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# The Colville Examiner

An Exponent for Stevens County

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**STATE INSTITUTIONS.**

Being one of a series of 12 special articles for the Examiner, prepared by W. H. Cochran, member of the state board of control.

The blind children of this state were formerly housed with the deaf children and all were under the direction of the superintendent of the State School for Defective Youth. The school was established on February 3rd, 1886, and was under the management of a board of trustees and did not come under the jurisdiction of the Board of Control until October 1st, 1900.

At that time Ernest Lister, now governor, was chairman of the Board of Control. He recommended to the 1903 legislature that the feeble-minded children be established at another point, that the blind children be segregated from the deaf and that the former be given the quarters then used by the feeble-minded. This board further recommended that the name of the school be "The State School for the Deaf and Blind." The recommendation was not followed at that session, but after being recommended by another board, the 1905 legislature adopted it.

In September, 1902, report there were but 14 blind children in attendance at the school, and one teacher was all that was required for the instruction of these. In the 1904 report this attendance had increased to 23.

Owing to the fact that the state of Idaho had up to this time made no provision for the care of its deaf and blind, our school cared for a number of Idaho children in the Washington institution. The sum charged the state of Idaho was \$200 for each child for the school term, and they received the same care and attention as those of this state.

While the law transferring the feeble-minded children elsewhere was passed in 1905, the buildings were not completed at the new location so that the transfer could be made until May, 1906. Immediately the blind children were removed to the buildings vacated, and there was to all intents and purposes a separate blind school and a separate deaf school, although under the same management and classed as "The State School for the Deaf and Blind."

At the time of the transfer the population of the blind school had grown to 31, sixteen of whom had become afflicted with blindness at the age of one year or less. Two years later, or at the beginning of the 1908 term, the number of students had increased to 37.

The 1909 legislature was requested by the board to separate the two schools, and that one be known as the School for the Deaf, and the other to be known as the School for the Blind. The reason for this request was that the schools had both grown so rapidly in population that it required one superintendent to look after the deaf and one to look after the blind. Dating from this recommendation the two schools were conducted separately, although the law dividing them was not passed until the 1913 session of the legislature.

In September, 1913, W. B. Hall, superintendent of the Kansas State School for the blind, was induced to come to this state and become the head of this institution. Mr. Hall was one of the foremost men in the work in the United States, and it was a great loss to the school and to this state when he passed away last fall. His widow, who had been his valuable helpmate throughout his life's work, was immediately appointed to succeed him, and she is now the superintendent of this institution.

In a tribute paid to the memory of Mr. Hall, the first superintendent of this institution, at the recent laying of the cornerstone of the new building being erected there, Hon. T. E. Skaggs, member of the State Board of Control, had the following to say: "I need not describe in detail the two years' work that have meant so much, not only to our blind children, but to the adult blind, who, last year for the first time, were permitted to enjoy the benefits of the summer school. You all know how his splendid executive ability, business judgment, thorough training and tireless energy have brought this institution up to a degree of efficiency that places it in the front rank of the blind schools of the nation. It is sufficient for me to say that every hope entertained by the governor and the Board of Control has been realized in full, and I betray no confidence when I tell you that no institution under our management gives less concern nor more cause for gratification than this.

"Standing in the light of such a life, I could not close without saying something that is in your mind and mine. If we could draw aside the veil and hear our brother in audible tones, this would be his message: "Twenty-three years ago, among the sunflowers of Kansas, God gave into my keeping the destinies of a pure and beautiful woman. With a common purpose, our lives enriched by love, we set out on life's sea, our hearts entwining and the union growing with years. All through life, whether in sunshine or rain, in winter's chilling blast or summer's warming zephyr, she bore more than her share of the burden. I covet nothing of honor or praise for myself, for I have already heard those welcome words, 'Well done, good and faithful servant, but it is my earnest wish that all credit and praise for whatever of success may have attended my labors may be richly shared by her.'

"Therefore, in honoring him, we do well to honor this brave, talented, Christian woman, who took up the burden when he laid it down and added it to that which she already bore. But we should not feel that, with this encomium our duty is ended. As citizens, as friends, as brethren, we must add our strength and support to her energy, activity and genius, that her achievements of the future may equal their combined triumphs of the past."

There are 20 employees of this school, including teachers, Mrs. Sadie E. Hall being the superintendent. The school now has a population of 63 students, of which King county furnishes the largest number of any county in the state, namely, 12. Lewis and Whatcom counties each furnish seven; Clarke, six; Spokane, Walla Walla and Yakima, four each; Snohomish, Skagit and Pierce, three each; Cowlitz and Lincoln, two each; and the following counties are represented by but one each: Chehalis, Columbia, Killekat, Pacific, Pend Orielle and Whitman.

The ages of the children run from six to 21, although there are at present six who are slightly over 21.

The value of the state property at this institution is estimated at \$68,162.39, which, of course, does not include the new building now being erected.

The School for the Blind is located in the city limits of Vancouver, and just on the edge of the city. The state owns here 5.16 acres of land, which is entirely inadequate, as with the growth of the school more will need be acquired. The school term is for nine months of the year and is open to any blind person of this state under the age of 21 years.

During the three summer months we hold a term of that period for the adult blind. Last year, 1915, was the first that this state had ever made provision for teaching the adult blind, and about 20 took advantage of it. It is our understanding that there is no other summer school for the adult blind in the United States outside this state and the state of Minnesota, and the establishment of this summer school, which will be a regular feature each year, is one of our achievements of which we are justly proud.

The parents and friends must pay the railroad fares of the students to and from the school and must furnish their clothing, shoes, etc. The state furnishes all of the maintenance and supplies the instruction free of charge. There are no tuition fees. There are many blind children in the state whose parents have never availed themselves of the privileges of the school and this is to be wondered at. It is an ideal place for the young ones thus handicapped and every child in the state should by all means be sent here and instructed. The superintendent is a good, Christian woman, whose every thought is for "her children," as she calls them, and the children love her and always aim to conduct themselves so that it gives her pleasure.

The administration or school building is an old dilapidated structure, but we are at present building, and will have ready for occupancy at the beginning of the next term in September, one of the most modern and up-to-date structures for the blind in all of the Western states. The sum of \$75,000 was appropriated for this building by the last legislature and the Board of Control appointed as architects Julius A. Zittel, of Spokane, and Dennis Nichols, of Vancouver, and let the contract for the erection of the same to S. C. Erickson, of Tacoma.

The new building will have three stories and a full basement and will be strictly fire proof. On the first floor will be the students' dining room, also dining rooms of the teach-

ers and the superintendent; linen room, drug room, offices, superintendent's quarters, guest rooms for the Governor and Board of Control members and a reception room. On the second floor will be the auditorium, class and recitation rooms. On the third floor will be the teachers' and officers' bed rooms. In the basement will be the plunge, where swimming will be taught to every pupil; the gymnasium, manual art training room, wrestling dens and dressing rooms for both the boy and the girl pupils. The building will have a roof garden for the benefit of the teachers.

Other buildings at the school are a boys' dormitory and a girls' dormitory. Both of these buildings are fire proof. The population of the school has grown, however, so that another dormitory is now needed, especially for the boys as that building is filled to overflowing. There is a first-class engine and boiler house which was constructed by the Board of Control when the present governor, Ernest Lister, was a member of the board.

It is difficult for the public in general to understand how much the sightless can really accomplish in a practical way. One thinks of the blind as simply folding their hands and sitting in idleness and as being a constant object of care. At our School for the Blind the girls make pillow cases, aprons, sheets, towels, napkins and laundry bags. They also make hammocks, study typewriting and make all kinds of fancy work. The boys make hammocks, nets, rugs, cane chairs, brooms and tune pianos. We recently supplied other institutions with brooms which were made by the boys of this institution.

The children do some of the work about the place. All make their own beds; the girls wash and dry the dishes in the pupils' dining room; the boys split and take wood to the kitchen and assist in keeping the yard clean. The difficulties in training blind children are very great. Strangely, the industry in which the blind seem to be most successful is one which depends upon the accurate employment of colors in harmonious arrangement, the weaving of art fabrics. The education of the blind is yet in its infancy and the future will see great strides in the way of education as well as in the matter of prevention.

It has been our endeavor to bring about systematic and accurate teaching in all departments of the school. To provide for the educational needs of the talented, the mediocre and the dull, requires patience, energy and charity upon the part of all. We believe that the bright pupils are now better provided for than they ever have been. We know that the mediocre and the dull are receiving far more intelligent help and attention. To bring about a well graded school requires years of patient effort. Higher standards are required in the school and the children generally are eager for study and use every means at hand for thorough preparation. The division of the study hour so that pupils would not need to study so long at any one time and the establishment of the reading hour has brought about very beneficial results. Instead of haphazard reading to pupils of all ages, the school is divided into three groups, according to ability to interpret and appreciate literature. Magazine articles and current events are thus presented to our young people. Under this tuition, if a child passes several years in the school, his life will be cultured with good literature and his vision broadened with a knowledge of world events.

That a large part of the blindness is due to Ophthalmia Neonatorum, contracted at birth, and that this might be avoided if the law requiring the physician attending at birth to drop a diluted solution of nitrate of silver in the eye of the new born babies, (the statement of Dr. Richards, which started New York), is absolutely true, according to Edward E. Allen, of Watertown, superintendent of the Perkins institution. Many physicians do this nowadays.

All of our teachers for the blind are not only well equipped educationally for the work of the school, but they are progressive and temperamentally suited to bring about results of a high order. While they approach their work with serious hearts, an atmosphere of good cheer at all times prevades their school rooms.

To meet the needs of the music department we have been compelled to resort to class instruction with primary pupils. While such instruction is not ideal, it brings very good results with the younger children. The division of the gymnasium into four classes instead of two and the length-

room, also dining rooms of the teachers

(Continued on page four.)

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