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IOWA STATE BOARD OF CONTROL OF STATE
INSTITUTIONS.

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The Board of Control of State Institutions of Iowa, and Its Work.*

By L. G. KINNE, Chairman.

To fully understand the work of this Board, it is necessary to give a brief outline of some features of the law under which it was created.

The Board consists of three members, who are appointed by the Governor, and must be confirmed by a two-thirds vote of the Senate.

The term of office is six years, and the salary Three Thousand Dollars per annum and expenses. The Board is subject to investigation by the joint committee of the legislature. It is made a crime for any member of the Board to accept gifts from anyone dealing with the institutions under its charge. If a member, or an officer of an institution exercises political influence on another, or contributes money for political purposes, he must be removed from office. The design of the law is to hold the chief executive officer of each institution responsible to the Board. It is made a crime for any member of the Board to suggest the appointment of any person under said chief executive officer. The chief executive officer of each institution appoints and removes all subordinates.

The Board appoints and removes all chief executive officers.

Thus we have in effect civil service, for every subordinate officer and employe of the institution knows that he holds his place at the will of the chief executive officer of such institution. Attention to duty, ability and efficiency in service are the only tests. No appointments are influenced by any political considerations whatsoever.

POWERS.

In general the Board has power to manage, control and govern the institutions under its charge. To investigate their management and financial condition. To investigate questions of insanity of patients in state hospitals. To determine when insane persons shall be admitted to be charged to the state. To divide the state into hospital and penitentiary districts.

*This paper was read before the National Conference of Charities and Correction at Topeka, Kansas, on Wednesday, May 23, 1900.

DUTIES.

The following duties are enjoined upon the Board: To prepare annually a statement showing the cost of operating the institutions for the preceding year. To make biennial reports to the Governor and Legislature. To visit all institutions once every six months, and hospitals by some of its members or its secretary once a month. To meet the superintendents quarterly in conference. To gather statistics. To publish a bulletin. To compel the providing of fire protection and fire escapes. To compel all employes handling money or property of the state to give bond. To require certain officers annually to take inventories of all the state's movable property, and quarterly of all supplies and stores. To annually fix the salaries of all officers and employes of the institutions, except the executive officers.

STATISTICS.

Under the provisions of the law the Board is required to prepare and furnish each institution books and blanks for statistical records and returns, and duplicates of such books and such blanks are kept in the office of the Board, and regular returns made on such blanks to the Board, from which the books in the office of the Board are kept. These statistical books and blanks are, as to the same kind of institutions, alike.

COMPLAINT RECORD AND MECHANICAL RESTRAINT.

At each institution a book is required to be kept, called a Record of Complaints, where all complaints made by inmates, employes and others must be entered, with the action of the superintendent thereon, and monthly reports of these cases are made to the Board. At the hospitals for the insane and the penitentiaries there is kept what is called a Mechanical Restraint Record, wherein must be entered a memoranda of each case where restraint of any description has been applied, the character of such restraint, the time of its continuance, the causes therefor, and its effect. At the industrial schools and penitentiaries reports are also required of all cases of punishment by means of mechanical restraint or otherwise for infraction of the rules. Reports are made monthly of all cases to the Board.

FINANCIAL BOOKS.

The Board was directed to devise the best system of keeping

financial accounts, and to prepare the necessary books and blanks therefor. It has been done, and duplicate accounts of the finances of each institution are kept in the Board's office. We keep no individual accounts. We keep an account as to each institution with the said institution, the general support fund, under classified heads, and with each separate item of every special appropriation. The credits are obtained from appropriations made by the legislature, and from reports of sales of products of the institutions from farms and shops; the debits, from vouchers sent to our office for approval, showing the purchases made. Monthly trial balances are made, from our books and sent to each institution, and accompanying them is a statement showing how vouchers have been classified, so that any error of the institution bookkeeper in classification may be corrected.

These classified accounts are as to general funds as follows:—

1. Salaries and wages of officers and employes.
2. Provisions.
3. Household stores.
4. Clothing.
5. Fuel and light.
6. Hospital and medical supplies.
7. Shop, farm and garden supplies.
8. Ordinary repairs.
9. Library.
10. Water and ice.
11. Postage and stationary.
12. Transportation of inmates.
13. Miscellaneous expenses.
14. Contingent funds.

As to special appropriations as follows:—

1. Deficiency.
2. Extraordinary Repairs.
3. Equipment.
4. Land.
5. New Buildings.
6. Transportation.
7. Miscellaneous.

There is allowed to the head of each institution a special contingent fund, not exceeding \$250.00 for emergencies, and for expendi-

tures out of this fund no estimate need be made, but an itemized report must be made monthly, showing what such expenditures were, the necessity therefor, and the amount thereof.

HOW ARTICLES ARE PURCHASED AND PAID FOR.

Under our present system estimates are made by each institution superintendent in duplicate, once a year for coal, flour and canned goods, and every three months for supplies of all other articles.

These estimates are sent to the office of the Board, where they are first passed upon by the estimate clerk, who corrects errors in computation, classification and in footings, and who attaches a memorandum to each estimate, with notes, showing what he has done, and also calls attention to other matters proper for the Board to consider. They are then passed upon by the Board, and reduced or added to the amount, or changed as to estimated prices. As corrected the estimate is approved, one copy returned to the institution and one copy filed in the office of the Board. If the estimate is found especially defective, or not properly signed or certified, it is then returned for correction. Supplemental estimates are allowed to cover articles omitted, or where the supply is insufficient. Re-estimates are required when the articles cost more than the original estimate. Estimate blanks for articles to be paid for out of the support fund are printed in black ink, and those to be paid for out of special appropriations in red ink, and vouchers payable from special appropriations are printed on red paper, and for estimates out of the special contingent fund spoken of are printed upon green paper. After the 10th of January, April, July and October, respectively, when the estimates are all in the hands of the Board, a schedule is made up for each institution of all articles estimated for. These schedules, which at first numbered about thirty, have grown until articles are grouped under about one hundred different heads, such as groceries, cheese, crackers, etc. These schedules are so arranged as to show the general item number, estimate number, item number in estimate, quantity, measure and article. On the right hand of the sheet is a blank for the price bid, weight or measure, and the amount bid on the item. These are footed for each institution. There is one schedule, for instance, embracing all groceries, but all items for a single institution are under its heading. We send these schedules, with printed specifications, to all bidders and wholesalers for such goods

in our own state, and to many in Chicago, St. Louis and other cities, and to all persons who express a desire to bid. When the bids are received they are opened, and each firm's bid on every item is scheduled, and the total of each bid footed. Samples are required for canned goods, flour, fish, salt and smoked meats, groceries, clothing, dry goods and findings, cloth, stockings, and of many other articles. These samples are arranged convenient for inspection. Our quarterly meeting of superintendents is held as soon as these schedules and samples are ready, and the superintendents inspect the samples and bids, and leave a written memoranda with the Board, indicating their choice.

After they are through, the Board with the assistance of one superintendent, makes the awards, the successful bidders are notified and the several superintendents are notified of the awards, and furnished a copy of the schedule as filled out by the bidder. We fix a maximum price on such articles as tea and coffee. We fix the character and quality of certain things, such as curled hair, prunes, rice, etc. for all institutions. No goods are shipped until ordered by the several superintendents, and they are then shipped direct by the seller to the institution using them. When the goods are received at the institution, the steward and storekeeper check them in and they are entered on the storekeepers' record, and the storekeeper is required at any time to produce the goods or proper requisitions for them. When the goods are checked in, the steward makes duplicate vouchers for the same, which are furnished to the sellers to be verified.

At the end of each month the pay roll and all vouchers are certified to the Board. They go to the estimate clerk, who compares the pay roll with the schedule of salaries, and calls attention to errors therein. He also examines and makes memoranda as to the computations and additions in the vouchers, and then they come before the Board for action. Accompanying them is a memoranda in red ink showing the balances in the several funds out of which these vouchers must be paid, to keep constantly before the Board the fact as to whether they have balances to the credit of the institutions in these particular funds, out of which the vouchers may be paid. The Board examines and approves or disapproves the same, and may return the pay roll or any voucher for correction.

Whenever a successful bidder has failed to furnish the article contracted for, or has furnished an inferior article, the superin-

teacher at the institution is directed to return the goods, or make a proper rebate on the voucher. When the pay roll and vouchers are approved it is so indicated by the Board, and the Secretary makes triplicate certificates, one to the State Auditor, one to the State Treasurer, and one to be kept in the office of the Board. The full amount of the pay roll is certified to be paid the superintendent, who disburses it to the several employes and all bills are certified in the name of the parties to whom they are due, giving the amount thereof in each instance, and their post office address. On receipt of these certificates, and warrant from the State Auditor the State Treasurer mails a check to each of said certified persons.

It will be observed in this connection, that the Board of Control does not handle a dollar, and that the superintendent of each institution handles no money except the pay roll, which he receives for disbursement among the employes, and what may be derived from sales of the product of farm or institution shops, which must be reported monthly and sent in to the State Treasurer. After very many examinations in different states of the system of book-keeping and the purchasing of supplies, I have found none in all respects like that we pursue in our own state and none equal to our system.

HOW THE STORES ARE ACCOUNTED FOR AND DISBURSED.

The storekeeper gives bond and is held strictly accountable for all stores coming into his hands. He has a store keeper's record. One page is headed "received", and the opposite "disbursed." On the "received" side is shown the invoice number, the number of pounds or yards, the price per pound or yard, and the aggregate cost of each item. On the "disbursed" side is shown the date of disbursement, from what invoice, the cost per pound or yard, the place sent to and the aggregate cost of each item. At the top of each page is the name of the item itself. Quarterly balances are taken, and invoices of goods on hand, so that the storekeeper may know whether he has the goods in stock which the books show.

By footing these pages and striking a balance, the amount of any kind of goods which should be on hand, is at once apparent. Occasional invoices of all institution stocks are taken by an expert, appointed by the Board of Control, without previous notice to the storekeeper. In case a shortage appears in any such

invoice, the matter is reported to the Board, and investigated by some of its members, and a report made to the full Board. If it is found that the shortage occurred by reason of matters beyond the control of the storekeeper, it is allowed, and a shortage requisition drawn which is entered upon the disbursed side of the book. If no reasonable explanation is made of the shortage, the same is charged to, and collected from the storekeeper.

No goods are disbursed except on requisitions, signed by the chief executive officer, and these requisitions are in triplicate, one copy being retained by the storekeeper, one by the bookkeeper and the other returned to the Board of Control. Duplicate storekeepers' books are kept in the office of this Board for each institution. They are made up from the vouchers and requisitions above mentioned, such articles as coal, farm implements, drugs, etc., are disbursed in gross to the engineer, farmer or pharmacist, as the case may be.

GENERAL.

The Board qualified April 6, 1898, but did not assume control of the institutions until July 1st, 1898. It was authorized to direct and prepare all books and blanks for use in its office and at the several institutions. The time intervening between April 6th and July 1st, 1898, was spent in preparing forms for statistical records and returns, financial books, storekeepers' records, books and blanks for complaints and mechanical restraint, and the more than eighty other forms of blanks required in the conducting of the business.

Much time was also spent in visiting the institutions, and becoming acquainted with existing conditions, and the needs of the institutions. The cost of these books and blanks which were furnished the institutions was apportioned among them and paid by vouchers as other bills. No new building or improvement to cost over \$300 can be erected except on competitive bids. All blanks, blank books, and supplies for the institutions are thus bought. Before the Board took charge of the institutions, the legislature reduced the per capita support for inmates in the aggregate by \$100,000.00 and the first year of the operation of the Board showed that of the support funds allowed, over \$119,000 remained unexpended, and this notwithstanding the fact that the physical condition of the institutions had been greatly improved, with new and improved machinery purchased for the farm and shops.

that the food and clothing furnished was far better than it had been under the old system, that the care of inmates in all respects was excellent, that the personal of the employes was improved, and the conditions in every other respect far better than formerly.

And this was all accomplished against a rising market: and with little reduction of salaries, in case of the higher priced employes, while the salaries of some of the lower grades of employes were raised, and the salary of women made the same as that paid men, for like services.

In his last report, the Treasurer of State computes the decrease in cost of operating the institutions under the control of this Board during the first year, as compared with the cost of the previous year "under the trustee system at \$379,490.73, or 26 and nine-tenths percent." * * * "This saving, it is fair to presume, was not the result of unwise economics that were detrimental to the institutions. The character of the members of the Board of Control is a sufficient guarantee that such was not the case. They have been the fruits of the application of business principles and methods in the conduct of the fourteen institutions under the Board."

In the last sentence the Treasurer has struck the keynote as to how this Board has been able to make such a large saving to the state, and at the same time improve the conditions at the institutions.

The law authorizes the Board to appoint an architect, who prepares all plans for new buildings, as well as estimates for the same, and who so far as practicable looks after the construction of the work. Plans are prepared for the inspection of the members of the legislature of all proposed new buildings for which appropriations are asked, and also estimates of their cost. The Board is charged with investigating the accounts of the State University, Agricultural College and State Normal School, and must report as to whether the officers of said institutions have drawn and expended moneys according to law, and whether they have conducted the financial matters entrusted to them in a good, business-like manner.

The chief executive officer at each institution, except the wardens of the penitentiaries, draws food supplies for himself and all members of his family under twenty-one years of age, from the institution stores, and he is not permitted to buy with state funds any articles of food not bought for inmates. In supplies, we use only the best patent flour and the best meats obtainable; fresh beef

must be from native steers, weighing when dressed from 600 to 800 pounds each. Great care is taken to get all goods of a good quality, and sellers are obliged to live up to the specifications upon which their bids are based.

Fire companies have been organized and drilled by several of the institutions, and quarterly reports are required from all institutions, showing the means of fire escape, and of protection against fire, and the condition of all fire apparatus, the amount of pressure attainable, and the result.

While we do not claim that our system is absolutely perfect, we do insist that as a whole our law is the best yet devised for the government of such institutions, and that the system of controlling them by a central board is without doubt the best, the most satisfactory, and the most economical plan.

This Board requires all officers and employes, except the chief executive, who may be in contact with inmates, to be uniformed. This, while indicating to the inmates and the stranger those who are clothed with authority, has tended greatly efficiency, and discipline, and the officers and employes in Iowa present a neat, inviting and orderly appearance, and by reason of the fact that the Board purchases material for such uniforms from the manufacturers, the employes are clad cheaper and better than they otherwise could be if using materials of equal quality.

This Board, by its frequent visits, its daily correspondence, its complete system of returns and checks and blanks and by its conference with superintendents, is in constant touch with these officers and at all times advised of the needs of the institutions under its care. The policy of the Board; which is well understood, is to promote faithful and efficient officers, who are capable to the position of chief executive in institutions when such places are to be filled, and this is a constant stimulant to good service.

Since the forgoing was written, the legislature has in accordance with our suggestions made several important amendments to the law providing for an interchange of the products of the farm or shops between the several institutions; prohibiting the levying of political assessments on employes of the Board; making it a misdemeanor on the part of any person to demand or solicit from any member or employe of the Board or from any officer or employe of any institution under the control of the Board, of a contribution of money or other things of value for election purposes or for the

payment of the expenses of any political committee or organization.

INSANE IN COUNTY AND PRIVATE ASYLUMS.

The legislature has also placed under the supervision of the Board all county and private institutions wherein insane persons are kept. We are required to have them visited at least twice a year; to prepare rules and regulations under which insane persons may be kept therein; to thoroughly investigate all such institutions; to remove patients from them in case they fail to comply with such rules and regulations; to release persons therein not insane; to remove to state hospitals violent or filthy patients. The act also fixes certain prerequisites to the incarceration of any person in a private asylum. We regard this law as exceedingly important, as its enforcement will result in bettering conditions in county and private institutions, and in all cases insure the proper and humane treatment of their inmates.

Herewith I present for your examination printed copies of the books and forms mentioned in this article and in use in the conduct of the business of this Board.

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