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ANNUAL REPORT

CHILD WELFARE BUREAU

BOARD OF CONTROL OF STATE INSTITUTIONS

STATE HOUSE DES MOINES

1925—1926

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DIRECTORY

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ANNUAL REPORT
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1925-1926

This being the first year of the Child Welfare Bureau's activity, the first months were naturally given to organization, development of plans and numerous other matters which are incident to the beginning of a new work, so that it was not until October 1925 that the Bureau began the investigations necessary preliminary to the licensing of child placing agencies. Investigation early revealed utter lack of uniformity in standards of work in child placing and child caring.

Very few agencies required adequate medical examination or adequate case history while only one or two were making personal investigation of the proposed foster home or attempted to do "Follow up" work. The records in many of the agencies were entirely inadequate, amounting in some cases to practically no records at all.

Then followed individual and group conferences culminating in a called conference of the heads of all child placing agencies in the State, held at the State House in March 1926. Much good was accomplished in this conference and there was a unanimous request for further meetings of like nature. The Bureau is now planning for two conferences a year with this group until such a time as all are enabled to reach a minimum recognized standard in child placing work.

In all, twenty licenses were granted, during the year, to child placing agencies, as follows:

- 1—Iowa Children's Home, Des Moines.
- 2—Des Moines Catholic Charities—Christ Child Home, Des Moines.
- 3—Lutheran Home Finding Society, Fort Dodge.
- 4—Catholic Woman's League—St. Therese's Home, Dubuque.
- 5—St. Marys' Orphans' Home, Dubuque.
- 6—Hill Crest Baby Fold, Dubuque.
- 7—St. Anthony's Home, Sioux City.
- 8—Florence Crittenton Home, Sioux City.

- 9—Boys and Girls Home, Sioux City.
- 10—Home for the Friendless, Cedar Rapids.
- 11—Benedict Home, Des Moines.
- 12—St. Vincents Home, Davenport.
- 13—American Home Finding Association, Ottumwa.
- 14—Elim Lutheran Orphans Home, Elkhorn.
- 15—Christian Home Orphanage, Council Bluffs.
- 16—American Legion (Child Welfare Division) Dep't of Iowa,
Des Moines.
- 17—Iowa Evangelical Lutheran Orphanage, Waverly.
- 18—St. Monica's Childrens' Home, Sioux City.
- 19—Elizabeth Hershey Orphans' Home, Muscatine.
- 20—Iowa Lutheran Childrens' Home, Stanton.

The Benedict Home, later decided not to enter the child placing field and surrendered its license.

The Saints Childrens' Home, at Lamoni, the Church of the Brethrens Children Home at Ankeny, and the Children's Home at Tabor decided to cease work along these lines and were not licensed.

The following report shows the activities of the licensed Child Placing Agencies in the state during the year July 1st, 1925—June 30, 1926:

Total children in residence and received during year—1774

Died	19
Placed in Permanent Homes	160
Placed in Temporary Homes	91
Returned to Relatives	110
Returned to Parents	451
Transferred, other institutions	17

Total released	848	848
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Number of children in residence July 1, 1926 926

These figures do not include children in any of the state institutions. The total of all institutions would run considerably over three thousand cases for the year.

Perhaps one of the most active child placing agencies in the state, in the past, revolved about the University Hospital at Iowa City. Their work particularly involved the placing of babies born out of wedlock. This activity was a matter of early investigation and conference resulting in the Hospital ceasing its activities along this line and entering into arrangements with licensed institutions through which this type of work is now carried on with an increased measure of safety to all concerned.

All child placing agencies having headquarters outside of Iowa and which had placed or were placing children in Iowa, were checked up and, when they wished to continue placing in Iowa, the matter of their bonds, covering their work, was cared for and brought up to date. The following foreign agencies are bonded and have the legal right to work in Iowa:

- 1—The Child Saving Institute, Omaha, Nebraska.
- 2—The New York Foundling Hospital, New York City.
- 3—The Childrens' Aid Society, New York City.

Early in the year, a difficult problem was encountered in the matter of adoptions being made in large numbers to families in this state by the Maternity Hospitals in Kansas City, Missouri. These Maternity Hospitals are commercial organizations whose business largely depends upon their agreeing to relieve the unmarried mother of all care of her baby. They must get these babies out regardless of fact or consequence. Meager and inadequate investigation of applicants rules while the standard as to "Placable" children is necessarily low. Such a combination can only result in a continuing number of bad situations.

This matter was early taken up by this Bureau with the Council of Social Agencies at Kansas City and with the Missouri Board of Charities and Corrections and through these agencies, Judge Porterfield, of the Juvenile Court in Kansas City, where all the adoptions from these institutions are completed, made a ruling that he would not complete adoption papers for residents of other states, until the application had been approved by the Child Welfare Bureau of that state. Thus, beginning October 1st, 1925, all applications from this state to the Maternity Hospitals in Kansas City for babies for adoption, have been submitted to this Bureau for approval or disapproval.

From October 1, 1925 to June 30, 1926, the Bureau received a total of forty-four applications under this plan of which thirty-seven were approved and seven disapproved. This plan of child placing is considered far from what it should be, yet, at the same time, is a big advance over the previously existing plan, and this is due entirely to the personal interest and cooperation of Judge Porterfield, of the Juvenile Court in Kansas City, as the laws of this state governing this type of work, do not enable us to require any check or, for that matter, any knowledge of adoptions made by residents of this state when they go outside the state and complete adoptions under the law of another state.

ADOPTIONS

There is a general feeling, among all who have close contact with the Child Welfare work, that our present adoption laws are entirely

inadequate. Under the present law it is entirely possible to traffic in little children and to pass them from hand to hand without regard as to the physical or mental condition of the child or the physical, mental or moral fitness of contracting parties.

The Child Welfare Code Commission, submitted and recommended to the 41st General Assembly a bill which would place adoptions under adequate safeguards but this bill failed of enactment. This failure left the state with practically no adoption law. The commission commenting on the situation said:

"Iowa's present regulation of adoptions is practically nil. Anyone who can make a will can adopt any child whose parents are willing to consent. No court has the right to pass upon such adoption unless the child is an orphan or has been abandoned and no one has the authority to investigate with a view to determining whether the persons adopting the child are in a position to give proper care. Iowa and Louisiana are the only states in the Union permitting adoptions without the protection of judicial procedure. As a result of this laxity it very frequently happens that wholly incompetent, even vicious and brutal people, adopt children and neglect or abuse them and even make them the basis of appeal for public aid."

During the past year in which the Child Welfare Bureau has operated, numerous instances have been referred to the Bureau where adoptions have been made in a manner amounting to little less than the procedure used in the transfer of stock or cattle. Iowa should no longer neglect the welfare of a large group of its children, but should enact such laws as will assure, at least, the protection given through judicial procedure in all adoptions.

I believe that our present adoption laws should be amended so that no adoption can be made without first having been approved by a court of record and also to require the reporting of all applications for adoption made to a court of record to the Bureau of Child Welfare together with the court's action upon same.

I believe that both of these requirements are vital to a development of a child welfare program within the state which will insure to all children, especially this class of children who are being readjusted in their home life, the full measure of protection which they should have. The Bureau of Child Welfare has thousands of records of children who are requiring various forms of adjustment, together with the names and addresses of thousands of families who have taken, or who desire to take, one or more of the state's unfortunate

children, and with the reporting of applications for adoption to this Bureau together with the action of the court upon the application, we would be in a position to give a more adequate safeguard than could be possible without the knowledge thus obtained. The files of the Bureau of Child Welfare would be open for any information which might be desired by any court and would thus become an ever-increasing source of information and a clearing house to the courts of the state.

MATERNITY HOSPITALS

The law requiring the licensing of Maternity Hospitals was intended primarily to provide a safeguard for the unmarried mother and the baby born out of wedlock. This is a large field of endeavor. Iowa has approximately 900 unmarried mother cases, each year. Less than 200 of these were handled in institutions defined by law as Maternity Hospitals. The balance were mostly cared for in so-called "General Hospitals". It will thus be seen that less than one-fourth of the total number of cases came under the legal safeguards provided. Approximately 700 unmarried girls were confined last year of whom there is no record in the Welfare Bureau. 450 of these were 18 years of age or under, 9 being only 14 years old. 90 % of the unmarried mothers abandon their babies either by turning them over to some charitable organization or by independent arrangements through which the baby is "given" direct to some family and of which there is no record made anywhere.

It will thus be seen that the problem of the unmarried mother and that of the baby born out of wedlock easily constitutes one of the big and important social welfare and Child Welfare problems for the handling of which the present laws are entirely inadequate.

The Bureau recommends that the present law be amended so that any person or institution making a practice of handling maternity cases, be compelled to report all unmarried cases to the State Board of Control and also meet the other requirements of the Maternity Hospital law. There are, at the present time, five institutions in this state whose chief object is giving care to the unfortunate girl—the unmarried mother. None of these are what is known as the "commercial" type. These institutions are well organized and equipped for the service which they endeavor to give.

There is more, however, which is seriously needed and which is very largely being overlooked. That is a definite, well planned social rehabilitation service to the unmarried mother. The service of care, during her immediate difficulties, is very essential to the girl, but the rehabilitation of the girl is, in fact, much more essential.

The following Maternity Hospitals hold licenses under the new law:

- 1—Florence Crittenton Home (Sioux City).
- 2—St. Monica's Home (Sioux City).
- 3—Benedict Home (Des Moines).
- 4—Salvation Army Rescue Home (Des Moines).
- 5—St. Therese's Home (Dubuque).
- 6—Mrs. J. M. Hendricks (Ottumwa).
- 7—Mrs. G. N. Lewis (Ottumwa).

BOARDING HOMES

Practically nothing has been done during the year in the matter of licensing boarding homes. No funds were available for personnel in the Bureau sufficient to handle the volume of work involved in the administration of all the Child Welfare laws enacted. The Boarding Home situation, although important, was felt to be less so than several of the others and consequently received the lesser consideration.

The Boarding Home license and supervision law is a good one and much needed, but as it now stands is far short of meeting the real needs. The present law places an age limit of "under three years" for children. This age limit should be made to be at least 14 years. The proper care of a child is just as vital, if not more so up to the 12th or 14th year, as is the care of the infant. No age limit short of 12 years should be considered effective.

STATE CHILDREN'S HOMES

Iowa maintains two exceptionally good homes for its dependent and neglected children in the Soldiers' Orphans' Home at Davenport, and the Juvenile Home at Toledo. The material needs of the children are given the best of attention and "out placing" Departments are maintained for the purpose of securing good homes and giving supervision of the child in its new home.

However, there is a condition at both institutions which appears to need serious attention. The present plan seems to be based on the assumption that all children are alike. There has been practically no real division of effort in the attempt to readjust, and properly care for, the heterogeneous types which are sent to these institutions.

All children are not normal, and any program based on the normal child, its needs and its readjustments, fails badly because only about 50 % of the children are normal. In February 1926, the Psychopathic Hospital sent its Mobile Clinic to the Soldiers' Orphans' Home for a study of the children then in residence. 483 children were examined and only 51 % were found to be normal minded and many of these pre-

sented conduct and other problems which should have special attention. 49 % were mental defectives ranging from normal down to, and including 20 feeble minded. The feeble minded were transferred to the State School for Feeble Minded, but there is no provision for the proper handling and training of the balance, some 225 who are mentally defective in varying degrees.

The Bureau believes that these children should be grouped according to their varying abilities and given such school work as they are able to properly assimilate. However, this type will early reach their limit in mental training. To learn to work with their hands is essential for their future welfare. This group can be placed in foster homes only with great difficulty and then with an increased danger, both to the child as well as society. The state can only keep them until they are eighteen years old. It thus becomes vital that the institution so train and fit them as to make them capable of taking their place in the world as good, honest, working, self-sustained folk.

The situation at the Juvenile Home at Toledo is indential with that at the Orphans' Home at Davenport except as to total number of children. Here, however, we find a third, distinct, group of children, the delinquent; children under ten years of age who are decidedly delinquent, and children over ten years whose delinquency is not serious enough to cause them to be sent to the training schools at Eldora or Mitchellville.

This group, however, cannot be considered as normal. They need a decided training and disciplining with a view of overcoming their difficulties. Yet we find that this group, as well as the mental defective group, are receiving the same identical treatment as is given the normal child.

The Bureau believes that the program of these two institutions should be changed so as to eliminate all duplication of effort and to further provide for an adequate system of schooling, training and disciplining of all children who must, for reasons, be held in residence.

The Bureau also believes that such changes should be made as will eliminate the present duplicated effort in "Out-Placing". Every child, regardless, should be placed as quickly as possible, into a carefully selected foster home and given adequate supervision while there. Consolidating this work into one department will give a greater efficiency and a greater volume of placements at a much reduced cost in travel and similar expense.

With a view of solving the present difficulties and providing a full and adequate program which will meet the needs of our state wards, the following plan is proposed for full consideration:

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- 1—A careful classification of every child by a competent psychopathic clinic.
- 2—A regrouping of the children of the two institutions as follows:
 - a.—All normal children at Davenport.
 - b.—All "Dull Normal" or the higher grade defective group at Davenport.
 - c.—All "Border Line" or lower grade defective group at Toledo.
 - d.—All delinquent and minor delinquent group at Toledo.
- 3—The inauguration of a school program at each institution adapted to the peculiar needs of its respective groups.
- 4—The inauguration of a system of manual training adapted to the needs of the respective groups.
- 5—A special course of training and discipline for the delinquent group at Toledo.
- 6—The placing of the "Out placing" work definitely under one administrative head.
- 7—The addition of at least one more agent to the "Out Placing" staff.

The state can never adequately meet the problem of the real welfare of its minor wards until it provides competent examination and classification and provision for continued study and re-classification. This service can only be provided for through a regularly employed psychopathic staff. With such a large number of children resident and placed out under supervision—a total of over 1200 now and new children arriving continually—this unit would be more than busy.

Chapter 77, Section 1, Acts of the Regular Session of the 41st General Assembly, makes it the—

"Duty of the State Board of Control to arrange for such tests, measurements, examination, and investigations as are necessary for the proper diagnosis, classification, treatment and disposition of children committed to its guardianship."

I can see no way in which this plain duty can be properly met, except through a full time unit organized for this specific purpose. The Bureau has had frequent conferences with the Psychopathic Hospital at Iowa City, and they are willing to do and have done this year everything within their power to aid us in this work, but it is entirely unreasonable to think that this institution can possibly arrange to do the work that should be done at these two institutions where the number of cases to be handled reach a total of between 1200 and 1500. Further conference with the Psychopathic Hospital heads assure us that a competent well-balanced psychopathic unit such as should do

the work required can be fully maintained within a maximum cost of \$10,000.00 per year.

It is the decided belief of the Child Welfare Bureau that the state of Iowa should give to its children wards the best possible, reasonable care and that the state should provide itself with the means of giving to these wards that training which will insure, as far as possible to do so, that they who are the victims of life's misfortune should become good, upstanding, reliable, self-supporting citizens, worthy in every way to take their place in life's activities.

Our institutions are doing the best they can with the material sent them, and with the means that has been provided up to the present time, but we are not meeting the problem as it should be met, and I do not believe that it can be adequately met and the work done which should be done for these unfortunate children until careful, competent, classification and grouping is made and a well-rounded program of training is given.

STATE CONDITIONS

The act which created the Child Welfare Bureau (Chapter 77, Acts 41st General Assembly) clearly sets forth certain duties which relate to the general conditions as found throughout the state. This obligation and duty is established as follows:

"It shall be the duty of the Board of Control to advise with and aid county boards of supervisors in the performance of their duties; to promote the enforcement of all laws for the delinquent children; to co-operate to these ends with juvenile courts and all reputable child-helping and child-placing agencies of a public or private character; and to take the initiative in all matters involving the interests of such children where adequate provision therefor has not already been made. It shall further be the duty of said board to enquire into the causes of dependency, delinquency and defectiveness of children in this state, and to report to the legislature from time to time any changes in the statutes relating to child welfare that the board finds will be likely to promote economy in the maintenance of public institutions and more adequate protection of the rights of children."

Here are established several, specific duties of state wide importance, which, although closely related, can best be considered separately.

1—TO ADVISE WITH AND AID COUNTY BOARDS OF SUPERVISORS.

The county must be considered as the real working unit in any state-wide child welfare program since the county is the political unit of administration, and because it is the local unit for taxation, poor relief, education and similar matters, and thus the Boards of Supervisors must face, either in the beginning or later, the problem of the county's destitute, dependent and neglected children as well as of their delinquent children.

The greater percent of the Boards, at the present time, have no reasonable means of meeting this responsibility. This often results in inadequate and unfair treatment.

It is rather common to find that people not entitled to mothers' pensions, to poor relief, and similar aid, paid for out of public funds, receiving such aid while many cases in the same county that properly should have aid are not getting it. A worse fact is that, due to the lack of proper study of the problems of children and their families, situations that should have careful attention are left to drift until the situation has become so aggravated that strenuous methods must be used to bring about adjustment; those families that might have been saved to a reasonable family life are allowed to go to pieces, children are taken from their own homes and placed in state or other institutions and oftentimes children become seriously delinquent and started on criminal careers because of the lack of proper attention and supervision in their early years.

Several counties have already inaugurated a plan of County Welfare Organization Work, and have employed a trained secretary to carry on proper investigations in all these matters. Often, this trained worker is appointed overseer of the poor and all matters of relief and other welfare problems are thus given careful investigation. This same person could in many of the counties, well be appointed Juvenile Court Probation Officer as a direct aid to the court in investigation and supervision of such cases as are brought before it, as the same difficulties, practically, face the County Board of Supervisors likewise applies to the Juvenile Court.

With a County Welfare Organization, headed by a competent trained investigator, we are confident that, not only would thousands of dollars of the tax-payer's money be saved to the state and county, but, and which is more vital, poor relief would be handled with greater equity, many a family rehabilitated, children that are headed to delinquency and crime would be saved to good citizenship, and a large number of children that are now being sent to state and private institutions

could be given the advantage of normal home training with their own people.

In this connection it might be well to note that the present statutes establish an altogether unreasonable maximum amount that can be paid in the form of mothers' pensions. \$2.50 per child is entirely inadequate, and because of this limit it frequently becomes necessary to break up a family and send the child to a State Orphanage. Here the cost of maintenance per child is approximately \$6.00 to \$7.00 a week, paid equally from state funds and county funds, BUT IN BOTH CASES FROM MONEY OBTAINED BY TAXATION. On the other hand, were the courts and the Board of Supervisors to exercise their judgment in the amount to be paid in such cases, we believe it is possible to grant such aid as would reasonably maintain the family at a much reduced cost to the county and state.

We fully believe that the County Boards of Supervisors would welcome any assistance possible in handling problems of the types herein mentioned, and that fairness and justice demands that the state give early attention to the organization of County Welfare units with competent secretaries to handle the work.

2—TO INQUIRE INTO THE CAUSE OF DEPENDENCY, DELINQUENCY, AND DEFECTIVENESS OF CHILDREN IN THIS STATE.

Volumes have been written and will yet be written as to the causes of dependency, delinquency and defectiveness in children. Much that has been written can well be applied to the children of this state. The Child Welfare Bureau has not had sufficient personnel nor time as yet to make anything more than a general survey along this line. However, there are three or four outstanding conditions in the state that can be well considered as being the greater of the many causes of dependency, delinquency, and defectiveness of the children in this state. One of the chief reasons for present conditions is doubtless due to a failure of a large number of homes to meet what should be considered as its primary and greatest responsibility to its own children. There is no question but that the home should be considered as the greatest single factor in moulding the lives and shaping the destinies of the child. The community and the state have a great part in the program and hold an unavoidable responsibility for the children growing up within it, but nothing, at any time, should be considered as relieving the home of its natural, fundamental responsibility. However, when for any clear cause the home fails to appreciate this fact and clearly neglects to function, it then becomes the paramount duty of the county and the state to intercede in behalf of the future of the child.

Perhaps one of the most formidable causes of dependency and delinquency, as well as of the failure of the homes to function, will be found to depend upon a mental defect on the part of the parent. We want to make ourselves perfectly clear in this matter. Hundreds of homes are not performing their functions where there is not the slightest question as to their mental condition. Many another cause serves to break down these homes. On the other hand, we believe it is clear in a majority of the cases of dependency, destitution and delinquency, that a clearly defined mental defective will be found. The Federal Government has been making a detailed study along these lines, as has also numerous individual states, and there seems to be no question whatever as to the conclusion. The state and private workers in this state which has to deal with these problems bear out the same conclusions as are found to apply elsewhere. From these investigations it is generally concluded that approximately 85 percent to 90 percent of all destitution and dependency have their basic cause in the low grade mental condition of the respective individual, while from 60 percent to 70 percent of delinquency is attributed to the same cause. Reliable facts, and we believe conservative ones, place the definite feeble-minded population at 2 percent of the total. That would mean that Iowa has very close to 50,000 feeble-minded within its borders. Of this number less than 4,000 have become sufficient problem as to cause their being cared for in public institutions, with several hundred more who have been before the courts and ordered committed to the institution, but who cannot be received for institutional care because of the badly overcrowded condition at the present time. In addition to this group of feeble-minded should be considered another group whose mentality is decidedly under normal, but yet above the mark of feeble-mindedness. Conservative estimates place this group at approximately 20 percent of the population. Thus, out of a population of 2,419,927, Iowa would have a mental defective population of 483,985. At first thought these figures appall, but we are sure an adequate survey will reveal that they are not far from right. Within this large group is found the greatest proportion of Iowa's destitute, dependent, delinquent and criminal population. The state's institutions are badly overcrowded with the more defined types. Billions of tax payer's money is paid annually, to say nothing of private and individual funds, for the care of these, both in and out of the institutions. Our marriage laws are inadequate and, as a result, this group is propagating its kind at a rate of five to six times as fast as are the non-defective groups. Our present plan in this state is not only making it possible for these defectives to multiply rapidly, but it can well be said that in the majority of cases, we are encouraging their multiplying, through a failure to recognize the facts as they exist, and through our

contributing in one form and another, the financial aid that makes such conditions possible.

The Bureau of Child Welfare believes that this is a problem which the state of Iowa should meet squarely and decisively. There would appear to be but two ways in which it can be met; one is by a complete segregation of this type of incompetents and the other is through the now simple process of sterilization. Segregation would be an almost overwhelming task because of the large numbers involved, and would also require vast sums of money to properly accomplish. On the other hand sterilization is today a minor operation and would be entirely effective in bringing about the solution demanded. Naturally a program of either segregation or sterilization should be adequately safeguarded through the providing for competent examining Board or Boards, but this should not be a difficult matter.

Not only is the state and the community responsible to a large extent, but they are also responsible for the fact that these mental defectives are not recognized as such in their childhood and youth and at that time given such a training as will assure substantial citizenship in the later years. That the mentally defective group produces the overwhelming percent of delinquency and dependency, is due almost entirely to this lack of proper training, a training of the hand to work, and inculcating of right principles.

In addition to the needs of laws which will curb the propogating of this type, we seriously need the development of a program of examination and classification carried extensively through our public schools, in order to locate these problems, at a time when they could be so trained as to practically assure substantial citizenship. While this program might have the appearance of creating considerable expense at first, it would result in the reduction by hundreds of thousands of dollars in tax expense and in other problems, at a little later date.

The science of mental hygiene is of comparatively recent development, but it has progressed to a point today where it is upon as firm a basis as is physical hygiene. Mental disease almost is as clearly marked as is physical disease, and is as effectively diagnosed.

We believe the real solution of the problem of dependency and delinquency with its overwhelming costs in money as well as in human life, will only be solved when people have been aroused to the needs and have established easily accessible psychiatric clinics throughout the state, and when strict attention is given to the marriage of the clearly defective type, and when well defined measures are taken to prevent reproduction of this type. We believe that every county should have at least one psychiatric clinic as a public organization,

before which is brought all of the cases of dependency, delinquency, etc., for diagnosis and classification. We further believe that such a clinic should not only be available to every school in the state, but that every child in the state should be from time to time given an examination by these clinics. If it is true, that 20 % of the children in our public school system today, are of a mental defective type, it is not only manifestly clear that the schools are hampered severely in their educational efforts, but it also is true that the non-defective groups in the school are not getting the full possibilities in education. Too, it would also be clear that such a program of classification within the schools would give the state an opportunity to definitely locate these defectives and enable the state to provide adequately for them, according to their respective and varying abilities.

Closely interlocked with this same group, and constituting a problem of very similar nature, is that of the insane, the epileptic, and such types, and the same program of clinic diagnosis, especially as applied to the schools, would be as effective in solving the whole general problem.

BROKEN HOMES

Another cause of dependency and delinquency, which should be given particular attention, is found growing out of the present system of divorce. The courts are extremely busy along this line. Many of these cases of divorce finds minor children involved. Not only has the child suffered because of the conditions which have produced the breaking up of the home, but there continues to be suffering because of the unestablished condition following the divorce. In a large number of such cases, alimony has been ordered by the court, presumably with the idea of enabling the mother to properly care for the child or children, but the records show that in a great proportion of the cases, the alimony is paid but for a short time, or not at all, with the result that destitution and dependency frequently necessitate the sending of the children to state or private institutions for care. Though the laws of the state are adequate for the compelling of the husband and father to meet his financial obligations in this respect, it is a matter of record that comparatively few of such cases are ever brought into court to force payment. Because of the large number of children involved in this way and the multiplicity of problems developing from this condition, we believe that some plan should be devised by which every divorce in which children figure, should be reported to the Child Welfare Bureau of the State Board of Control for record, together with such necessary information as to the children, the alimony ordered, methods of payment, etc., as would enable the Bureau to have an active interest in aiding dependent mothers and families in

securing the necessary and adequate attention from the courts, as would enable her to continue the care and support of her children.

Somewhat in the same class and presenting a condition that should be given careful attention is the situation developed through one or the other parent deserting the family. 447 of the children cared for by the state or private institutions during the year 1925 to 1926 were children who had become public charges because of one or the other parent deserting the family. This is 21 % of all the children cared for during this period and undoubtedly represents only a small part of the children in the state who are very adversely affected from this one cause. There probably is not a way in which a husband and wife can be compelled to live together if they do not wish to do so, but there are ways and our laws are sufficient to compel the responsible party to support his family whether he lives with them or not, and the serious thing about this situation at the present time is that there is very little effort on the part of society or of the law-enforcing bodies to bring such delinquent parent to court and enforce his meeting the responsibility which is his. Child Welfare in Iowa demands a strenuous campaign of law enforcement in which especially the laws affecting the welfare of children are given a high place. Not only are deserting parents allowed to go with little or no effort to compel them to meet their responsibility, but hundreds of putative fathers are likewise allowed to go absolutely unchallenged and in no way made to feel their responsibility for the support of their child born out of wedlock, casting the full expense in most cases for the confinement and for the care of the child upon public charity. These added to the failure of the enforcement of payments of alimony where such has been decreed by the courts in actions for divorce, serve to produce better than 50 % of the cases during the past year where children have been cared for by private and state institutions which is only another way of saying that the causes enumerated produce about 50 % of our cases of destitute, delinquent children.

These instances of broken homes are serious ones and to a great extent, are within the power of the state to control or at least to enforce the support of the children involved. The other 50 % of the cases cared for during the year 1925 to 1926 were in broken homes due to the death of one or the other parent or where one or the other parent had broken down and was in some state institution.

The statistics of the Child Welfare Bureau for the one year 1925—1926 show that 80 % of all the children cared for by private and state institutions were the direct result of broken homes.

One more outstanding cause of dependency in Iowa is to be found in the problem of the unmarried mother. We have approximately 800 cases of this kind each year, that are of record. The very nature of these cases make the problem a difficult one for adjustment. However, records show that approximately 85 % of these unmarried mothers abandon their babies at birth. These little ones must be cared for by public and private agencies in one way or another, while many of the babies which their mothers attempt to keep with them, later become public charges due to the inability of the mother to secure such employment as would enable her to maintain herself and child. The last session of the legislature enacted a law, known as the paternity act, which would force upon the putative father the responsibility of financial care for the child. Naturally, there are many difficulties in the way when it comes to the adjustment of these cases, but the courts should be urged to use every means at its hand to compel the father to meet his full obligations. During the past year, the Child Welfare Bureau has referred a number of cases about which there was no question as to identity, to County Attorneys in different parts of the state, and almost invariably we have found that the matter has been ignored, and usually because some charitable organization has taken the burden of the care of the child. Just what procedure should be followed in order to secure action on the part of the court, and the compelling of these fathers to assume their evident responsibility, is not clear, but that some method should be devised remains evident.

In closing this part of my report, I believe we should call attention of all concerned to another matter that is greatly overlooked today. In fact a statute affecting many of the cases of destitution, poor relief, etc. for which thousands of dollars of public money is now being spent instead of compelling responsible parties to bear this expense themselves.

Chapter 267 of the Code of 1924, Section 5298-5301 clearly establishes the responsibility of relatives in the matter of aiding and supporting their unfortunate kin. This is not limited to the immediate family, but the responsibility under the statutes is extended to include even the grandparents and the male grandchildren. This, as may readily be seen, is a far reaching statute and were it enforced within this state, would relieve the state and the county as well as the charitable agencies of the state from heavy financial burdens involved in the care of the dependents within the state.

I desire to again call attention to the fact that we have, in most cases, adequate statutes, the enforcement of which would give a tremendous relief both financially and otherwise, and at the same time would bring about the adjustment of hundreds of problems in a much more satisfactory manner.

A summing up of the situation as outlined above, with our recommendations regarding adjustments, is as follows:

1—The organization in each county of a Public Welfare unit headed by a competent executive for the purpose of investigating and advising with the County Boards of Supervisors, and the Juvenile Court, in all matters of public welfare, especially those relating to poor relief and problems of delinquency.

2—The enactment of adequate adoption laws providing for a proper safeguard to all children who are passing through this readjustment in family life and the requiring that all divorces in which children are involved be reported to the Child Welfare Bureau, together with such information as will enable the Bureau to actively aid the mother and children in securing support.

3—The making possible the employment of trained personnel in the Child Welfare Bureau for the purpose of aiding in the rehabilitation of unmarried mothers, and assisting them in securing financial assistance from the putative father.

4—The carrying forward of a strenuous educational campaign for the purpose of bringing about necessary changes in, and the enforcement of, the laws now upon the statute books with regard to the responsibility of parents for the support of their own children and of all relatives for the support of any relative who through any cause has become dependent.

5—The inauguration of a conservative educational campaign for the purpose of acquainting the people with the facts as to the outstanding causes of crime, delinquency, destitution, and dependency especially as it is related to the matter of mental defectiveness.

In addition to these recommendations, I wish to sum up the recommendations made in the balance of the report.

1—That adequate personnel be provided for the Bureau for the carrying out of its duties in investigating needy cases of children, and the giving of advice and aid to County Boards of Supervisors and the Juvenile Courts of the state.

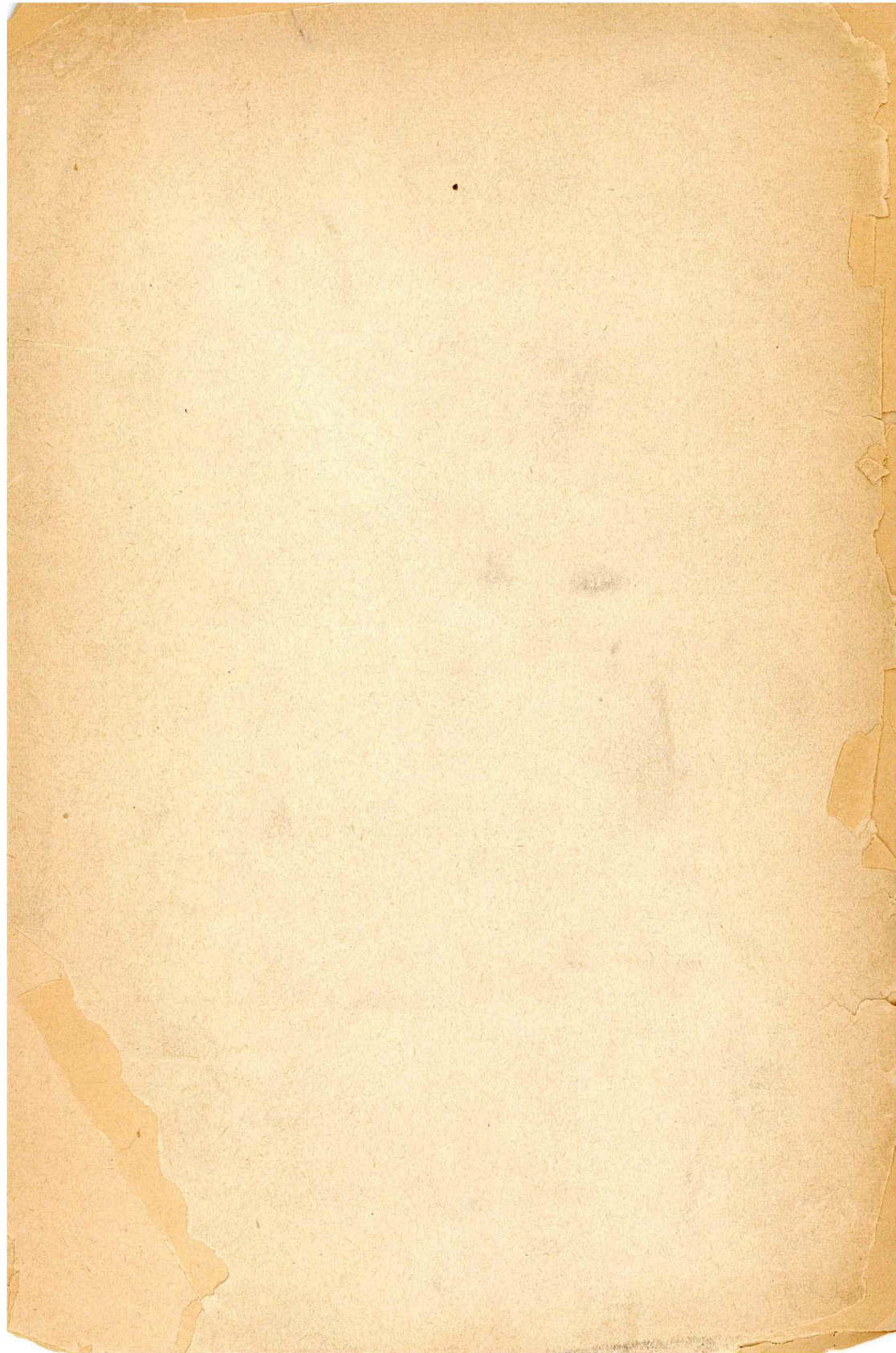
2—That at least one more outplacing agent be provided for the staff in the State Orphanage.

3—That the children in the State Homes should be carefully classified and grouped on the basis of their capability, and that a carefully planned program of training be inaugurated fitted to the respective groups.

4—That provision be made for the employment of a full time psychiatric unit under the direction of the Bureau of Child Welfare.

Respectfully submitted,

Edwin H. Sands, Supt.,
Bureau of Child Welfare.



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