

is no more potent influence in the production of vice and crime than the unwatched mental defective.

This Province is no exception to the rule abundantly proved in other countries that the largest proportion of crime and the cost of endeavouring to counteract it are due to mental defectives who have been allowed to continue at large. Never having had any useful training in their youth they are allowed in maturer age as "repeaters" to congest the courts and crowd the gaols. The inter-relation of crime and feeble-mindedness is now put beyond all controversy. If the cardinal fact could be assimilated by the general public that the elimination of the mental defective from the schools and from the streets and from the agencies in reforming character, would render the efforts of teachers and social workers comparatively easy and empty the gaols of over half their inmates and that these unfortunates can, if taken in time, be made comparatively happy and useful, there would be little time lost in bringing about the desired result.

Gentlemen, there is therefore great need for an immediate, intelligent and systematic effort to ascertain, record, and educate and care for the mentally defective, and you must help. It is necessary to realize that mentally defectives fall broadly into two classes—the comparatively harmless and the anti-social—and it is also necessary to grasp as the leading idea the fact that while these two classes may need, in the end, totally different treatment, the whole benefit to the public is brought about by the application of proper care and training to all who come within the definition of feeble-mindedness, provided they undergo the training at an early age.

Dr. Tredgold, the eminent British authority upon mental deficiency, estimates that among aments—that is, mental defectives—out of every hundred there will be found only six idiots and eighteen imbeciles, as against seventy-six feeble-minded, one-half of whom would be children.

This startling proportion shows what a wonderful chance and at the same time what a terrible risk there is as regards this class. Under proper care, and through proper industrial training of the young, three-quarters of the mentally defective will be kept practically out of harm's way. If neglected this same proportion is at large in the community, creating trouble, distress and crime. No single fact is so well established now as that most of the feeble-minded can be trained and made proficient in industrial work and manual labour. They can be made happy, healthy, and in many cases almost, if not altogether, self-supporting, but if allowed as children to run wild and untrained they develop vicious qualities and degenerate into criminals.

Another thing I feel certain of is that there is at the present time a large amount of effective voluntary effort and a great deal of really