

VIRGINIA STATE BOARD OF PUBLIC WELFARE

On January 1st, the State Board of Public Welfare was caring for over 2000 children committed by the courts, 911 of whom were committed in 1925, an increase of 251 over 1924. Handling these children requires individual care, investigation placement and supervision. It is difficult to hold competent workers, when they can obtain higher salaries without trouble. Within the past month two trained workers have left for easier and more remunerative jobs. The Board of Public Welfare can exercise no choice in receiving delinquent children, and is fairly compelled to accept the dependent and neglected, a large percentage of whom come half-clad, badly needing medical examination and hospital treatment, specialized care and permanent supervision. It is impossible to curtail expenses or cut down the present programme under the law without working great injury to these children. To delay their removal from the jails and almshouses is both inhuman and uneconomical.

One-half of those committed to the Board to go to the reformatories last year after medical care and adjustment, went into free homes. The saving to the State, based on institutional costs, exceeded \$100,000.00.

In response to the Governor's appeal for strict economy in making budget estimates, the undersigned committee cut the estimates to the very minimum, asking for only a slight increase, notwithstanding the greatly increased work of the department. For 1926-7, the sum of \$42,145 and for 1927-8, \$42,495 was asked. The Governor's recommendation for each year is \$39,000.00. The Department cannot handle the work on less than the requested estimate. We therefore request that the amounts asked for be authorized.

There is now a state-wide interest in the almshouse problem. Several measures are being considered to alleviate the present intolerable conditions and excessive costs of county almshouses. Following the example of the Eighth Congressional District and surrounding counties in consolidating under the District Home Act of 1914, other regions of the State are considering consolidation. Such consolidations are believed the proper solution by the Board of Public Welfare, which believes that with a travel allowance for an agent of \$1,500.00 each year of the biennium, such consolidations could be effected at great improvement and great saving of money to the counties.

S. C. Hatcher,
R. L. Brewer, Jr.,
W.F. Drewry,

Committee.

