in many of them, produced honesty even in the presence of punishment.

Table VIII shows Mental Diagnosis and Reason Committed. Earlier in this report Delinquency and Truancy have been discussed. Dependency in this table is also a factor in many of the other Reasons Committed", and therefore is not truly differentiated. Sex Offense is recorded in this table only in those in whom it was a major reason. Larceny, breaking and entering, stealing, theft and burglary comprise a total of 67, or a group next largest to those labelled under Delinquency and Incorrigibility. The need of treatment is again made imperative by the fact of the number of this group ‐‐ a quarter of the total in the institution. Thirty of this 67 (or nearly one‐half) also are intellectually subnormal thus making the need for adequate treatment additionally acute. Also in Table VIII, 62 of the intellectually normal group are Delinquent or Incorrigible, as well, and 66 subnormals are also Delinquent or Incorrigible. It is a debatable question, if a question at all, which group (normal or subnormal) needs treatment more than correction. It may safely be said that over one‐half of both groups are in need of study and guidance in regard to Delinquency and Incorrigibility. In reference to vagrancy or running away (previous to admission), it is noteworthy that 4 are of the normal group whereas only one is of the subnormal. This small number cannot be considered as suggesting that the feeble‐minded, (as will be pointed out in the section of this report discussing the feeble‐minded at Brandon), are essentially non‐aggressive and endure hardships rather than to escape therefrom. It is, however, noteworthy. The small numbers of forgery, involuntary manslaughter and arson cases do not call for a statement. Their presence in this report indicate only the range of the heading "Reason Committed".

**FACTS IN REGARD TO ATTEMPTS TO ESCAPE FROMTHE INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL.**

The following outline gives the number examined during this Survey, who have escaped from the institution:

Total, 50 have escaped

14 Girls 6 normal 8 subnormal (1 returned of her own accord)

36 Boys 18 normal (3 returned of own accord) 18 subnormal (5 returned of own accord)

Of the 50, there have been 15 boys (4 normal and 11 subnormal) and 3 girls (1 normal and 2 subnormal) who have made more than one attempt. Those who have escaped within the first month after their admission are 20 (18 boys ‐ 12 normal, and 6 subnormal; and 2 girls ‐‐ 1 normal and 1 subnormal). Five others have escaped approximately on their first anniversary date of admission. The tendency to escape in pairs or groups is small. For example, a normal and a subnormal girl escaped together. Two subnormal boys escaped together. A normal and a subnormal boy left together. Also one normal boy escaped with 4 subnormal boys. Another fact elicited was that of the 50, twenty‐five had unstable or otherwise faulty personalities. Many of the escaped were impulsive acts. A few mere planned in order to avoid censure or punishment for minor infraction, of rules, distasteful "details", difficulties in school and irksome routine. The normal in intellect tend more to run away soon after admission than do the subnormal. The subnormal in intellect tend to return of their own accord. Since approximately one‐third of all make more than one attempt; since the tendency to escape is related to adjustment to institutional life early in their sojourn; and since the attempts are largely impulsive acts, it would appear that the institutional policy of hair‐cropping for run‐aways might be abandoned. This policy is a trademark of the penitentiary and to the impressionable youth it suggests revenge and a not‐altogether unwelcome martyrdom in the eyes of their less courageous cottage mates. Fear, or strangeness on admission, and later dissatisfaction may well be reduced by an intimate personal interview with a sympathetic and discerning executive, not too closely allied with disciplinary measures.

**SOCIAL SERVICE DEPARTMENT AS CONDUCTEDIN THE INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL**

There is one full time worker in this department. her duties include giving psychometric tests to those committed to the institution, as well as making home visits. Also, she corresponds with paroled cases and personally addresses and sends out the publication of the institution paper, ‐‐ "The Echoes". Further, she types her own records. Aside from the clerical work, her duties are manifold when it is considered that home visits include new cases, pre‐parole and paroled cases. For a new case she seeks interviews with the Town Clerk, the Judge, the school, the home and the neighbors. For pre‐parole and paroled cases there are additional interviews with employers and associates. A review of a 46 day period shows that this one social service worker, in additional to institution duties made 212 calls in 45 different towns. Exclusive of clerical work and psychometric testing, the territory to be effectively covered calls for the services of another trained worker.

A summary of the visits to the homes of the 239 boys and girls in the institution reveals the following facts. The home situation in 56 cases have been unascertained except as 15 were reported by the Vermont Children's Aid Society, 19 by the Public Welfare Department, and 1 by the Eugenics Survey. The remaining 185 homes are thus reported:

1. Visited prior to admission ‐‐ 6 (4 of those wore visited between one to nearly four years prior to admission) 2. Visited after admission  
(a) less than 3 months ‐‐ 67 (b) 3 months to l2 months ‐‐ 73 (c) 1 year to 3 years ‐‐ 36

It should be mentioned that the delay in visiting the 36 homes in group (c) is the result of the Socia1 Service Department having been in existence in the institution only with the appointment of the present worker. However, group (b) above indicates that nearly a third have been in the institution more than three months without reliable home information. This naturally defers adequate evaluation of the individual needs in these children. It is unfair both to the institution as a training school, and to the delinquent as an individual. Also, it prevents any corrective measures being applied and tried out in an unfavorable home far enough ahead to be made permanent, prior to the incumbent's return there on parole. As a result, with but few concrete facts as to the individual's equipment, (i.e. physical condition, institutional training gained, personality and aim) this one worker is relied upon to place properly in good environmental conditions a paroled case from the institution. It likewise is evident that the heavy demands made on the social worker preclude her giving as much attention as is needed to the essential service of proper parole placement as to home, work and recreation.

Handwritten annotation:  
[The social worker there at time of survey had been there only 1 1/3 years ‐‐ previous worker had been there between 2 and 3 years‐ ]

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