

organizations and societies, or by properly qualified volunteers in each community. This systematic supervision of the feeble-minded could easily be made to cover the entire state, with a local representative in each community, but all under the direction of the central authority.

Each defective could be regularly visited and kept under observation by the local visitor. The reports of these visitors, covering the life histories and the family histories of many cases, would soon constitute an invaluable treasury of information as a basis for scientific research and study in the search for practical methods of prevention. The official visitor would advise the parents as to the care and management of the defective, and would have opportunity to inform the family, the local officials, and the community generally as to the hereditary nature and the peculiar dangers of feeble-mindedness.

The registration of every feeble-minded person, and the regular visitations, especially of children of school age, would make it possible to inform the parents of the condition of the child, of the necessity of life-long supervision, and of the possible need for future segregation. Suitable, tactful literature should be prepared, which could be gradually presented to the parents in a way that would have great educational value. Sooner or later, the parents will probably be willing to allow their child to be cared for and trained in an institution. In suitable cases parents who are not willing may be allowed to have the custody of their child, with the understanding that he shall be properly cared for and protected during his life, that he shall not be allowed to become immoral or criminal, and that he shall be prevented from parenthood. Whenever the parents or friends are unwilling or incapable of performing these duties, the law should provide that he shall be forcibly placed in an institution, or otherwise safeguarded. The local representatives of the central bureau would officially serve as advisors and sponsors for pupils graduated from the special school classes, for court cases under probation and observation, and for institution inmates at home on visit or on trial.

There would be a person in every locality familiar with the opportunities for mental examination and methods of permanent commitment. The extra-institutional supervision and observation of cases in their homes would do away with the necessity of institution care of many persons who would otherwise have to go to an institution, thus reducing the expense of institution buildings and maintenance.

There should be legal provision for the commitment of uncared-for defective persons to the permanent custody of the central authority. This commitment should formally recognize the actual mental age and degree of responsibility of the defective person so committed. The legal status of a defective should be that of a normal child with a mental age of 8, 9 or 10 years.