

Improved Programs Free Many Retarded Persons At Brandon

Morning Press Bureau

MONTPELIER, May 14—Expanded programs of placement, educational training and rehabilitation are unlocking the doors of Brandon Training School for increasing numbers of the mentally retarded.

With the advance of scientific testing and training, the accent on the Brandon program has shifted gradually from custody to rehabilitation.

The goal is simple preparation of students and patients for a constructive life.

"There is no question but what the outlook is far brighter than it was only 10 years ago," says Supt. Francis W. Russell. "It will improve even more."

For some of the 533 child and adult students at the school, there is no hope. They will always require complete supervision and care.

But for many others there is a real chance of returning to community life and a substantial degree of independence. And some in this group were once believed to be completely institutionalized.

Status Changed

Last week's decision to change the status of the Rutland Colony House typifies the new attitude towards measures of rehabilitation, and, according to Russell, is a measure of the success already encountered along these lines.

Russell said the Brandon institution could no longer supply enough "high grade" girls to fill the Colony House.

The main reason, he indicated, is that various training and rehabilitation programs now in force have proved effective enough to warrant placement or discharge of some of the girls.

Miss Dolan Has May 28 Deadline For New Post

Morning Press Bureau

MONTPELIER, May 14—Miss Katherine M. Dolan, long-time matron of the Rutland Colony House, has until May 28 to take over new duties as a custodial supervisor at Brandon Training School.

The Colony House is being transferred from the Institutions Department to the Vocational Rehabilitation Division of the Education Department to become a rehabilitation agency.

Gov. Johnson approved the transfer last week. It is expected to take place about June 1 with the rehabilitation center being opened a month later.

Education Commissioner A. John Holden Jr. said the present plan is to have one part of the Colony House serve as a rehabilitation center for male patients from the Waterbury State Hospital and the other side for male students from the Brandon Training School.

The Colony House is actually two buildings connected by a runway.

Miss Dolan was the center of a bitter dispute last winter in which she won reinstatement to her job as Colony House matron after being ousted for disobedience of orders.

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rant placement or discharge of some of the girls.

The same holds true for male students at Brandon.

Russell put forth five basic reasons for the reduction in "high grade" students at the institution:

1. The number of students placed in farm and domestic jobs has been sharply increased since 1953. Russell said people are becoming more receptive to the mentally deficient, and Brandon "graduates" have proven diligent and reliable workers.

2. A number of others have been trained for other occupations through the Vocational Rehabilitation Division of the Education Department.

3. A day placement and experience program was established in 1954. In this group, Russell said, were many who had been thoroughly institutionalized but were found to be placement material nevertheless.

4. Vacation programs were instituted in 1954, allowing students to go home for short periods. In some cases the families accepted them back and asked they be returned on an "extended visit status."

5. Psychiatric and psychological case evaluation has resulted in some transfers to institutions outside the state.

Russell said the program of the Vocational Rehabilitation Division has been of great benefit to many boys and girls in preparing them for community life. This division will have charge of Rutland Colony House under the new setup.

Figures supplied by the superintendent show there are 172 chil-

to increased activities at the local level and the new handicapped education program, the admission rate at Brandon is likely to be lessened.

Vermont has been sending some mentally deficient but educable children to Virginia for schooling.

Under the new rehabilitation program at the Colony House, some of this work is to be done there.

5 The Burlington Free Press
Tuesday, May 15, 1956

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