

# Vergennes School Probers Advocate Drastic Changes

## Summary Of Recommendations

"1. Greater discrimination by the committing authorities.

"(a) No commitments for dependency or neglect and only in exceptional instances for truancy.

"(b) Mental defectives should not be imposed upon an institution for delinquents.

"2. The development of a program of preventive work through the development of facilities for family rehabilitation or family case work so-called.

"3. The substitution where possible in the light of adequate case studies of foster home placements for detention in the institution.

"4. A more refined classification of children committed as a basis for forming smaller groups and providing more individualized treatment.

"5. Instruction by the superintendent of his staff regarding the essential importance of a thorough knowledge by them of case studies which will give them an adequate knowledge of the individual children coming under their care.

"6. The development of educational and vocational work, of group activities and forms of individual self-expression which will cut down the number of disciplinary incidents and problems.

"7. Separation from the school of certain members of the present staff.

"8. A number of recommendations relating to program have been discussed heretofore. These include:

"(a) Increasing the hours devoted to school work; (b) a more extensive development in the field of vocational training; (c) group recreation; (d) hobbies; (e) fitting the activities of the band into the general program of the school so that it will not conflict with the educational requirements.

"(f) Provision for an adequate program of instruction; (g) certain reforms relating to hours of work and night work; (h) the framing of a clear policy of discipline and punishment and the more effective control of punishment by the superintendent and chief matron; (i) adequate provision for religious instruction.

"It would seem desirable to have a definitely designated chaplain or director of religious instruction responsible for this important phase of school activities.

"9. The addition of at least one and preferably two field workers to share the excessive load now carried by Miss Anderson.

"10. The establishment of a psychiatric clinic or at least provision for the services of a psychiatrist or a competent psychologist.

"11. The establishing of a visiting committee of three.

"12. The desirability of avoiding transfer of young boys to the state prison at Windsor and the attempt to meet the requirements of discipline and the problem of the so-called incorrigible in other ways.

"13. The use of a solitary discipline room for repeating runaways and so-called incorrigibles.

"14. Refund to the school of net earnings turned into the general funds of the state.

"15. A clear policy, generally understood, and the maintenance of morale, would seem to require contact between superintendent and staff, and among members of the staff on fairly frequent occasions. Monthly staff meetings for the men with the superintendent, and for the women with the superintendent and chief matron would seem a desirable provision for the meeting of this need.

"16. Adequate provision for routine physical examinations for detection of physical defects requiring corrective treatment.

"17. A study should be made of the problems due to the lack of facilities between the industrial school and the houses of correction for handling the older juvenile delinquents and the so-called incorrigibles."

## BOARD URGES CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS BE 'FIRED'

### Sweeping Indictment of State's Treatment of Children in Reformatory Returned in Report Made Public by Governor; Persons Facing Dismissal Are Not Revealed.

## EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM CRITICIZED

### Special Commission Says Longer Periods of Study and Fewer Coercive Measures Are Needed; Psychiatric Clinic Is Proposed; Superintendent's Methods Assailed.

Recommending the separation from the staff of certain individuals and indicting in general Vermont's treatment of dependent and delinquent children, the report of the commission appointed to study charges of abuse of inmates and mismanagement at the Vermont Industrial School, Vergennes, was made public here yesterday by Gov. Charles M. Smith.

The report, as given to the press by the governor, does not name the individuals recommended for removal by the commission.

The names of the officials and attaches said to be slated for removal have already been printed in the Herald and are reproduced today in an adjoining column.

The commission, composed of Dr. Edward L. Tobin of Bennington, chairman, Professor A. R. Gifford of the University of Vermont, Burlington, and Col. Loren R. Pierce, Woodstock, was appointed after Rev. H. P. Edwards, a former cottage master at the school, had made charges of cruelty and mismanagement against the administration, headed by Howard N. Hanson, superintendent. Hanson resigned after the charges had been made.

Hearings were held at Vergennes on June 11, 12, 13 and 14, during which testimony was introduced to show that certain inmates had been beaten with hose, that boys were forced to carry 25-pound cannon balls, that boys and girls were forced to work 12 hours at a time and that some inmates had been locked in a cellar as punishment.

The commission, in its report to the governor, makes only brief comment about the charges of alleged cruelty but picks flaws in the system of commitments, education, punishment, treatment of problem cases and the school's official personnel.

The commission makes recommendations looking to the betterment of school as a whole and cessation of certain practices said to be in vogue there.

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