



J. H. BELL, M. D.  
SUPERINTENDENT

## STATE COLONY FOR EPILEPTICS AND FEEBLE-MINDED

COLONY P. O., NEAR LYNCHBURG, VA.

January 11, 1926.

Hon. S. L. Ferguson,  
C/o Murphy's Hotel,  
Richmond, Va.

Dear Senator Ferguson:

As suggested by you, I am writing to remind you to see Mr. Jake Wells with reference to any moving picture film service that he might be able to secure for us.

You might also ask Mr. C. Lee Moore as to what will be done with our bank balance at the end of the appropriation year, although I have written him for that information.

In case a habeas corpus proceedings is instituted in the Belvin case I would be glad to have you go to Norfolk with me, if it can be so arranged, for legal advice and to represent the institution. I think the father and the man who married this girl while on parole from the court in Norfolk have had difficulty in getting a lawyer to take the case. I have had communications from several, and after stating the situation to them they apparently have not had anything further to do with it.

I have made a careful and thorough study of the laws relating to institutions, and particularly to the feeble-minded. They are well framed and seem to cover most every situation that could arise, with the exception of the act of the Assembly, Chapter 157, approved March 10th, 1920, which was not clear and could not be interpreted by the Attorney General. The part of the act referred to reads:

"That if any man or woman shall knowingly marry any person lawfully adjudged to be insane, epileptic, or feeble-minded, and duly admitted as a patient or inmate in any State hospital or colony for the insane, epileptic or feeble-minded, whether such person be actually confined in a hospital or colony or in the custody of some person on bond or furlough or at large as an escaped patient or inmate, he or she shall be guilty of misdemeanor, and on conviction thereof shall be confined in jail not exceeding six months or fined not exceeding five hundred dollars, or both. Any such marriage, if knowingly attempted to be entered into, shall be absolutely void without any decree of divorce or other legal process."

