

Education, Not Coercion, Needed

All through the 28-page report the commission endeavors to show that education rather than coercive measures should be employed in the attempt to lead Vermont's delinquent children toward better lives.

The report criticizes the system of education at the industrial school, pointing out that four hours a day of school work seem insufficient.

The famed Vergennes Industrial school band, known throughout the state, comes in for comment, when the commission recommends that while the band is important, its activity should be fitted in and adjusted to the school program as a whole instead of having the school program adjusted to and organized around the band.

One of the major recommendations is the establishment of a psychiatric clinic or at least provision of the services of a psychiatrist or a competent psychologist at the institution.

In referring to the superintendent, the committee says:

"Testimony indicates an inadequate control of disciplinary measures in the past and tardy discovery by the superintendent of cases of excessive severity or improper behavior on the part of certain members of the board."

The commission also found that in some instances inmates were forced to work excessive hours of duty and in the report recommends this practice be stopped.

Following is the complete text of the report of the governor's commission:

"The committee appointed to investigate conditions existing at the Vermont Industrial school herewith submit the following report:

"Pursuant to the call issued by Dr. Edward A. Tobin, chairman, the committee assembled at the Stevens house in Vergennes on Monday, June 10, at 7 p. m., with all members present and a conference was had with Commissioner of Public Welfare Timothy C. Dale and the proceedings outlined. The hearing was held at the Industrial school on June 11, 12, 13 and 14 and recessed to Rutland, July 22, 1935, for the purpose of reviewing the transcript of testimony taken at Vergennes and formulating this report.

"The occasion for this investigation was the circulation by Harry P. Edwards, a former cottage master, of certain charges against the institution and its management and Mr. Edwards and his attorney, the Honorable Leon D. Latham, Jr., were present during most of the hearing. Attorney General Lawrence C. Jones was present, representing the state, and the Hon. Aaron H. Groat appeared for Superintendent Howard N. Hanson and all participated in the examination of the witnesses.

"The report of your committee is subdivided under the following headings:

"I. Intake. II. Distribution and treatment of problem cases. III. Classification. IV. Education rather than coercive measures. V. Discipline. VI. Personnel. VII. The superintendent. VIII. Program. IX. Field workers. X. Psychiatric clinic. XI. Visiting committee. XII. Incurable and older boys. XIII. General considerations.

"A summary of your committee's recommendations appears at the close as Section XIV.

INTAKE.

"The children received by the

Vermont industrial school at Vergennes have been committed by the courts and must be accepted.

"Legal grounds of commitment—The legal definition of a delinquent child, Section 5444 of the Public Laws of Vermont, is so broad that it is extremely easy to classify almost any child as delinquent, and there is no doubt that this statute is frequently invoked and proceedings instituted thereunder when the child in question is actually dependent rather than delinquent, the town thereby shifting the liability for such child's support from the town to the state. This practice should be discouraged and each case carefully scrutinized to the end that no dependent child be sent to the Industrial school unless such child is actually delinquent.

"Your committee finds that greater discrimination by committing authorities is desirable.

"(1) At least twenty-five (25) children now in Vergennes, and presumably a larger number, are mental defectives who increase the difficulties of effective handling of the delinquent normal children properly committed. The field workers of the institution makes the following report as of June 15, 1935:

"Children tested, 218; untested, 46; total, 264.

"Of the children tested, 123 have an intelligence quotient 75 or above; 92 or 44 per cent have an intelligence quotient below 75.

"(2) While the law forbids committing to Vergennes for reasons of dependency or neglect, it happens too frequently that these are the real reasons though grounds stated may disguise this fact. The reason for such commitments is the lack of adequate community and state facilities for handling such cases in the number occurring. It is the general consensus of experts in the field

(Continued on Page 14 with Pictures.)

News At a Glance

DOMESTIC.

"RUTLAND—Basket weaver admits he stabbed his wife; father-in-law denies he stabbed basket weaver.

"RUTLAND—Joe seen to go back to work on hotel project here either tomorrow or Monday, mayor says.

"RUTLAND—Miss Mary Spine crowned queen of fest at Italian and Jewish celebration.

"RUTLAND—Industrial school commission's report recommends drastic changes.

"POULTNEY—Suppercommunal celebration of Baptist church opens tonight; distinguished visitors expected.

"MIDDLEBURY—Two Soviets arrested on charges after radio broadcast.

"MONTPELIER—Complete reorganization of state school districts announced.

"SARATOGA SPRINGS, N. Y.—Chancery papers on newspapers in surprise appearance before Senate subcommittee.

"METHUEN, Mass.—Three killed, six hurt as two autos crash.

"NEW YORK—Henry Long says he's 'available' for presidency if major party doesn't choose a 'liberal' candidate.

"WASHINGTON—Rida asked on site for new postoffice at Woodstock.

"WASHINGTON—Senate passes tax bill, but amendment hits federal securities.

"WASHINGTON—Hopson discloses ability papers on newspapers in surprise appearance before Senate subcommittee.

FOREIGN.

"WEINBERG, Germany—Ginger 'Lafayette Bezdell,' notorious draft dodger, makes new offer of surrender to U. S.

"BERLIN, Germany—Strasser denounces law and attacks America in public speeches.

Clipped By:



amst0313a
Sat, Oct 26, 2019