CENSUS OF FEEBLE-MINDED IN THE UNITED STATES.

{Compiled from the enumerators' returns, taken June 1, 1890.)

Alabama	2187	Nebraska	959
Arizona	13	Nevada	22
Arkansas	1671	New Hampshire	779
California	880	New Jersey	1631
Colorado	192	New Mexico	127
Connecticut	1208	New York	7337
Delaware	220	North Carolina	3597
District of Columbia	261	North Dakota	135
Florida	500	Ohio	8035
Georgia	2191	Oklahoma	34
Idaho	55	Oregon	283
Illinois	5249	Pennsylvania	8753
Indiana	5568	Rhode Island	488
Iowa	3319	South Carolina	1805
Kansas	2039	South Dakota	285
Kentucky	3635	Tennessee	3590
Louisiana	1173	Texas	2763
Maine	1591	Utah	183
Maryland	1549	Vermont	901
Massachusetts	2929	Virginia	3090
Michigan	3218	Washington	140
Minnesota	1451	West Virginia	1430
Mississippi	1756	Wisconsin	2402
Missouri	3881	Wyoming	14
Montana	52		

Total in United States 95,571

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STATE CARE OF THE FEEBLE-MINDED.

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These figures from the census returns of 1900 are our excuse for calling you together to-night, to consider with us the best means of dealing with the feeble-minded. Those of us engaged in their care and training are always at a disadvantage in presenting their claims, because we are their paid retainers. Their misfortune happens to be our means of sustenance. We are conscious that a calm judgment must eliminate from our testimony all personal interest. "With this understanding, let us state the facts as we understand them, holding ourselves open to conviction, if better methods than ours can be suggested.

Speaking for the United States, and using the figures for 1890, the facts are these:

First.—We have approximately 95,000 feeble-minded persons among our 63,000,000 people, or one to every 660 of the general population.

Second.—These defective children seem to be no respecters of family station or caste. They come to the homes of the rich and poor alike. The learned and the illiterate share alike in this misfortune. They are found in the dense population of the cities, amid the ceaseless noise and smoke of manufacturing traffic and transportation, and they are not strangers to the rural homes where nature revels in sunshine and songs of birds.

Third.—In general it is a fact that the advent of a feeble-minded child into a family brings a burden of sorrow and care which has not its equal upon the calendar of domestic afflictions.

Fourth,—It is a fact, with some rare exceptions, that from the time a feeble-minded child arrives at the age when normal children walk and talk, it is better for the child, the family and the neighborhood that it be cared for by those trained for that kind of work. A well organized institution with twenty-five trained persons can care for and train one hundred feeble-minded persons more easily than a whole family can *care* for one such person, under ordinary circumstances, without attempting any systematic training whatever.

Fifth.—It is a fact that all mankind is growing in the knowledge and practice of that greatest of all virtues, charity—charity in that true sense which Webster gives as the first and principal meaning, namely, "That disposition of heart which inclines men to think favorably of their fellow-men and to do them good."

Sixth.—The advantage of insurance is a fact of common business experience. Men gladly contribute at regular intervals to a common fund from which they can individually be indemnified for loss of property or limb, or their families for loss of life.

Seventh.—Every family in the land into which children are liable to be born faces the possibility of having one or more defective ones among the number.

Now with these seven important facts before us, we are ready to advocate state care for the feeble-minded. We would not for a moment be understood as discouraging private enterprise in this direction; but any enterprise that is at all comprehensive requires large capital. Private care of the feeble-minded necessitates wealthy patrons or an income from extensive endowment. As the great mass of children of our land are of poor parentage, or parentage of mediocre means, so the great majority of feeble-minded children are of similar parentage and hence ineligible to private care. If a few of our millionaires can be led to see the good which some of their money could do in endowing homes for all classes of the feeble-minded, by the influence which this Congress wields, or otherwise, it will be "a consummation devoutly to be wished." May God hasten the day of its realization! What we do urge is universal effort to bring this class under the care which every interest of humanity demands that it should have.

Following now as corollaries from the proposition stated are these facts:

First.—The state can accomplish what private enterprise cannot, simply because it can readily furnish the means. Counties might unite and accomplish practically the same results, if they could agree upon some fair adjustment of the necessary support, responsibility and oversight. We will not argue over the particular means if the work is only comprehensive. The machinery of state government is well adapted to handle these matters, and hence in practice will, we believe, generally be called upon to do so. The principle involved in both cases is the same.

Second.—The state can bring together a sufficient number of children to make the institution accomplish its best work, because with large numbers will come better classifications, and the reduction of expense to a minimum consistent with the character of work done. I think all who have had experience with the feeble-minded will testify that these children are happier and more teachable when carefully arranged into convenient groups; and economy of administration demands that each group, whether under the care of a teacher or companion, be as large as possible consistent with the most efficient attention of the care-taker. The colony system has been a logical and almost necessary result of the requirements of classification, and it meets with universal approval wherever it is clearly understood.

Third.—The state can secure harmony and uniformity of action among the various agencies, auxiliary or indispensable to successful working of organized effort for the feeble-minded; the determining of eligibility; keeping in view the fact that it is not necessary that every feeble-minded person should be in an institution; the collection of data bearing upon causation, and the application of means tending to the comparison and harmonizing of methods employed for training and especially the application of such preventive policies as prove to be adequate and desirable.

Fourth.—State care of the feeble-minded is after all a practical system of insurance which guarantees to every parent of a common-wealth a home for any child of this kind which may come to his fireside through no known violation of natural laws upon the part of either parent, a home where such a child can

receive a degree of care which no mother can give without neglecting those children who are to engage in the active affairs of life, and the direction of whose destiny she alone can properly supervise.

Finally, the state can better afford *financially* to care for its feeble-minded in well organized institution colonies than to neglect them. The question of comparison of per capita expense for the care of public wards involves two variable elements in particular, namely, character of treatment and data from which expense is estimated. The character of treatment will depend not altogether upon the disposition of the management, but more especially upon the culture, sentiments and general financial ability which characterize the community. Paupers can be maintained at a cost of seventy-five cents per week in county poorhouses, and idiots can be "farmed out" for seventy-five dollars per year. I regret to say that one of our noble sister states still reflects discredit upon her otherwise fair name, by permitting this latter state of affairs to exist. At the present price of the necessities of life, do you want the reputation in your respective communities of imparting the kind of care which these figures indicate?

The only way to compare cost of maintenance intelligently, quality and all details being equivalent, is to consider the interest upon permanent investments, with every item of food, lodging, clothing, instruction, amusement, medical and general attendance. When conparisons are made on this basis, state care will, I believe, be found in every case to exceed but little the average cost of the ordinary county care of our poor. For the sake of illustration I turn to the published report of the board of charities of a neighboring state, the only one accessible at this writing, and I find the following facts for 1891, namely: *First.—The* per capita cost of the poor varied in the different counties from nothing (where sales from farms exceeded cost of maintenance; to $11.13 per week, the average for the state being $2.71, excluding interest on investments and medical attendance. Adding these latter items the average becomes $4.03. *Second.*—The cost per capita of the school for feeble-minded, in the same state for the same year, was $3.52, exclusive of clothing, transportation of inmates to school, and interest on investments. Adding the latter items the average becomes $4.50. This gives a difference of 47 cents in favor of the poorhouse care of paupers, as against the systematic care and training of feeble-minded in an institution well equipped with schools, shops, farm and garden. It is only fair to our cause to add that in this particular case the institution is comparatively new and has hardly begun to reap the financial advantage which follows from the employment extensively of trained inmates. This feature eventually becomes a very important characteristic of every institution organized upon the colony plan. These figures are suggestive, and while they will not correspond in detail in every state, I trust you will follow up this line of investigation in your respective states, and I have no fear that the results will strengthen our present deductions.

Now let us face the problem squarely. If it is good for one state to establish training schools, it is good for every state to do the same. I imagine I can hear a protest arise in many quarters when the suggestion is made of establishing training schools and state homes for 95,000 feeble-minded persons. The undertaking does seem vast. Assuming a reasonable deduction for the number of persons that can be cared for best at their homes and in private institutions, we will suppose provision to be made for an army of 84,000, each state taking care of its respective quota, in well equipped institutions built of the best material and with the best modern appliances, and with at least one acre of land to each inmate. For all this we will allow $600 per bed, which you will all agree is ample; add six per cent, of this amount to the average per capita expense of maintenance under existing circumstances, and we will find that the enormous expenditure of $16,500,000 will be annually required to do the work. These figures almost stagger us, but they must be considered from all standpoints and estimated by comparison with other things with which we are familiar before their proper bearing upon us as individuals can be appreciated. $16,500,000 would nearly reproduce the World's Columbian Exposition, but it would represent only one of the small items of the budget which Congress annually passes for its numerous dependencies. This amount would be equivalent to a direct tax of about 26 cents per individual, or $1.45 per voter in

our federal elections. A tax of $1 on all real and personal property assessed at $1460 would supply the means required. Practically, however, our taxes for such purposes are indirect, and we can estimate this sum of money by another method. In 1891 the United States received as internal revenue tax on smoking and chewing tobacco, exclusive of the various forms of manufactured tobacco, cigars, cigarettes, etc., over $18,325,000, or enough to carry on our enterprise and drop over $1,750,000 into a permanent endowment annually.

After all, you will, I think, agree with me that the premium upon this insurance is not excessive. In the meantime what are these insurance companies doing with this premium? They are not simply relieving you of the care of your child; they are doing more for its interests and happiness than you can do yourself. They are organizing farms, workshops and industries adapted to the utilization of the forces which they are developing. They are reducing to a minimum the possibility of increasing the number of this class of unfortunates by multiplying their own offspring, for a fountain can never rise above its source; and to stop this one cause of misery alone would well repay the state for a vast outlay of money.