

STUDY OF THE INCUMBENTS OF THE STATE SCHOOL
FOR FEEBLE-MINDED AT BRANDON, VT.

Procedure:

The psychiatric examination was conducted along the same lines as given to the public school children. The psychologic examination, however, was modified, in that all those examined psychologically were given individual tests. The institutional records of certain individual cases were studied and 20 home visits made by the Survey's social worker. At the time of the survey 35 males and 149 females - a total of 284 - were present in the institution. One hundred forty-six individuals were examined. These have been divided into two groups, those over 20 years of age, and those under twenty years.

Tables I and IA show the "Mental Diagnosis by I.Q. and Nativity". One hundred twenty-four of the 146 are American born, 108 Vermont born and 4 are Canadian born. Fifteen are unascertained. The remaining 3 are foreign born; 1 English, 1 Scottish and 1 Italian.

Tables II and IIA show "Mental Diagnosis and Environment." For the total psychometrically tested (146) 3 are intellectually normal, 1 is dullard, (essentially normal), 12 are borderline, 103 are mental defective and 21 are imbeciles, 5 are psychopathic personalities, 4 are said to have psychotic attacks. One is a case of dementia praecox. One hundred ten are given as coming from urban districts and 13 come from rural ones. Previous environments of 13 others are not ascertained.

Tables III and IIIA show the "Mental Diagnosis and Sex." Forty-eight of those examined are males and 98 are females. The survey included those, who in the opinion of the survey staff, might be considered as benefitting by supplementary training or instruction. Specifically omitted from study were the epileptics, and those who were markedly deteriorated, or who were markedly handicapped by physical defect. In all, 68.8 %

of the total population of the institution were examined.

Tables IV and IVA show the "Mental Diagnosis and Physical Condition" of those examined as Good, Fair, and Poor. For those over 20 years of age (Table IV), 41 of the 72 are in good physical condition, while 3 of these are intellectually normal and dullard (essentially normal). For those under 20 years of age, (Table IVA) 40 of the 74 are in good physical condition, of whom 7 are intellectually normal or borderline. Nearly one-half are not handicapped physically. Thirty-five more are in fair physical condition, while 30 are in poor physical condition. From the standpoint of physical condition alone, more than half of the inmates of this institution could receive training in manual work or in some trade. In this connection, it may be of interest to note that for the public school children in various communities the physical condition of the borderline and mental defective group, 25.9 percent were found to be poor, with a majority of the defects regarded as remediable. On the other hand, even under care and supervision by the institution 30.9 % of the feebleminded at Brandon remain in poor physical condition.

Tables V-B and V-C show "Mental Diagnosis and Specific Defects". The tables have been arranged to present the defects according to frequency found. This is for both sexes. Therefore, the menstrual history of the females is not shown. The institutional records did not contain information regarding menstrual history, and this information was obtained instead from the incumbents. Irregular menses are recorded as such, from statements which gave definite information to non-leading questions. Thus, for the 56 females over 20 years of age, 11 gave a history of irregular menstruation, while for the 42 females under 20 years of age, 13 also gave a history of irregular menstruation. This abnormal tendency suggests the desirability of more adequate medical investigation of the subject at this institution.

For all incumbents over 20 years of age the chief physical defects are those of the teeth and eyes. Of 27 with poor teeth, 12 had more than

two-thirds of all their teeth missing and were unsupplied with bridges, plates or other satisfactory substitutes. Nine of the 27 had no serviceable molars. Two others of the 27 had no teeth at all, now were these equipped with artificial teeth. (One had been previously so supplied but had broken one plate and had discarded the other.)

For those over 20 years of age with defects of the eye there are 18. Eleven of these had worn glasses, but 7 of the 11 had discarded them without the advice of a specialist. One of these gave as an excuse that glasses made him look like a "sissy", and he wanted to be like a man. Three of the 18 over 20 years of age had worn the same pair of lenses for over six years (incumbents statement unverified and unmentioned in institutional records.) The remaining 4 of the 18 complained of headaches when reading or sewing, or of blurred vision with some evidence of chronic irritation at time of the survey's examination.

Of 8 children with speech defects, only one stated that speech correction had ever been attempted, and that attempt was made before admission to the institution. One case of stammering was that of a boy whose speech difficulty followed a beating from his drunken father. A tenth of those inmates over 20 years of age are underweight, although they have been in the institution 4 years or more.

For those under 20 years of age (Table V-C), as well as for those over 20 years of age, the eyes, tonsils and teeth are more frequent in defectiveness. Over a third have gross defects of the eyes. Only eight now wear glasses although four others have worn them previously. Sixteen of the 74 in this group have hypertrophic tonsils. Ten have badly decayed teeth. Nine each have fainting spells, and speech defects. No speech correction has been undertaken for these 9, seven of them having been in the institution more than 2 years. Eight of the 74 under 20 years of age are underweight,

more than 10 percent compared to the average for their height and age, while 5 are overweight by 15 percent compared to the average for their height and age. No specific attention to diet for the mal-nourished appears to be given. A more accurate estimate of mal-nutrition and its subsequent correction could be made by comparison of weight by height-weight ratios, according to age at time of admission, and then repeated every quarter year during institutional residence. Weights upon admission at Brandon are not taken and consequently such a comparison as suggested could not be made by the survey staff.

The conclusion reached is that individual correction for major physical defects is inadequate and that satisfactory records of physical status are not kept in this institution.

Tables V-1 and V-1A show the "Mental Diagnosis by Intelligence Quotient and Personality." For the total of 72 over 20 years of age, 18 fail to show any outstanding personality difficulties. Of these 18, seven are very low (between 49 and 40) in intelligence quotient rating, and one is an imbecile. Twenty-four are inadequate in personality - easily influenced, easily discouraged, hypersuggestible, sluggish and without ambition. On the other hand, for the younger and more plastic group (those under 20 years of age) in Table VI-A, 29 fail to show any outstanding personality difficulties. Only 17 are regarded as possessing truly inadequate personalities. Comparison between the two groups with inadequate personalities, suggests the possibility that prolonged sojourn in the institution has contributed to the inadequacy of the personality of the older group, I.E. (Those over 20 years of age.) This inference appears to be verified later in Tables IX and IX A.

Tables VII and VIIA show "Mental Diagnosis and Behavior." In Table VII

(20 years and over), 13 are without adverse behavior, while 13 others have been perverse in sex activity (masturbation predominant, although 2 admitted bestiality). One steals (incumbent's statement and verified by record.) None give persistent trouble in reference to cruelty to animals. The institutional records of the males disclosed no reference **in** even a single instance of heterosexual relationships. Each one of the males examined insisted he never had had intercourse. To be sure, three said they had made attempts, but as described by them these could be classed as ineffectual ones. Seven expressed a wish to have heterosexual relationship while two others wished they could marry.

On the other hand, twenty-one females over 20 years of age have been promiscuous sexually. Of these 21, ten have consorted with but one individual. Of the remaining 11, six have been assaulted by an immediate relative. Five only then can be classed as primarily promiscuous. Further analysis of the sex promiscuity shows one had been assaulted, allegedly by a theological student. Another had been assaulted at ten years by her father. She also had a brother who died in an asylum. This girl claimed her brother had been "made insane by beating" for having fought off the father's perverse advances. Still another girl gave adequate details of a sex assault at 8 years on the day her second step-mother was confined, by her father, who later "loaned me to a farm hand - my father's friend." Another one was assaulted first at 13 years by her stepfather, and at 17 bore him a daughter. And yet another had been assaulted at 17 years by her uncle, aged 40. She had been chronically ill since the age of 10 - anaemic and undernourished as "I've always been." She states that her aunt slapped her to contradict the foster uncle's denial of assault while her own mother kept her in seclusion for weeks and even four years, while 30 have been more than ten years in the institution.

refused her toilet facilities except once a day because the "vixen had tempted him."

In Table VII A, 55 of the 74 in the group under 20 years of age, are without adverse behavior. Masturbation is admitted by 16. Two admit stealing or fighting to the degree that punitive measures for them both have been used by the institution. Four are said to have been sexually promiscuous - all girls. Of these, one denied it, and the evidence of the institutional records was inconclusive. Another had consorted with but one man, and still a third at eleven years, it is said, with her mouth held shut, hands together and her feet tied apart to the bed by her mother, had been repeatedly assaulted by a middle aged farmer who paid \$1.50 for the privilege of each assault.

There has long been apparent in communities all over the country a tendency on the part of many to indict the feebleminded as a group for excessive sex-promiscuity. It is beginning now to be realized, however, that before this indictment can be proved, reliable statistics including those for consanguinity in sex relationships for the state at large, should be studied. Unfortunately, at this time such statistics are not available; - incomplete or uncompiled, they rest chiefly in the files of the general practitioner of medicine. For those cases examined by the survey staff, non-aggressive (or better, passive) sex promiscuity is a more applicable term in reference to sex activity of the mental defective.

Tables VIII and VIIIA show "Mental Diagnosis and Length of Time in the Institution." For those over twenty years of age (Table VIII) only 9 of the 72 have been less than four years in the institution. Sixty have been in the institution four years or more. For those under twenty years of age (Table VIII A) 43 of the 74 have been in the institution less than four years, while 30 have been more than two years in the institution.

Thirty-one, or nearly half of these 74, have been for more than four years, in the institution.

Under the present system the population in the institution is practically immobile. In the Biennial Report of the Department of Public Welfare of the State of Vermont for the year ending June 30, 1926, the report of the Superintendent, addressed to the General Assembly of the State of Vermont, gives the enrollment as 261 (June 30, 1926). For the same date it gives 31 as "on visit or parole." But many of these 31 have been carried "on the books" for years past indefinitely. During the biennial term referred to but 15 inmates were discharged. Six of these were transferred to the Vermont State Hospital for the Insane by order of the Governor. Five only were discharged to the custody of their parents. The report also states that:

"Three girls who have been on parole or visit were discharged, also one boy, as he was not a proper subject for our supervision."

Mobility of population of an institution of this kind should be dependent upon two basic factors. One is the condition of the incumbent, and the other is his extra-institutional environmental placement. Discussion of these factors is deferred to the section of this report on Recommendations.

Tables IX and IX A show the "Personality and Length of Time in the Institution." For those over twenty years of age (Table IX), 15 of the 18 without personality difficulties have been in the institution four years or more. For those under 20 years of age (Table IX A), 9 of the 29 without personality difficulties have been in the institution four years or more. However, the outstanding feature of both of these tables is found in correlating them with those of inadequate personalities. Only one-

