

COMMITTEE ON DEFECTIVE AND EPILEPTIC CHILDREN.

(EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.)

REPORT.

TO HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE, K.G., LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL.

1. We have the honour to submit to your Grace the following report, in accordance with the order of reference from the Education Department, dated 20th December 1896, instructing us "to inquire into the existing systems for the education of feeble-minded and defective children not under the charge of guardians, and not idiots or imbeciles, and to advise as to any changes, either with or without legislation, that may be desirable :
"to report particularly upon the best practical means for discriminating on the one hand between the educable and non-educable classes of feeble-minded and defective children, and on the other hand between those children who may properly be taught in ordinary elementary schools by ordinary methods and those who should be taught in special schools :
"to inquire and report as to the provision of suitable elementary education for epileptic children, and to advise as to any changes that may be desirable."

I.—INTRODUCTORY.

History of Appointment of the Committee.

2. It will be convenient first to recapitulate the circumstances which led to the appointment of the Committee.

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3. The Royal Commission on the Blind, the Deaf and Dumb, &c., which reported in 1889, made the following recommendation :—

"That with regard to feeble-minded children they should be separated from ordinary scholars in public elementary schools, in order that they may receive special instruction, and that the attention of school authorities be particularly directed towards this object."

4. Special classes for such children were accordingly established at Leicester, and in London; in the latter they have steadily increased in number till the present time; other classes have also been established at Birmingham, Bradford, Brighton, Bristol, and Nottingham; and one is in process of formation at Plymouth.

5. No special regulations are laid down by the Education Department for these classes, nor are special grants made; but the School Authorities are left free to devise such arrangements as seem best. Grants have for the most part been paid as if for infants, the school hours being shorter than those required by the Code for older scholars.

6. The expense of conducting these classes has been considerable, and in 1894 the London School Board made representations to the Department with a view to increased grants; after some correspondence, the Board urged that legislation should be introduced to enable School Authorities to provide for defective children on the same lines as for blind and deaf children by the Elementary Education (Blind and Deaf Children) Act, 1893. Mr. Pooley, a member of our Committee, in his evidence, has shown what would be the precise effect of extending that Act to defective children; the chief provisions of that Act are to extend the age of compulsory school attendance of blind and deaf children to 16 years, to enable School Authorities to provide both for their suitable instruction and for their maintenance, and to empower the Department to make special grants, which have been fixed at a scale allowing 5*l.* 5*s.* per child.

Pooley, 6262.

7. A plea was also made by the London School Board for powers to make special provision for epileptic children, the special classes for defective children having been found to be unsuitable for children who, by reason of severe epileptic fits, are unable to attend ordinary schools.

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8. In March 1895 the Department issued circular letters to Her Majesty's Inspectors and to the chief School Boards, inviting their views as to the suggested extension of the Blind and Deaf Children Act to defective and epileptic children; but the replies, while they showed that attention was being directed towards the subject, did not afford a sufficiently clear basis for further action on the part of the Department.

9. Upon the introduction of the Elementary Education Bill, 1896, into Parliament, a memorial was addressed to the Education Department by persons interested in the subject of feeble-minded children, urging that the Bill should be amended so as to enable county authorities to make provision for the education of such children; and reference was therein made to the Report of the Poor Law Schools Committee, published in February 1896, in which separate provision was recommended for the education of feeble-minded children in Poor Law schools. Renewed representations were made by the London School Board and by other School Authorities in favour of special legislation for defective and epileptic children, and in December 1896 your Grace appointed this Committee.

Mode of Inquiry pursued by the Committee.

10. We have held 28 meetings, and have examined 46 witnesses. With the exception of the classes in Nottingham, with regard to which written information was supplied by the School Board, we have visited for the purpose of this inquiry all the special classes, and have examined witnesses connected with them all. These witnesses include members, medical officers and other officials of School Boards, and managers and teachers of the classes. We have also received written replies to questions sent to the teachers of all the classes; and a summary of these replies will be found in an Appendix to the evidence.

We have visited the Darenth Schools for Imbecile Children, and have received evidence in regard thereto from the clerk to the Metropolitan Asylums Board, and from the present and the late Medical Superintendent, and the head-mistress. Written information has been received from officers of institutions for idiots and imbeciles, in reply to questions addressed to them, and is printed in an Appendix to the evidence.

Inquiries have been made by means of circulars addressed to Her Majesty's Inspectors in certain towns and rural districts, and a summary of the information so received will be found in the evidence of Mr. Harrison and Mr. Colvill. Several Inspectors have also given oral evidence.

In addition to those already referred to, the following medical gentlemen have been good enough to appear as witnesses and to give us the benefit of their experience and advice:—Dr. Colman, Dr. Ferrier, Mr. Holm, Dr. Tait, and Dr. Warner. A written memorandum was also furnished by Dr. Alexander, of the Maghull Home for Epileptics.

With a view of ascertaining the limits of the powers and operations of the guardians or other local authorities in regard to these children, we have received evidence from Mr. Knollys of the Local Government Board, and Mr. Scott Lidgett of the Bermondsey Settlement.

Evidence in regard to training homes for girls was given by Miss Cooper, secretary to the Association for Promoting the Welfare of the Feeble-minded; and the experience of other voluntary agencies was brought before us by Miss Sewell, of the Women's University Settlement; Mr. Loch, secretary to the Charity Organization Society; and Sir Douglas Galton, chairman of the Childhood Society. Mr. Van Praagh also gave evidence as to the teaching of the feeble-minded deaf.

Upon the treatment of epileptic children, in addition to that received from some of the witnesses above mentioned, evidence was given by Mr. Penn Gaskell, secretary to the National Society for the Employment of Epileptics; and we also visited the colony for epileptics at Chalfont St. Peter's.

Miss Margaret Hodge gave evidence as to her experience of the teaching of feeble-minded children in Germany; and written information as to foreign systems of teaching such children was obtained from various sources, and will be found in an Appendix to the evidence.

Arrangement of Topics in the Report.

11. In the report which we now present, the subjects are arranged in the following order: we deal first with definitions of terms, the existence of the class of children referred to in the terms of reference, their description and number, and the state of

the law with regard to them, and with regard to idiots and imbeciles, so far as it affects them; we submit proposals as to the best practical means of discriminating them from imbeciles, and from ordinary children; the existing systems for the education of feeble-minded children are then examined in detail, and advice is offered as to any changes, either with or without legislation, that appear to us desirable; the case of physically defective children is then considered; and, lastly, the case of epileptic children. In conclusion, the various recommendations are summed up, and classified according to the measures and methods by which effect could be given to them.

Definitions of Terms.

12. The word "feeble-minded" has presumably been adopted in the terms of reference to us in consequence of its having been used in the report (paragraph 709) of the Royal Commission on the Blind, the Deaf and Dumb, &c. That Commission appears to have taken the use of the word from the Royal Commission on the Education Acts. The term is also used in the report (paragraph 311) of the Poor Law Schools Committee. The objection to it is that it has come to be applied to all classes of mentally deficient children, including imbeciles. We recommend that in dealing with the children referred to in our inquiry, the term "feeble-minded" shall not be used, and it will be seen that in our recommendations we have spoken of the classes required to be set up as "special classes." As, however, the word "feeble-minded" is used in the terms of reference to us we have used it in this report; and as our inquiry only relates to feeble-minded children not idiots or imbeciles, we have, for the sake of brevity, used the word "feeble-minded" as excluding idiots and imbeciles. Throughout this report the word "feeble-minded" denotes only those children who are not imbecile, and who cannot properly be taught in ordinary elementary schools by ordinary methods.

By the introduction of the word "defective," as well as feeble-minded, into the terms of reference, we have understood that we are also instructed to consider the case of mentally normal children who, by reason of physical defect, cannot properly be taught in ordinary elementary schools by ordinary methods. In this report, therefore, the word "defective" denotes those children who are not imbecile, and who, whether by reason of mental or physical defect, cannot properly be taught in ordinary elementary schools by ordinary methods.

We have not attempted to formulate a technical definition of feeble-minded children; but we are instructed to report upon the best practical means of discriminating these children from normal and from imbecile children, and we have, therefore, in each case in which we have recommended special measures, laid down the working definition which we conceive to be proper to the purpose, and have also made recommendations as to the authority and the procedure by which such definition is to be applied. We see no reason to suppose that there will be any difficulty, if these directions are followed, in arriving at a system of discrimination which will be satisfactory in the great majority of cases, and as uniform as will be necessary for practical purposes. The difficulties which may occasionally be incidental to the diagnosis of individual cases cannot be eliminated; but such difficulties are not expected to be very numerous, and we have recommended machinery for dealing with them.

"Epileptic children," as used in the terms of reference, we have understood as covering children of all degrees of mental power and all degrees of epilepsy.

II.—DEFECTIVE CHILDREN.

Existence of Feeble-minded Children not Imbeciles.

13. That children exist who, on the one hand, are too feeble-minded to be properly taught in ordinary elementary schools by ordinary methods, and, on the other hand, are not so feeble-minded as to be imbecile or idiotic, is assumed in the terms of reference to us. With this assumption we are in entire agreement. From the normal child down to the lowest idiot, there are all degrees of deficiency of mental power; and it is only a difference of degree which distinguishes the feeble-minded children, referred to in our inquiry, on the one side from the backward children who are found in every ordinary school, and, on the other side, from the children who are too deficient to receive proper benefit from any teaching which the School Authorities can give. The great majority of the 1,300 children whom we have seen in special classes have been tried in the ordinary schools, and have been shown to be incapable of

Introductory.

Shuttleworth, 9.
Beach, 129.
Walmsley,
3963-4.
Ferrier,
5215.
Colman,
6055.

Defective Children.

Appendix B., 13.

Appendix A., 12.

Appendix B., 2.

Warner, 837.

Colman, 6064.

Colvill, 6666.

Ferrier, 5218.

Kerr, 656.

Walmsley, 4017.

Walmsley, 3944, 4059-60.

Walmsley, 4138-41.

Shuttleworth, 40.

Warner, 752.

Walmsley, 4312.

Ferrier, 5215.
Colman, 6055.

receiving any proper benefit from the instruction, having for the most part learned little or nothing beyond certain habits of discipline. On the other hand, these children show themselves capable of receiving considerable benefit from the individual attention and the special instruction given in the special classes. By the age of 13 or 14 they may sometimes arrive at a stage of elementary instruction equal, perhaps, to that attained by ordinary children of eight or nine years of age, and they often show themselves capable of being trained in some manual occupation. Thus there is a fair prospect, that, with favourable surroundings, they may take their place in the world, and may not become inmates of workhouses, asylums, or prisons.

Though the difference in mental powers is one of degree only, the difference of treatment which is required is such as to make these children, for practical purposes, a distinct class. Public feeling would revolt, and rightly, against the permanent detention of these educable children in institutions, and therefore it is better that they should not be sent to institutions during their childhood, but should become familiar with the world in which they will have to live, and should if possible, by individual-teaching and suitable training, be put in the way of making their living. They would obviously take harm from association with low-grade imbeciles, and ought to associate with ordinary children as much as is consistent with their receiving the special and individual care and training which they require. Feeble-minded children should therefore be considered a distinct class from those imbeciles whose mental deficiency is such that their seclusion for life in institutions is highly to be desired in the interests of society as well as in their own. The treatment of low grade imbecile children requires to be directed, not towards enabling them to take their place in the world, but towards making them as happy as their affliction permits. They do not suffer from association with other imbeciles, and the individual teaching which is required for feeble-minded children would be wasted on them.

Thus the feeble-minded children referred to in our inquiry exist as a distinct class from imbeciles; they are not, in fact, certified as imbeciles; they are not provided for as imbeciles; they are not classified as imbeciles by most scientific authorities; and they differ, both from ordinary children and from imbeciles, in the treatment which they require during their school life.

Description.

Harris, 1298-1300.

Walmsley, 4058.

Beach, 111-20.

Walmsley, 3973-86.

Kerr, 433-3.

Warner, 729.

Warner, 951.

Shuttleworth, 64-71.

Beach, 103-10, 343-9.

Kerr, 437.

Harris, 1133.

Walmsley, 4199-200.

Ferrier, 5232-7.

Colman, 6179-83.

14. Feeble-minded children are, in the great majority of cases, marked by some physical defect or defects discernible by the trained observer, and to some extent also by the untrained. The most conspicuous of such defects are irregularity in general bodily conformation, malformation of the head, the palate, tongue, lips, teeth, and ears, defective power either of motion or control in almost any of the different forms of muscular action, as shown in balance, attitude, and movement, and defects in some one or more of the sensory functions, besides the ordinary varieties of deformity and ill-health. A child may be abnormal in one or more of these respects without being necessarily feeble-minded: and there is no formula which will enable an untrained observer to pick out the precise point at which a combination of abnormalities constitutes a strong presumption of mental deficiency, and to identify the combination as that of a feeble-minded child. This is a matter which requires not only medical knowledge, but some special medical study; but we need not discuss whether a combination of physical signs is by itself, to a trained mind, a sufficient ground, without other proofs, for an opinion as to the mental powers of the child. Information can always be obtained as to the child's habits, conduct, and power of learning, and generally also as to its history, and there is no reason why these most important factors should ever be neglected. But when each case has been decided upon its merits, the fact remains that a class of feeble-minded children is also a collection of children physically defective, and consequently their proper treatment in school depends to a great extent upon medical considerations. A reference to the medical evidence will show that there are some differences of opinion as to the proper classification of the defects noted in these children; and a more difficult matter still is the proper classification of the children themselves. Dr. Harris classifies them according to the causes producing mental feebleness, thus:—Children suffering from low nutrition, neurotic, strumous, epileptic, paralytic, syphilitic, and crippled children. The epileptics and the cripples require separate consideration, but Dr. Harris's classification is a fair account of the materials out of which a special class, as now conducted, is usually composed. When special classes have been brought more generally under medical supervision, more complete classification will be possible.

Harris, 1016-30.

Number.

15. Approximately 1 per cent. of the children of the public elementary school class appear to be feeble-minded. An exact estimate will only be possible when more complete measures shall have been taken for discriminating and dealing with them; but on the material at present available for calculation we estimate the number at 1 per cent. Probably also, apart from the variations caused by a difference in the standards adopted, the proportion of feeble-minded children varies considerably in different places.

It may be well to state in detail how this estimate is arrived at. We have not been able to obtain any authoritative estimate of the proportion of feeble-minded children in those foreign countries where special provision is made for them, but it will be observed that in Brunswick, out of 13,176 children in the municipal schools, 124, or .95 per cent. were pupils in the classes for defective children, termed "auxiliary classes," or Hilfsschulen. It will also be observed that, in 1880, the German Minister of Education called upon all towns with a population of over 20,000 to provide an auxiliary school. In such a population the total number of children between 8 and 14 (the ages for which such schools are used) would be 2,600; and the ordinary size of an "auxiliary class" in Germany being about 25, we may perhaps infer that the demand was based upon an estimate that approximately 1 per cent. of the children are defective.

In England Dr. Warner has bestowed great care for many years upon the subject, and has produced statistics based on the examination of 100,000 children. 930 of these, or .93 per cent. come under the categories of "children feeble mentally and deficient," "dull mentally and feeble in body and brain," "epileptic and subject to fits during school life." Dr. Warner has been good enough to furnish fresh tables in order to show the number of children found by him in attendance at public elementary schools who might be classed as feeble-minded in the sense attached to the word in this report. His calculation gives .65 per cent. of feeble-minded children out of 86,000 actually in attendance at public elementary schools, and to these figures, which will be found in the report of the evidence, must be added an estimate of the number of feeble-minded children not in attendance at school at the time of the inquiries.

Mr. Chard has furnished a calculation based upon a comparison of the number of children, aged 7 to 13, admitted to special classes, or found by the medical officer to be fit for admission to special classes, with the total number of children aged 3 to 13 upon the rolls of all schools in such districts. This ratio varies from .3 to .77 per cent., and the number amounts to 215 upon a total of 40,000 children. Taking Mr. Chard's calculation, and deducting infants from the 40,000, it would appear that in these districts the number of ascertained feeble-minded children, aged 7 to 13, was 215 on a school population of 26,500 children aged 7 to 13, or in other words .8 per cent.

In Birmingham the number of children in the ordinary schools reported by the teachers to be feeble-minded, together with the children excused school on that ground, and the children in the special classes, amounts to 800 out of a total of 87,500 children, or .9 per cent.

In Brighton, Miss Verrall estimates the number of feeble-minded children in the poor neighbourhoods at 1 per cent.

Dr. Kerr selected 117 children out of 10,000 in Bradford schools as feeble-minded, or 1.1 per cent., but he roughly estimates the total in Bradford at 2 per cent.

In Leicester, out of 21,000 in the board schools, 400 were picked out at a preliminary selection by the teachers as suitable cases for a special class. No complete medical examination of these children has been held, and only a very small proportion are at present provided for in special classes. In London, however, the suitable cases appear to be two-thirds of those selected by the teachers; and, if the same proportion between the cases selected by the teachers, and the cases finally passed as feeble-minded, holds in Leicester, the number of feeble-minded children in Leicester would be 236, or 1.2 per cent.

At a similar selection in Bristol, 260 out of 17,818 were chosen by the teachers, and, if two-thirds of these are assumed to be suitable cases for special classes, the result is .9 per cent.

We issued a circular to certain of Her Majesty's Inspectors in rural districts with a view of obtaining calculations as to the number of defective children residing in the villages. How carefully some of them worked in this inquiry will be seen from the evidence of Mr. Colvill, Mr. Willis, and Mr. Dibben. The result of these

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Appendix A., 14.

Appendix A., 1.

Warner, 816.

Warner, 748-76.

Warner, 768.

Chard, 1366-71.

Dale, addendum to evidence. Airy, 7218.

Verrall, 2240-52.

Kerr, 397-406.

Major, 1576-8.

Harris, 1058-61, 1196-1202.

Martin, 4941-56, 5045-50, 5102-7, 5129-36, 5178-82, 5185-8.

For copy, see Colvill, 6577, 6580.

Defective Children.

Colvill
passim
Willis,
6817.
Dibben,
6831.
Harrison,
7217-21.

inquiries was to show, out of a total of 29,446 country children, 281 to be defective but not imbecile; that is to say, .95 per cent.

In the similar inquiries conducted by means of Her Majesty's Inspectors in large towns, an account of which will be found in Mr. Harrison's evidence, 3,150, out of 846,600, were reported to be defective, or only .37 per cent.; but on reference to Mr. Harrison's evidence it will be seen that this must be considerably under the mark, owing to incomplete returns. More reliance can be placed on the per-centages of 1 per cent. returned by Bradford, Halifax, Norwich, and Birmingham, and .5 per cent. from Liverpool, Newcastle, Plymouth, Aston, Reading, Merthyr Tydvil, and Swansea.

Three conditions must be observed in order to yield a sound basis for a calculation of the number of children to be classed as feeble-minded:—

- (1.) All the children of school age resident in a given area must be examined, whether attending school or not.
- (2.) The examination must be by skilled persons on a uniform standard.
- (3.) The area must be sufficiently large and representative.

Statistics on this basis are difficult to obtain; but we have received two calculations on a basis which nearly approaches it, one from Mr. Newton, a member of this Committee, and one from Mr. Purver, superintendent of the visitors under the London School Board in the Greenwich Division. Mr. Newton's table will be found in his evidence. Ten special classes, in different districts of London, were taken; and the area (or "feeding ground") was ascertained within which the defective children attending those classes reside. The total child population of that area was then ascertained from the returns of the London School Board, which are compiled from a house-to-house census. Mr. Newton's table exhibits the proportion borne by the children in the special classes to the total child population of the area, being over the whole 10 areas 482 children out of 67,690, or .71 per cent., who have been ascertained by the medical examination which precedes admission to the special classes, to be defective. To this must be added any other defective children in the same area who do not attend the special classes.

Newton,
7682.

Newton,
7682.

Newton,
7687.

Mr. Purver's figures (given in Mr. Newton's evidence) furnish a complete and detailed account of all the children residing in one defined area in Deptford, situated near the Edward Street special classes for defective children, and selected by Mr. Newton as being representative in character. They show 58 children out of 3,987, between 7 and 13, to be feeble-minded, or 1.45 per cent.

Galton, 5958.

It has been suggested to us that the Education Department should institute a scientific and statistical investigation, more particularly for the purpose of verifying the results of Dr. Warner's inquiries. We do not think that such investigation should be undertaken by the Education Department. The methods of diagnosis of feeble-minded children are well established and generally agreed upon amongst medical authorities, and the Department can only in this, as in other professional matters, accept the best available expert advice. As regards Dr. Warner's inquiry, we have found ourselves in agreement with him at several points where his inquiry and ours have touched, and we do not think that, so far as the purposes of the Department are concerned, there is any necessity for his statistical work to be tested.

For the present the estimate given above of 1 per cent. of all school children as feeble-minded appears to us sufficiently probable to be provisionally adopted for practical purposes; and when there is a properly organised system of providing for the education of these children, better statistics will be available.

Sewell,
6295.

Newton,
7687.

16. The number of children absent from school, owing to physical defect, in London on Ladyday 1896 is returned by the School Board at 840 out of 833,000, or about 1 per thousand. Miss Sewell reports in the neighbourhood of the Bermondsey Settlement 35 out of 16,000, or rather over 2 per thousand. Mr. Purver reports 15 out of 11,116 in Greenwich. The number may probably be inferred to be from 1 to 2 per thousand; but we have no evidence as to the proportion of these who would be capable of attending school if means of conveyance were provided.

State of the Law.

APPLICATION OF THE ELEMENTARY EDUCATION ACTS.

Knollys,
7939.

17. We are not aware of any laws relating specially to feeble-minded children, except those empowering guardians to provide for feeble-minded children under the Poor Law, a subject which lies outside our terms of reference. If children are not legally provided for as idiots or imbeciles, they are in the same position as any other children during their school life. They are subject to the laws and byelaws relating to school

attendance, and are obliged to attend same certified efficient school unless there is a reasonable excuse for non-attendance. In London, and probably in other large towns where the attendance is strictly looked after, the practice is for the school attendance officer to exercise no discretion, but to report all children not attending school to the committee of the board which is responsible for enforcing school attendance in the district. This committee decides whether or not to require the attendance of the child at school, and in the last resort attendance might have to be enforced by the magistrate. Under the headings of mentally defective (175), crippled (840), epileptic (145), idiots (235), and other cases (270), the returns of the London School Board show 1,665 children (or about 2 per thousand) not attending school at Ladyday 1896. In exercising their discretion as to exempting from school attendance, the committees do not, as a rule, require any medical examination of the children. In country districts the decision is usually made upon the recommendation of the attendance officer, who usually decides without medical advice: out of 29,000 children the returns show 119, or .4 per thousand, absent from school owing to mental or physical defect. If a case arose in which the School Authority considered that a feeble-minded child was not attending school with due regularity, proceedings would be taken in the same manner as with other children. In some cases such proceedings have been taken so far as to require the parent to attend before the local School Attendance Committee in London, but never, as yet, has the police court been reached.

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Howard
3097-117.

Colvill,
6650-1.

Colvill,
6580.

Howard,
3059-678.

Attendance at any certified efficient school satisfies the byelaws, and therefore there is no law directly requiring a feeble-minded child to attend special classes rather than an ordinary school. Cases have sometimes arisen in which persuasion has failed to induce a parent to take his child from an ordinary school in order to send it to special classes, and General Moberly, who desires that School Authorities should be empowered to enforce such transference, mentions that a test case was attempted in London, with a view of seeing whether the attendance of a child at special classes could be compulsorily enforced by refusing admission at ordinary schools and then prosecuting for non-attendance. As, however, the child has been admitted into a voluntary school, the point has not yet been decided.

Moberly,
3716-33.

POWERS OF GUARDIANS.

18. As we are limited by our terms of reference to considering the case of children not under the charge of guardians, it may be well to state how far the powers of guardians extend in regard to feeble-minded children. They are in the main the same as those which used to be exercised by guardians towards blind and deaf children, namely, under 25 & 26 Vict. c. 43., to maintain in certified schools, and under 42 & 43 Vict. c. 54., to subscribe towards maintenance in uncertified homes. It is a condition of such assistance that the parent should be destitute, a condition which, in the case of blind and deaf children dealt with under these Acts, was interpreted as meaning not necessarily a pauper in receipt of relief, but unable to pay for the child's maintenance and education in the school. A similar interpretation would no doubt apply in the case of feeble-minded children, and thus the powers of guardians are of wide application. By a special enactment, 4 & 5 Will. IV. c. 76. s. 56, parents of blind and deaf children were relieved from disability as paupers upon receipt of this assistance from the guardians, but this provision was not extended to the case of feeble-minded children, and the parents of feeble-minded children are rendered paupers by the receipt of assistance from the guardians towards the children's maintenance or education. The certified homes at present are few, and the exercise by the guardians of their powers to maintain and educate feeble-minded children is by no means general or frequent; but with the increase of the supply of homes by voluntary agency the demand on the part of the guardians is increasing, and we may refer to Miss Cooper's evidence as showing the position in regard to the present and prospective development of voluntary effort in this direction.

Knollys,
7039.

Knollys,
7111-4.

Royal
Commission
on the Blind,
&c. Report,
para. 31.

Knollys,
7158.

Knollys,
7202-7.

Cooper,
3293-544.

The powers of the guardians to send blind or deaf children to school were repealed by the Blind and Deaf Children Act, when these duties were entrusted to School Authorities. Defective children stand, however, in a different position; for blind and deaf children were not found in public elementary schools, and were either sent to school by the guardians, or not sent at all, whereas defective children are sent to public elementary schools, and are only as an exception educated by the guardians. Further, the boundary line between the feeble-minded child and the imbecile has no counterpart in the case of blind and deaf children, and might, if the powers of

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guardians were repealed as to feeble-minded children, but not as to imbeciles, give rise to difficulties. We think, therefore, that the special reasons which existed for repealing the powers of guardians as to blind and deaf children do not exist as regards feeble-minded children, and we recommend that these powers should not be repealed.

LAW RELATING TO IMBECILES.

19. A brief statement of the law relating to imbeciles will show how it affects the measures necessary to be taken for children feeble-minded but not imbecile. By section 241 of the Lunacy Act, 1890, the local authorities under that Act have power to build asylums for idiots and imbeciles, and the Commissioners in Lunacy, in a report quoted in Mr. Knollys's evidence, give particulars as to the extent to which this power has been used, and suggest that county councils should more generally take the matter in hand. Power to make provision for the care and training of imbecile children is also vested in the poor law authorities (in London, the Metropolitan Asylums Board); their power is limited to children requiring relief; and can only be exercised with the consent of the parent, except where the child is not under proper control, or is cruelly treated or neglected. The provision by the guardians for an imbecile child is a form of relief, which renders the parent a pauper and deprives him of all franchise rights. No definition is given in any statute as to the amount of destitution which justifies the guardians in providing for imbecile children, or as to the degree of mental deficiency to be adopted as a standard. The former point is left to the discretion of the guardians (subject to the control of the Local Government Board) which will extend so far as to include cases of parents not receiving relief in any other form, and paying a certain amount weekly towards the maintenance of the child, such payments however not avoiding the pauper disqualification, even if they should amount to the whole cost of the child's maintenance. The degree of mental deficiency adopted as a standard depends upon the interpretation of the word "imbecile" which may be adopted by the medical officer of the guardians on whose certificate the child is provided for.

20. Apart from provision made by public authorities, some small provision for idiots and imbeciles is also made by voluntary institutions, a list of which will be found in Dr. Fletcher Beach's evidence. The form of certificate for admission to such institution is laid down by the Idiots Act, 1886, and will be found in Dr. Shuttleworth's evidence. No definition is there given as to the degree of mental deficiency to be adopted as a standard.

21. School Authorities are to some extent affected by the absence of adequate provision for imbeciles. Until some legal provision has been made for an imbecile child, such child has not been legally ascertained to be imbecile; and the School Authority may well feel difficulty in refusing to attempt to provide for the child's training in school. When the child is found to be unfit for any form of teaching or training which the School Authority can give, the exclusion of the child as an imbecile is often rendered more difficult by the want of any suitable course which can be suggested to the parent, except that he should apply to the guardians and become a pauper. Thus the absence of other suitable provision has sometimes led to the retention of imbecile children in the special classes, where they are out of place; just as the want of suitable provision for feeble-minded children has also caused feeble-minded children to be certified as imbeciles. As it may be argued that no child is imbecile until he has been found by proper authority to be so, it becomes necessary to decide how far down the scale of mental deficiency the duties of School Authorities extend. If there were complete provision for imbecile children the principle might be laid down that all children not provided for as imbeciles come within the province of the School Authority. But under existing circumstances any such principle would at once throw upon School Authorities the duty of providing for a large number of uncertified imbeciles, for whom day classes are unsuitable, and for whom institutions would have to be found similar to those for certified imbeciles, where the care and training would differ very greatly from anything which is at present given in public elementary schools, or understood as education within the meaning of the Education Acts. Desirable as it may be that some provision should be made by public authority for imbecile children, yet we do not think that such work could properly be undertaken by School Authorities unless entrusted to them by legislation after careful inquiry. Whether such legislation would be advisable, does not come within our terms of reference, as we are concerned only with children not imbecile; but we desire to state clearly that, under present circumstances, it is impossible for School Authorities to act

Defective Children.

upon the principle that all children not provided for as imbecile come within the province of the School Authority. School Authorities must, therefore, lay down their own boundary of imbecility, beyond which they cannot, under present circumstances, undertake the education of children. The practical test of imbecility must, for school purposes, be incapacity to receive proper benefit from instruction in the special classes. Although there will be some feeble-minded children for whom we shall recommend that School Authorities may properly provide temporarily in training homes, with a view of better fitting them to earn their living; yet broadly, and for practical purposes, all children who are too deficient to receive proper benefit from the special day classes, must be regarded as imbecile, that is to say, as lying outside the province of School Authorities as at present constituted.

Discrimination.

DISCRIMINATION OF FEEBLE-MINDED CHILDREN FROM NON-EDUCABLE CHILDREN.

22. We now proceed therefore to describe the test which, when applied by a properly constituted authority, furnishes in our opinion the "best practical means of discriminating between the educable and non-educable classes of feeble-minded children." If the child has been sent to school, and admitted there, he will, on leaving the infant school, or on completing six months in a school for older scholars, be brought up in due course for examination by the medical officer according to a procedure which we shall presently describe in detail. But, as regards children who are not sent to school, we have seen that their discrimination at present rests with either the school attendance committee or the school attendance officer. Neither of these is properly qualified to judge whether a child is imbecile or not, this being a question upon which we are satisfied from the evidence brought before us that medical knowledge is indispensable. The production of certificates from the family doctors of the children would be of little assistance, for no guarantee can be given that the practitioners who sign such certificates have the requisite special knowledge, or that they adopt a uniform standard, or that they regard the matter from the point of view of the necessity of securing the proper administration of the Education Acts. Dr. Warner alludes to the existence of unsatisfactory certificates, and Dr. Colman has seen cases where medical certificates, rightly given, were wrongly called in question by school board officers. We recommend that every child who, by reason of any physical or mental defect is not sent to school, should be brought before a medical officer to be appointed by the School Authority; and that all the available information having been submitted to such medical officer, he should be responsible for recommending the School Authority either to require the attendance of the child at a suitable school, or to exempt the child from school attendance as an imbecile. His certificate should be in the form of declaring that he has examined the child, and has found it to be (1) capable, or (2) incapable of receiving proper benefit from the instruction (a) in ordinary schools, or (b) in special classes for feeble-minded children: and in the event of a child being classed as 2 (b), that is to say imbecile, the certificate should contain a schedule stating, for convenience of record and revision, the facts observed, and the facts communicated by others, as in the case of a certificate under the Lunacy Act. We are inclined to think that, if this course were adopted, magistrates would generally be guided by the result of this examination, and would support the School Authority. Furthermore, if the parent is aggrieved by the decision, he should be allowed an appeal to the Education Department, who must in the last resort decide whether the School Authority is to be compelled to provide for the child's education; and for the decision of such questions the Department should have at their disposal the services of a Medical Adviser. No school should be allowed to refuse admission to a child as imbecile except on the certificate of the medical officer of the School Authority. The effect of these regulations, if carried out, will be that no child will be absent from school as "imbecile" without having been so certified by the medical officer of the School Authority, who will have a complete record of all cases so excluded; and such records should be carefully preserved.

23. We have invited the opinion of Mr. Loch and Mr. Mann as to whether the certificate so given could with advantage be used as a certificate for the purpose of admitting children to Darenth Schools for Imbecile Children, or to certified institutions for imbeciles, or to branches of asylums set aside for imbeciles under the Lunacy Acts. As the process of obtaining admission to Darenth by means of the certificate of the medical officer of the guardians appears often to be difficult and roundabout; and as

Shuttleworth, 64-71.
Beach, 103-10,
343-9.
Kerr, 437.
Warner, 987.
Harris, 1133.
Walmsley,
4199-200.
Ferrier, 5217.
Colman, 6182-3.

Beach, 194-5.
Warner, 910-13.
Colman, 6155.
Moberly, 3674.
Warner, 910-13.
Colman, 6150-1.

Beach, 160-1.

Loch, 5525-26, 5583-8.
Mann, 5891-908.

Moberly, 3700-2.

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Sewell,
6324-30,
6433.

it is desirable that the authorities dealing with imbeciles should take the same view of imbecility as the School Authority, and that no children should be left to whom both authorities refuse provision, we offer this suggestion as a means of properly adjusting the frontier line between the two authorities.

DISCRIMINATION OF FEEBLE-MINDED CHILDREN FROM ORDINARY CHILDREN.

24. The discrimination "between those children who may properly be taught in ordinary elementary schools by ordinary methods and those who should be taught in special schools" is the first point to be considered in connexion with the special schools, or, as they are more generally termed, special classes.

25. No special provision is made, nor do we recommend that any should be made, for feeble-minded children under the age of seven. Until that age all children may be treated alike in the infant schools, with such individual modifications of method to suit special cases as are already used by all good infant mistresses accustomed to variations shown by infants of that age in their development. If infants under seven years of age were admitted to special classes, the discrimination would be, in many cases, so doubtful that it would have to be revised at a later age, and a great deal of valuable teaching would be unnecessarily expended in premature endeavour to correct defects, due to some natural delay in development. There are, doubtless, children whose feeble-mindedness can with certainty be diagnosed at a less age than seven years, but there are not many who can derive any great advantage from special training before that age; and the training of an ordinary infant school with its kindergarten exercises is found to be productive of more or less benefit to feeble-minded infants. All feeble-minded children not imbecile should therefore, as at present, attend infant schools in the ordinary course; and their defects will either be observed in the infant school, or when they are moved into the schools for older scholars and fail to make progress there. It is at that point that machinery is required for discriminating them from those children who may properly be taught in ordinary elementary schools by ordinary methods; and there are two stages in this discrimination, firstly, the preliminary selection of children for admission to special classes, and, secondly, the examination of such children.

Special Classes.

SELECTION OF CHILDREN AS CANDIDATES FOR ADMISSION TO SPECIAL CLASSES.

26. In Bradford, the medical officer appears to have made a preliminary inspection of children in all the schools; in other places the first selection of children for examination, with a view to their admission to special classes, is left to the teachers of ordinary schools. A few teachers, however, think that defective children do not exist, and amongst others the standard applied is not uniform. In Germany, the usual practice appears to be to send for examination children who have remained in one class for two years and are then unfit for promotion. We recommend that the preliminary selection should be made by the teachers of the ordinary schools, and that the head teachers of infant schools shall be required to submit the names of any children who, being in their charge, and being over 7 years of age, are, in their opinion, fit for special classes rather than for ordinary schools; and similarly that the head teachers of schools for older scholars should be required to submit the names of children who, having been in their charge for not less than six months, are, in their opinion, fit for special classes rather than for ordinary schools. In each case, one person only should be held responsible for making the nomination, and such person should be personally familiar with the child, and able from first-hand knowledge to give an account of the child's capacity and peculiarities. Nomination forms should be supplied by the School Authority to the head teachers of all schools, both board and voluntary, and due notice should also be sent to them of the time and place when the children nominated will be examined. If Her Majesty's Inspector finds in any school children whom he considers ought to be sent to be examined, with a view of admission to special classes, and if the managers fail to send such children to such examination, he should report unfavourably on the organisation of the school, and make a statement of the case to the Education Department.

27. The teacher who is responsible for presenting a child for examination with a view to its admission to a special class, is instructed in London and in Bristol to fill

up a form stating details as to the character, capacity, and attainments of the child. It is important that this form should be well filled up, as a guarantee that the teacher presenting the child has properly made himself acquainted with these points, and can show *prima facie* justification for his selection of the child. Such a record is important in assisting those persons who are to decide as to the child's admission to the special class, and it serves a secondary purpose afterwards when the child has been admitted into the class, as being the starting point of the records kept as to the child's development in the class. Upon the whole, the manner in which the form is filled up is satisfactory, but the teachers of special classes, in some cases, remark that the statements made on the form are inaccurate, and, in other cases, that they are indefinite.

A terse statement of all that is known about the child's powers should be made, and made, not in general terms, but in the fewest possible words, and should be a statement of facts, such as the number of letters which the child knows, the sums it can do, the peculiarities of its conduct and so forth. We subjoin a form which we recommend for universal use, being slightly modified from that in use in London.

Having filled up this form, the teacher should accompany the child to the examination with a view to its admission to a special class.

FORM A.—To be filled up by Teacher of Ordinary School sending Child to be Examined with a view to Admission to Special Class.

- | | |
|--|---------|
| 1. Name of child and address | - - - - |
| 2. Age | - - - - |
| 3. How long has the child attended school? | - - - - |
| 4. What is the appearance of the child—stupid or bright? | - - - - |
| 5. Is the child: 1. Obedient; 2. Mischievous; 3. Spiteful? | - - - - |
| 6. Are the habits of the child correct and cleanly? | - - - - |
| 7. Are the propensities of the child peculiar or dangerous? | - - - - |
| 8. What is the mental capacity of the child? | - - - - |
| 1. Observation. | - - - - |
| 2. Imitation. | - - - - |
| 3. Attention. | - - - - |
| 4. Memory. | - - - - |
| 5. Reading. | - - - - |
| 6. Writing. | - - - - |
| 7. Calculation. | - - - - |
| 8. Colour. | - - - - |
| 9. Special tastes. | - - - - |
| 9. Is the child affectionate or otherwise? | - - - - |
| 10. Has the child any moral sense? | - - - - |
| 11. Have you any other information bearing on the case? | - - - - |
| 12. Has the child been in regular attendance, if not, state why? | - - - - |

Signed
School
Department
Date

N.B.—In filling up this Form avoid general terms such as "fair," "moderate," &c., and say in the simplest terms what the scholar can do.

ADMISSION OF CHILDREN TO SPECIAL CLASSES.

28. Different systems are adopted in different places for conducting the examination of children with a view to their admission to special classes. In Bradford, the examination is made by a medical officer. In Brighton, in Bristol, and in London, a medical examination is also held; but in Leicester an examination is held by the Inspector of the Board, and in Birmingham, by the teacher of the special class. Many witnesses have laid stress upon the necessity of a medical examination of the children before being admitted to special classes. With this opinion we agree, and we think that the examination of the children by a medical officer should be a necessary condition of the recognition of the classes by the Department, and that the recommendation to the School Authority (with whom must necessarily rest the responsibility of acting upon the recommendation) should be made by the medical officer.

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Children.
(Special
Classes.)

Whenman,
2700-7.
Appendix
B., 9.

Harrison,
7264.

Warner, 895.

Ferrier,
5339.

Kerr, 414-8.

Aldis, 3125,
3138, 3147.
Moberly,
3551.

Hodge, 7406.

See ante,
paragraph 22.

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Ferrier, 5232-13, 5271, 5338-18, 5351, 5355-7, 5371-2.
Whenman, 2685-7.
Appendix B., 8 (a).

Kerr, 443-5, 454-7.
Whenman, 2892-6, Howard, 3055-9.
Major, 4627-9.
Martin, 4966-8.
Du Port, 6909-10.

In deciding whether a child is feeble-minded or not, Dr. Ferrier has stated that three elements are necessary—the opinion of the teacher, the life history of the child, and the medical examination. With this view, most of the witnesses who have come before us agree. Experience, however, shows that it is not always possible to get an accurate statement of the life history of a feeble-minded child from its parents, especially on the first occasion of inquiry. When the children have been admitted to the special classes, and have begun to make progress, the teachers of these classes are often able to ascertain the life history of the children from the parents or other relatives, where the improvement made by the child inspires confidence in the teacher. Opportunity should, however, be given to the parent to be present at the examination of the child before admission to the special class. Direct benefit to the child may in some cases result from the presence of the parent, for it often turns out that the child who is believed to be feeble-minded really suffers from curable defects in eyesight or hearing. In such a case the medical officer is able to impress upon the parent the desirability of having the child treated for the defects in question. The School Authority should notify to the parent the time and place of the examination; and it is also desirable that, in addition to an official notification, some personal explanation should be given by a visitor, with a view to smoothing the way for the proposed change. In the majority of cases, parents are willing to send their children to the special classes, if they clearly see that it will be for their benefit; but, at the same time, a certain prejudice exists against the classes, which are popularly known as the “silly schools,” and this prejudice, though it tends to disappear, must still be reckoned with. Probably the personal explanation will come best from the teacher of the school which the child has been attending, for such teacher often has the confidence of the parents; but, failing this, it will be well that the parent should be personally approached by some other visitor.

The Education Department recently ordered that in London these examinations, which are held at fixed periods, should also be attended by Her Majesty's Inspectors. It is desirable that the Inspector should be present in order that he may be acquainted with the details of the cases from the first. It is also usual for the teacher of the special class, who is in future to be responsible for the children, to be present at the examination, and it is desirable that this practice also should be continued, in order that this teacher's acquaintance with the child may date from the first examination, and that any necessary questions may be asked from the teacher who brings the child, and from the doctor who examines it; and her opinion is also likely to be of value in forming a judgment as to whether the child is a suitable candidate for admission to the special class.

29. There are, therefore, four persons who should be present at the examination of children with a view to their admission to special classes, namely, the teacher of the school where the child has been, the medical officer of the School Authority, Her Majesty's Inspector, and the teacher of the special class; and a fifth, namely the parent, should be given an opportunity of being present.

The medical officer should receive from the teacher presenting the child a form duly filled up, containing a statement of the child's attainments, and he, after conference with the two teachers and the Inspector, should make his recommendation to the School Authority. The form of the recommendation should be as follows: “I certify that A. B., not being imbecile, is, by reason of (1) physical or (2) mental defect, incapable of receiving proper benefit from the instruction in ordinary schools, but capable of receiving benefit from instruction in special classes.” If the certificate is based upon physical defect, the precise nature of that physical defect should be stated. As regards those children whose admission to the special classes he does not recommend, the medical officer should state the reason of such rejection, viz., either that the child is not incapable of receiving instruction in ordinary schools, or that it is not capable of receiving benefit from special classes.

If the above procedure be adopted, we anticipate no great difficulty either in arriving at a decision or in enforcing it, but in doubtful cases there should be an appeal to the Education Department, who are, in the last resort, obliged to decide whether it is reasonable to refuse a child admission to an ordinary school or to a special class; and for the proper performance of the duty of deciding these appeals, the Department should have at their disposal the services of a Medical Adviser.

RECORDS TO BE MADE OF THE TIME OF ADMISSION, AND AFTERWARDS, AS TO THE CHILD'S STATE AND ATTAINMENTS.

30. We have already given a form to be filled in by teachers of the first school attended by the child. This form should be copied, as at present is the practice, into a record book kept at the special class. The medical officer, at the time of the examination of the child, should also make a record as to the facts observed, and this also should be copied into the same record book, and should be of assistance in guiding the teacher of the special class. At present, no form is in use for these records. It is desirable that they should be uniform, (1) for statistical purposes, (2) in order to show whether the standard adopted is the same in different places, (3) in order to facilitate inspection by anyone charged with that duty on behalf of the Education Department, and (4) in order to support the decision in the event of appeal. We do not here suggest the precise form in which the medical records should be made, as this would probably be better left to medical advice.

31. With regard to the record of family history, we subjoin a form drawn up almost exactly as it is in use in London. If the parent attends the examination of the child, it may perhaps then be filled up, but the responsibility for the due filling up of this form should rest with the teacher of the special class, and such teacher should be expected to fill up the form to the best of her ability within six months of the admission of the child.

FORM B.—Particulars of Family History of Child admitted to Special Class.

1. What is the bodily and mental condition of the parents?
2. Are they temperate or otherwise?
3. Family History:—

(Living) Present Age.	Present state of Health.	Age at date of Death.	Cause of Death.	Year of Death.
Father, alive, aged -		Father, died, aged -		
Mother, alive, aged -		Mother, died, aged -		
Brothers, { alive, aged -		Brothers, { died, aged -		
{ alive, aged -		{ died, aged -		
{ alive, aged -		{ died, aged -		
Sisters, { alive, aged -		Sisters, { died, aged -		
{ alive, aged -		{ died, aged -		
{ alive, aged -		{ died, aged -		

4. Has any near relative, dead or living, suffered from Insanity, Fits, Consumption, Scrofula, or any other hereditary disease?
5. When was the mental deficiency of the child first observed?
6. To what cause is this mental deficiency attributed?
7. Is the child subject to Epileptic or other Fits?
8. From what illness has the child suffered?
9. Has the child received any special treatment? If so, where?
10. Is the child improving or otherwise?
11. When did the child commence to walk?
12. When did the child commence to talk?

Name and address of person giving the above information

Date

32. Records of the child's progress in the special class are kept with varying degrees of completeness. These, too, should also be uniform. We, therefore, subjoin a form which we issued during the course of our inquiries, and which appears to have been successful in attaining its object. There should be a book of these forms for each class.

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FORM C.—Particulars as to Progress of Child in Special Class.

Name of School
Name of Scholar
Date of Birth
Date of Admission to Special School

	PROFICIENCY IN				YOUR OPINION AS TO			Number of Attendances at Special School.
	Reading.	Writing.	Number.	Hand-work.	General Intelligence, Knowledge of Form, Colour, &c.	Character and Conduct.	Health.	
At time of admission								—
6 months after admission.								For 1st six months.
1 year after admission.								For 2nd six months.
1½ years after admission.								For 3rd six months.
2 years after admission.								For 4th six months.
2½ years after admission.								For 5th six months.
3 years after admission.								For 6th six months.
3½ years after admission.								For 7th six months.
4 years after admission.								For 8th six months.
4½ years after admission.								For 9th six months.
5 years after admission.								For 10th six months.

N.B.—In filling up this sheet, avoid, as far as possible, general terms such as "very fair," "moderate," &c., but say in the simplest words possible what the scholar can do.

Signed

Teacher of class.

33. Medical records of the children should also be kept, and it should be a rule that a regular medical examination should be held of every class every 12 months by the medical officer, and of individual children, at other times, when necessary. Teachers of special classes are aware of the necessity of studying the physical defects of the children, and suiting the instruction and discipline accordingly.* This is a matter upon which advice should be given to the teachers by the medical officer of the School Authority, both upon the admission of the children and at the periodical inspections. The teachers should be guided by the advice, and should record the treatment adopted in accordance therewith. Her Majesty's Inspector, on visiting a class, should see that all these various records have been kept up to date.

SCHOOL AGE.

Harris, 1038. Whenman, 2698-9, 2866-75. Ferrier, 5339.

34. Children are admissible at seven years of age at all the special classes, and the greater number enter at the age of eight. Dr. Harris prefers eight to seven as the age of admission. The teachers of the Hugh Myddelton School would prefer five. Dr. Ferrier recommends seven. We recommend that children should not be admitted at less than seven years of age to the special classes, and we consider that the present practice should be retained.

Ferrier, 5329-30.

35. As to the age of retention in special classes, a few are retained over 14, and it seems to be agreed that children ought not necessarily to be removed on reaching that

* See Appendix I.

age. Opinions, however, differ as to whether feeble-minded children should, as a rule, be retained up to the age of 16 in the special classes as at present constituted, being mixed classes under women teachers. Dr. Kerr and Dr. Martin think they should, and General Moberly and Mr. Chard appear to desire the retention of the child in the special class till 16, and Miss Whenman, in some cases.

On the other hand, Dr. Harris thinks that if, at 14, the children are not fit for the world, they should, as a rule, go to institutions. We think that all children may be kept in the classes till 14, and that their retention till 16 should depend upon the decision of the managers made upon the recommendation of the medical officer, and should be conditional upon the arrangements being suitable for the older children. The rules here suggested as to age resemble those in force in Germany.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE.

36. The state of the law on this subject has already been explained to be the same as for other children. Two questions appear to arise in connexion with the further provision now contemplated for feeble-minded children: firstly, whether a child ought to be compelled, against the wish of the parent, to attend a special class, rather than the ordinary school; secondly, whether the age of compulsory attendance for feeble-minded children should, in any case, be raised to 16. To the former point is relevant the evidence received as to the willingness or otherwise of the parent to use special classes. Often there is at first some shyness and even aversion. This is overcome in most cases by persuasion, and the parents generally approve the classes, but care is required in approaching them on the subject. We think that, following the precedent of the Blind and Deaf Children Act, attendance at an ordinary certified efficient school should not be considered sufficient compliance with the byelaws in places where special classes are available, and that the School Authorities should be empowered to compel a child's attendance at a special class, where available.

37. Opinions differ as to raising the age of compulsory school attendance for feeble-minded children, to 16. Some witnesses, such as Mr. Chard, Miss Verrall, Miss Whenman, Mr. Martin, and Dr. Warner, do not think it desirable, or think that it would be difficult to enforce attendance up to the higher age. Others, such as Dr. Beach, Dr. Kerr, and Dr. Harris, think it necessary or desirable. General Moberly recommends that universal attendance up to the age of 16 should not be compulsory, but that the School Authority should have a discretionary power of compelling attendance up to that age. We recommend the adoption of General Moberly's proposal.

ORGANISATION AND STAFFING OF SPECIAL CLASSES.

38. The special classes are organised in many different ways, ranging from the use of an ordinary class-room of an ordinary school under an uncertificated assistant teacher, to separate buildings, with separate playgrounds and offices, under certificated teachers. In the event of any grant being proposed, with or without legislation, for special classes, it is desirable to lay down the minimum amount of separate provision which is necessary in order to constitute a special class.

A special class may be defined as one so certified by the Education Department. For the certification of it the following conditions should be regarded as essential:—That the children should be admitted by the procedure already laid down; that they should be periodically examined by the medical officer; that they should have a room of their own suitably furnished (a term which will be defined hereafter) and used exclusively by them, and a special teacher of their own having no other day-school duties; that the children should not be mixed with ordinary children for any lessons; that there must be managers specially appointed and a special time table; that the principal teacher must be certificated, unless the class is for fewer than 10 children; and that in any case the staff shall satisfy the requirements of the Department.

SIZE OF SPECIAL CLASSES.

39. The classes range from 12 at Leicester to 38 at Abbey Street, London. There is a consensus of opinion that not more than 20 children can properly be taught at one time by one teacher. We think that the maximum number of children to a teacher should be on the following scale:—If there is one teacher at a class or centre, 20 on the roll; if two teachers at a centre, 20 on the roll for each class; but if there is a third teacher, 30 may be allowed to be on the roll in the third class, and in the fourth and fifth, if any, these being the highest classes in the school.

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Moberly,
3615-6.
Kerr, 485.
Martin,
5029.
Whenman,
2844.
Harris,
1100-5,
1147-57,
1184-90.
Appendix A,
5-6.

Kerr, 443-3,
454-7.
Whenman,
2892-6,
Howard,
3055-9.
Major, 4627-9.
Martin, 4996-8,
5067-9.

Warner, 932.
Chard, 1405-
18, 1425-30,
1486-90.
Verrall,
2366-7.
Whenman,
2841-5.
Martin, 5029-
43, 5052-5,
5119-24.
Beach, 291-9.
Kerr, 538-42.
Harris, 1233-8,
Moberly,
3615-9.

Appendix B, 11.
Beach, 182.
Dale, 2486.
Hoatson, 2064.
Loch, 5424.
Price, 6556-7.
Martin, 5006.
Synge, 7625.
Hodge, 7461.
Harrison,
7342-5.

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Children,
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Classes.)*

Price, 6551,
6561-72.

MIXTURE OF THE SEXES.

40. Nearly all the special classes are mixed; and in Germany, in towns where, for ordinary children, there are no mixed schools, the special classes are mixed.

All the witnesses, except one, see no objections to mixed classes for children up to 14 years of age. We see no objections to mixed classes, and it will, of course, be understood that, for children over 14, regard must be had to the question of the proper supervision of the two sexes in considering whether the provision is suitable.

TEACHERS' QUALIFICATIONS.

41. All the teachers are certificated in London, Brighton, Leicester, Bradford, Bristol. Uncertificated assistants are employed at Birmingham. The teachers have generally been chosen from infant schoolmistresses with a knowledge of kindergarten work, and have attended some existing special class for a time in order to learn the work, but have received no other special training. Only women are in this country so employed. Subject to the continued recognition of the uncertificated teachers at present employed, we think that, at every class of 10 children, or more, on the roll, the principal teacher should be certificated, and that only in cases where two classes or more are taught at one centre should assistant teachers be employed. Uncertificated assistants should be persons qualified under Article 50 of the Code, or holding a Froebel certificate.

Verrall,
2360-5.
Martin,
5051.
Whenman,
2980-2.
Dale,
2590-2.
App. B., 15.
App. B., 11.

42. Some evidence has been received as to the employment of pupil-teachers in special classes. Miss Verrall and Mr. Martin approve, but Miss Whenman disapproves; also Miss Dale, who thinks that girls should not specialise so young; and Miss Poynton points out that the work is too depressing. Evidence is also given by the teachers as to the repulsive and immoral habits of some of the children. We agree with those witnesses who disapprove the employment of pupil-teachers, and we recommend that no one under the age of 21 should be recognised as a teacher in special classes.

43. In cases where there is a class with less than 10 children on the roll, the Department should not necessarily require a certificated teacher, but might accept a teacher holding the Froebel certificate, or qualified under Article 50. The recognition of teachers for this special work should depend upon the approval of Her Majesty's Inspector from year to year, and it should be understood that the withholding of such approval should in no way cast a slur upon the teacher's qualification for teaching in ordinary schools, and in no way prejudice the teacher in the official records of the Department.

SPECIAL TRAINING OF TEACHERS.

Ferrier, 6077-
9, 6114-7.
6152, 6188-8.
Warner, 715-6,
804, 834, 884-9,
920, 978-85,
994.
Du Port,
6915-21, 6993-
5.

Van Praagh,
5647-59,
5684-9.
Galton, 5978-
82.

Colman, 6077-
9, 6114-7,
6154, 6183.
Price, 6489-92,
6530-2, 6543-5,
6561.

44. At present there is no system of special training. The opinion is strongly held that it is desirable. Dr. Warner recommends that the teachers of special classes should receive special training in the observation of defective children and the treatment of defects by suitable physical exercises. Mr. Du Port thinks that physiological training is necessary, and also training in Sloyd, laundry, cookery, and dress-cutting. Mr. Van Praagh recommends special training, which he says resembles that required for deaf children. Sir Douglas Galton recommends special training, and suggests that the physio-psychological laboratory about to be opened at University College might be utilised for the purpose. Dr. Colman is of opinion that training is essential, and that lectures are not sufficient, and Mr. Price suggests that the teachers should have six months at an institution.

We agree with these witnesses that special training is desirable, and we recommend that the Department shall encourage the provision of such training. Until the means for giving such training exist, the supply of teachers would be entirely cut off if the Department made it a necessary condition of the employment of teachers in special classes.

The Department should, however, look favourably upon any practical proposal which might be brought forward by persons offering a good system of training and asking for its recognition. Such training cannot well be given to ordinary students at training colleges, as it is required for only a very small proportion of the teachers, and even for these the special training should be added to the other qualifications which the ordinary training in the training college gives. The special training should if possible, be given, not only after the teacher is certificated, but after she has had some experience in

ordinary schools. It should embrace: (1) such general school training and instruction in kindergarten methods as is required for infant school teaching, including lectures on observation of children; (2) a course of physiology and school hygiene with practical demonstrations; (3) gymnastics, on some rational system; (4) instruction in articulation and voice production; (5) Sloyd and other manual occupations; (6) two months' practical work under a qualified teacher in special classes.

Any system which would satisfy the above conditions would be well worth the support and recognition of the Department; but, at the present time, we do not see our way to suggest any further requirement being made by the Department than this: that, before any teacher is recognised as a head teacher, she should have at least two months' experience in a class approved by the Department, and that each teacher should require annual approval by the Department, as already explained.

INSTRUCTION IN SPECIAL CLASSES.

School Hours.

45. The hours vary from four and a half to five a day, the hours in London being five hours a day for five days a week, with an interval of two hours in the middle of the day, and half an hour being given out of the five hours to recreation. In Germany, 27 hours a week are spread over six days. The undue prolongation of the hours for feeble-minded children must carefully be avoided, and we recommend that the hours during which the school is open should not exceed two and a half in the morning and two in the afternoon; that a proper interval of at least one and a half hours should be interposed between the morning and afternoon meeting, and that the Department should accept as sufficient for the purposes of a grant any attendance at secular instruction for not less than one and a half hours, which is the present standard in infant schools.

Appendix
A., 9.

Time Table.

46. The length of lessons varies from 15 minutes in Leicester to 25 or 30 minutes in London. For lessons other than varied occupations the time should not exceed 30 minutes, including the time spent in giving out the apparatus. The customary plan which is to be recommended is to alternate brain work with hand work; to take the more difficult brain work in the morning, and to give short physical exercises between all lessons. Such exercises may be taken in the time assigned to the lessons on the time table.

Major, 4611.
Dale, 2515.
Whenman,
2821.

47. Several teachers state that they do not have sufficient freedom in departing from the time table when desirable, as, for instance, in cases of atmospheric disturbances which appear to have peculiar effect on feeble-minded children. It should be generally understood that there is complete freedom in departing from the time table whenever it is reasonable to do so, subject of course, to the fact and the reason being noted at the time in the log book.

Whenman,
2811-6.
Appendix
B., 15.

48. As to the distribution of the time between the various lessons, the time table of London is fairly typical, and shows the following analysis of a week's lessons:—

Scripture	-	-	-	-	-	-	3 hours 5 minutes.
Number	-	-	-	-	-	-	2 hours.
Singing	-	-	-	-	-	-	2 hours 15 minutes.
Play	-	-	-	-	-	-	2 hours 30 minutes.
Object lessons	-	-	-	-	-	-	2 hours.
Writing	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 hour 30 minutes.
Reading	-	-	-	-	-	-	2 hours 30 minutes.
Occupations	-	-	-	-	-	-	5 hours.
Recitation	-	-	-	-	-	-	30 minutes.
Drawing	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 hour.
Conversational lessons	-	-	-	-	-	-	30 minutes.

Total - 23 hours 30 minutes.

*Defective
Children,
(Special
Classes.)*

Defective
Children.
(Special
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A rather greater proportion of the time in Germany is given to reading, writing, and arithmetic, which occupy twelve hours in the week as against four or four and a half given to manual instruction, including needlework.

Some of the witnesses have recommended that, in the English special classes, a greater proportion of the time should be given to manual instruction. Dr. Kerr would give ten or twelve hours out of twenty-five. Dr. Walmsley would give half the time. Mr. Du Port would make manual instruction the key of the whole training. On the other hand, Dr. Harris thinks that for younger children the time given at present to hand work is sufficient. We recommend that it should be a condition of the grant that not less than six hours a week should be given to suitable manual instruction, and, subject to the distribution of time being rearranged accordingly, the London time table may be taken as a good example.

Subjects of Instruction.

49. Being worked at present under the rules for infant schools, some subjects are compulsory in the special classes, and some are optional. We recommend that the following subjects shall be compulsory in order to obtain any grant that may be proposed:—reading, writing, and arithmetic, drawing, singing, object lessons, suitable occupations, needlework for girls, and suitable manual instruction for older scholars, with sufficient recreation. If these are provided for, other subjects may be introduced if desired.

Elementary Instruction.

50. It will be seen from the distribution of time, and the list of compulsory subjects which we have recommended that we do not desire to see the three elementary subjects of reading, writing, and arithmetic thrust into the background. The constant employment of children in manual occupations does not appear likely to lead to the best results, nor are there any instances in which any such system is at work, although, doubtless, some of the occupations, such as cookery and laundry work, may offer advantageous opportunities for the incidental introduction of elementary instruction. Officers of the institutions for idiots point out that “a knowledge of reading and writing is of great importance as opening up sources of information and recreation, and affording means of keeping up communication with friends. Most imbeciles derive great pleasure from receiving and writing letters.” Miss Hoatson also finds that reading is the most interesting part of the mental work to her scholars who are imbeciles, and the three elementary subjects must also be for feeble-minded children a most important means, if properly applied, of cultivating their faculties and assisting them to live in the ordinary world under ordinary conditions.

The importance of concrete teaching of arithmetic and of adapting various methods of teaching children to read in a manner calculated to excite their interest is sufficiently recognised; we desire also to notice with special approval the use of the shop lesson, which has been mentioned, as an aid to the teaching of arithmetic.

As to the standard reached in the elementary subjects, the Teachers' Appendix shows that in more than half of the classes, the most advanced scholars are doing work which is usually done in the First Standard of an ordinary school, though in about 16 or 17 classes, work equivalent to the Second or Third Standard is being done. It must be remembered however that these classes include children physically, but not mentally, defective.

Manual Instruction.

51. Manual instruction is at present the least satisfactory point in the instruction given in the special classes; but the evidence shows that those who are responsible for the classes are alive to this deficiency and intend to remedy it when circumstances permit. For the younger children of both sexes, kindergarten occupations form a satisfactory preparation for more advanced manual training, but a proper system requires that this should be completed by definite manual instruction for older children and for both sexes separately, devised with a view both to its educational value and to fitting the children for supporting themselves in after life.

It may here be observed that the technical or manual instruction which may be given to blind and deaf children, and may also be extended to feeble-minded children, is not subject to the Technical Instruction Acts, and that the distinction which is

in those Acts laid down, between technical instruction and the teaching of a trade, need not be applied to the manual instruction of feeble-minded children, which should have, as one of its direct objects, the teaching of employments to children, so as to prepare them to earn wages on leaving school at the age of 16.

We have already recommended that it should be a condition of any grant that may be proposed, that suitable manual instruction shall be given to all the children. For this purpose, the manual instruction should be divided into instruction (a) for younger children of both sexes, (b) for older boys, (c) for older girls. There is no need to lay down precisely the age at which a child should pass to the instruction suitable for older children. Feeble-minded children vary greatly in the stage of development reached at any given age, and it will be sufficient to lay down a rule that every child must have manual instruction suitable for it, and that, when the child is fit for manual instruction of a more advanced kind than that provided for younger children, it should receive the manual instruction suitable for older children.

Manual Instruction for Younger Children.

52. The forms of manual instruction at present in use for younger children of both sexes are as follows:—At Bradford, knitting, building with little wooden cubes, clay-modelling, colour work; at Brighton and at Bristol, kindergarten; at Birmingham, clay-modelling, macramé, colour-work. (the occupations being changed every three months); at the Hugh Myddelton School, bead-threading and colours, and pricking outlines, macramé-work, clay-modelling and painting, paper designs and colouring. At Darent, the first forms of manual instruction for imbeciles are threading reels, pin-grasping and holding balls, putting small nails into holes, fitting pins into pin-cushions, clay-modelling, knotting and looping, colouring, paper-folding, basket-making and mat-making.

Suitable forms of manual instruction for younger scholars can readily be supplied by any teachers who have had sufficient experience of infant classes. We need only remark that, (1) the instruction must be specially suited to feeble-minded children; (2) that frequent change in the forms of instruction may be desirable; (3) that considerable freedom of choice of the fittest form for each scholar in accordance with his particular defects must be given, and, if necessary, under the guidance of medical advice; (4) that there will be, owing to these causes and owing to the greater proportion of time given to manual instruction, necessity for making a liberal provision of material.

Manual Instruction for Older Boys.

53. At Bradford, Dr. Kerr is trying to introduce wood-work. In London, wood-work instruction is given, but only in those places which are near to manual training centres; and Dr. Harris thinks that even there the time is insufficient, and he desires teaching in carpentry and joinery. In Brighton, a little carpentry is done, and Miss Verrall points out that it requires to be taught in a manner specially adapted to feeble-minded children. In Birmingham no wood-work is taught. At the Hugh Myddelton School, some basket-weaving is done. At Bristol, the introduction of wood-work is hoped for. In Norway, machine sewing and knitting, weaving, shoe-making, lace-making, and farm-work are taught. In Germany, book-binding, chair-making and *papp-werk* (or modelling in pasteboard). At Darent, mat-making, mattress-making, tailoring, shoe-making, farm-work, basket-making, and cane-seating. The officers of idiot institutions suggest basket-making, cane-seating, simple wood-carving, fret-work, shoe-making, brush-making, mat-making, joinery, and gardening, and farming where possible.

We recommend as regards the manual instruction for older boys: (1) that it shall be a necessary condition of any grant that may be proposed that suitable manual instruction shall be given to every boy for at least six hours a week; (2) that all the above-named forms of manual instruction shall be accepted as suitable by the Education Department, and that the list may be kept open for subjects to be approved by the Department; (3) that such manual instruction may be given off the premises of the school, that is to say, in manual training centres; (4) that in no case shall the feeble-minded children be taught with children not feeble-minded, and that no class for manual instruction shall exceed eight children.

It will be necessary for Her Majesty's Inspectors to look carefully at the instruction given, and to see that instructors adapt their teaching properly to the needs of the

Defective
Children.
(Special
Classes.)

Ferrier,
5329-30.

Kerr, 591.
Verrall,
2349.

Martin, 5016.

Dale, 2592.

Whenman,
2734-51.

Hoatson,
1741-2.

Kerr, 592-4.

Harris,
1224-41.

Verrall,
1349-51.

Dale, 2585.

Whenman,
2761.

Martin,
501-7.

Appendix A,
(26).

Hodge,
7525.

Hoatson,
1756, 2166-

70.

Walmsley,
4174, 4269

Appendix
C, 5.

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feeble-minded children. It may, perhaps, be found possible to tell off those instructors who are most successful in this special work, to give their time solely or chiefly to the teaching of the feeble-minded, and it will be desirable that any necessary information as to the peculiarities of the children, or the special points to which attention should be given, should be communicated by the teacher of the special classes to the giver of manual instruction. Where a special class is not situated conveniently near to a manual instruction centre, it should be required that a room, properly furnished, should be supplied on the premises of the special class.

Manual Instruction for Older Girls.

Kerr, 593.
Dale, 2596.

Du Port,
6896.

Du Port,
6883.
Appendix
A., 5.

54. Needlework, cookery, and laundry work are the forms most in use. Needlework is universal. Cookery and laundry work are not yet taught at Bradford nor at Brighton. They are in future to be taught at Birmingham. They are not taught at Leicester nor at Bristol. In London, cookery and laundry work are taught to the defective girls where the special classes are near to the centres. Mr. Du Port suggests wood-work for the girls, and points out that a great deal of elementary instruction can be well combined with cookery, laundry work, and dressmaking. The officers of the idiot institutions recommend instruction in sewing (hand and machine), housework and laundry work.

The custom appears to vary in London classes as regards the amount of elementary instruction combined with the cookery and laundry work, in some cases the teaching being only practical, and in other cases the children being taught to write notes of their lessons.

We have been favoured by Miss H. M. Deane, Inspectress of Cookery and Laundry Work, with the following memorandum:—

I have inspected several classes of cookery and laundry work given to feeble-minded children, and have arrived at the following conclusions, which I have the honour to submit to you, with various suggestions which appear to me advisable with regard to their instruction in these two subjects.

LENGTH OF DEMONSTRATION.

These children are naturally not capable of concentrating their attention for any length of time; therefore, the demonstration should never last longer than one hour, while the teacher should be permitted to use her discretion in shortening the period to $\frac{3}{4}$ or even $\frac{1}{2}$ an hour, according to the mental capacity of the children under instruction.

LENGTH OF COURSE.

The length of the course given should extend over double the period allowed for an ordinary normal class, and should include constant though varied repetition of the principles taught.

SCHOOL BOARD SYLLABES.

(a.) *Cookery.*

The present Board School Cookery Syllabus, which is used at all the normal classes and also at some of those for the feeble-minded, is much too full and varied to suit the requirements of the latter children. It is preferable that only one kind of dish should be taught and practised at each lesson, and this should illustrate a definite principle of cookery.

(b.) *Laundry.*

The syllabus for laundry work used for the ordinary classes is fairly simple, and might be further simplified at the discretion of the teacher.

THEORY.

The very simplest theory should be given, and such details as the choice of materials and price of food. Object lessons on fish, vegetables, flour, &c. would be very valuable, but no attempt should be made to discuss the dietary value and chemistry of food, instruction in which I heard given to some feeble-minded children at a mixed class which I visited recently.

SPECIAL CLASSES.

I do not consider it at all satisfactory, at any rate at the commencement of the instruction, to mix normal and feeble-minded children together in a class, a method which is adopted at Laxon Street Board School and various other cookery centres under the London Board.

I have noticed that those feeble-minded children which have attended special classes set apart for them have been much improved; that they were capable, in many cases, of answering and reasoning almost as well as carefully taught normal children after their first course, whereas those girls who were attending a mixed class, and whom I questioned and watched at their work, were very little advanced from their former state, either in mental capacity or manual dexterity.

LIMIT TO NUMBER OF CHILDREN AT THE CLASSES.

It would appear to me that the number of children attending these classes for feeble-minded should be limited in the case of cookery to eight girls, and to six girls for a course in laundry work.

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We recommend, as regards the manual instruction of older girls, that it shall be a condition of any grant that may be proposed (1) that suitable manual instruction shall be given to all older girls for not less than six hours a week, of which not more than two shall be given to needlework; (2) that such instruction shall be, where possible, cookery for two hours a week and laundry work for two hours a week, and that other forms of manual instruction, such as practical housewifery and machine-sewing, with other forms approved by the Department, shall be permitted; (3) that such instruction may be given off the premises; (4) that in no case shall feeble-minded children be taught with children not feeble-minded, and that no class shall exceed eight for cookery or six for laundry work.

We also make the same recommendations as to the necessity of attention being paid by laundry teachers to the adaptation of their instruction to feeble-minded girls, and as to the supervision of such teaching by the Inspector, as in the case of older boys.

We are aware that the recommendations with regard to the manual instruction to be given in future in special classes, will, in many cases, not be easy to carry out, but with a full sense of the practical difficulties which may arise, we recommend the Department to make the compliance with these recommendations an essential condition of any grant that may be given for this instruction.

Physical Exercises.

55. The choice of suitable physical exercises adapted to feeble-minded children, especially with a view to their physical defects, is occupying the attention of the expert teachers. The principle laid down by Dr. Kerr is one that can be generally approved, namely, to practise the use of the bigger muscles before the finer ones. Mr. Holm has been good enough to advise us upon the subject of physical exercises for the feeble-minded, and his evidence may be commended to the notice of School Authorities and teachers. In addition to the ordinary physical exercises, suitable games, both indoor and out, should be provided at all the classes. This is already done at many schools, the teachers giving the necessary initiative. Games are particularly valuable, especially games of ball, in developing quickness, and practising children in actions which will tend to overcome their defective powers of muscular co-ordination.

Among other forms of physical exercises that are mentioned in use in the special classes are breathing drill and eye movements.

Punishment.

56. Most of the teachers use punishment when it is required, and most of the witnesses think it is occasionally required. It is obvious that for this class of children the greatest care is required in using corporal punishment.

SUPPLY.

57. The need of further supply of special classes is recognised in all the places where they at present exist. The number of children requiring to be taught in special classes is, approximately, 1 per cent., and the age at which they should be taught has been laid down as from 7 to 14 for all children, and, for some, the continuation of teaching up to 16.*

In a population of 10,000 people of average age distribution, 1,596 are aged 7 to 14, and 428 are aged 14 to 16. If it be assumed that 1 per cent. of these are defective, and that provision is required for half of those between 14 and 16, then the total number of defective children requiring school accommodation on a population of 10,000 would be between 7 and 14, 16; and between 14 and 16, 2; total, 18. From these, furthermore, must be made some deduction, usually computed at one-seventh, for children of a higher social class. If the average held good for the

* Defective children between the ages of 13 and 14 may be exempt from school attendance by a certificate of five years' attendance, as provided by the Elementary Education Act, 1876; otherwise they are required to attend school until the age of 14, unless (which is improbable) they have passed the standard of exemption fixed by the byelaws. If our recommendations are followed, a further power will be conferred upon School Authorities of extending the period of compulsory school attendance of defective children, at their discretion, up to the age of 16.

Kerr, 593.
Holm, 7688-
839.

Whenman,
2829-31.
2505-7.

Kerr, 597,
638.
Warner, 729.
Holm, 7816,
7831-4.

Kerr, 611.
Dale, 2521-6.
Whenman,
297-80.
Martin, 5019-24.
Walmsley,
475-83.
Du Port, 6919,
7001-4.

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Appendix
A., 1.

country, this would point to requiring every place with a compact population of 10,000 to supply a special class; but the proportion of children to population varies in different districts, and it is probable that the proportion of defective children varies considerably in different districts. There may, therefore, be places with a population of 10,000 without sufficient children for a special class.

In Germany, as already mentioned, the Minister of Education appears to have called upon all towns of over 20,000 inhabitants to provide a school for feeble-minded children.

We consider that the Department should be empowered to require the provision of special classes in all districts where they think special provision necessary; and that, for towns of a population of 20,000, special classes will almost certainly be required, and that inquiry should at once be made in all towns with a population of 10,000 or over with the view of ascertaining whether a special class is necessary. Some of the returns which have been supplied to this Committee from towns will be useful to the Department in this inquiry.

CONSTITUTION OF SCHOOL AUTHORITIES.

58. The authorities charged with the supply of necessary accommodation for blind and deaf children are: (a) school boards, (b) for places not under school boards, the district council—urban or rural—acting through a committee appointed for educational purposes. The preference of district councils to school attendance committees appears to have been made in anticipation, not yet, however realised, of a transference of the powers of school attendance committees constituted under the Elementary Education Act, 1876, to district councils. A certain anomaly has thus been created in the constitution of two authorities charged with powers and duties in regard to education in rural districts. Mr. Colvill has suggested that the authority for providing for defective children should be the county council rather than the district council. His reason is that the county council would be likely to do the work better than the district council; an argument which might, however, equally be applied to the case of blind and deaf children. Unless upon general grounds county councils were entrusted with duties under the Education Acts, we recommend that, under existing circumstances, the precedent of the Blind and Deaf Children Act should be followed, and that the authorities for dealing with defective children should be the same as those named in that Act.

We notice, however, that by that Act a parish which is under a School Board and within the area of a district council may become liable, not only for the education of its own children, but also for its share in the education of children in other parishes under the district council, although such parishes pay no part of the expense of providing for the children in the parish under a School Board. We would suggest that this anomaly should be avoided in any legislation regarding defective children.

MACHINERY FOR CAUSING PROVISION TO BE MADE.

59.—(a.) In requiring provision to be made for ordinary children, the Education Department issue public notices to districts not under School Boards. Volunteers have the opportunity of supplying such accommodation, and if it is not supplied a School Board is formed. No such notices are issued in respect of the provision for blind and deaf children, but the Act requires the School Authority at once to provide the necessary accommodation for all children not otherwise provided for.

We recommend that the Education Department should give notice in such form as they think proper requiring the School Authority to provide for defective children. This notice need not, however, necessarily be in the form of a public notice, and will vary according to the size and requirements of a place, and according to the likelihood of volunteers coming forward.

(b.) In regard to the provision of ordinary accommodation the Education Department have wide powers, either to combine two districts into a united district, or to call upon one district to provide and upon another to contribute.

We recommend that, for the purpose of providing for defective children, School Authorities should have power to combine and to contribute; and that the Education Department should have power to compel contribution in respect both of provision and maintenance of school accommodation. Cases may often arise in which children living outside the borders of an urban district provided with special classes can best be provided for by being sent to such special classes; and the necessary proportion of

the expense should be borne by the district in which the children reside; but to induce a satisfactory arrangement to be made for such payment, it is essential that there shall be in the background power in the Education Department to make an order for such payment as they may think fit.

(c.) If a School Authority fail to do their duty in regard to blind and deaf children, the Department have the same powers of default as in regard to ordinary children, or may order it to pay a fixed sum to a certified school towards the expense of a particular child.

We recommend that these powers should also be conferred on the Department in regard to the provision for the education of defective children.

RETURNS TO THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

60. By section 95 of the Elementary Education Act of 1870, School Boards are required to make such report and returns and give such information to the Education Department as the Education Department may, from time to time, require; and by section 43 of the Elementary Education Act of 1876, similar duties are laid upon the local authorities under that Act.

These provisions should be extended to School Authorities now to be constituted for providing for defective children; and we recommend that the Department should require a return from time to time from every Authority, stating what action has been taken to perform their duties in regard to defective children.

COLLECTION OF SPECIAL CLASSES AT A CENTRE.

61. In thickly populated districts, provision may be made by single classes or by the collection of classes at a centre. The maximum number that can be so collected depends upon the distance which the children may be expected to go, and although there are cases in which children go a mile and a half and two miles, such distances are thought inconvenient. Subject to the classes being within easy reach, the centre system is approved in preference to a number of scattered single classes as giving better accommodation and better organisation.

The advantages in classification which are attained by three classes at a centre are so great that we recommend that, when possible, centres should be provided with at least that number of classes.

INSPECTION.

62. The inspection of special classes should be part of the ordinary duty of Her Majesty's Inspector. He should pay his visits without notice; should, without holding a formal examination, see that all the conditions of the grant are fulfilled; and should be instructed by circular from the Department as to the points to which notice should be directed with a view of raising and maintaining the level of instruction in the special classes.

Medical inspection in some form is also recommended by some witnesses. We recommend that it should be part of the duty of any Medical Adviser whose services may be at the disposal of the Education Department to inspect and report, when required, upon special classes, and that he should, in the ordinary course, inspect some classes in the company of Her Majesty's Inspector.

PREMISES FOR SPECIAL CLASSES.

(1.) Construction.

63. London appears to be the only place in which rooms exist which have been designed for the purpose of special classes; but premises planned for the purpose are in process of construction at Brighton. In Bradford the premises are classrooms of ordinary schools provided with separate entrances; in Birmingham the same, one being a room in the deaf centre; in Leicester and in Bristol the same; in one case the room is a teachers' room. The use of ordinary classrooms is approved by Dr. Kerr, Mr. Chard, and Miss Dale who, however, recommends that special lavatory accommodation should be provided.

Miss Verrall and Miss Whenman, on the other hand, prefer separation as far as possible, especially as regards playgrounds. Mr. Martin is of the same opinion, and the policy pursued in London is to extend the system of separate centres.

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Appendix B., 10.
Verrall, 2263-7;
Whenman, 2703-
16, 2912-6.
Chard, 1437;
Moberly, 5570-7;
Harris, 1321;
Moberly, 3383-4;
Martin, 5196;
Price, 4290-502;
Cross, Ap-
pendix B., 15.

Galton,
5983.
Harris,
1110, 1158-
61.
Harrison,
7281.

Kerr, 635.
Dale,
2548-72.
Major, 4625.
Martin,
1961-82.
Kerr,
656-61.
Chard,
1465-71.
Dale, 2471.

Defective
Children.
(Special
Classes.)

Verrall,
2329-34.
Whenman,
2779-85.
Martin,
4982.
Moberly,
3573-5.

Newton,
7672.
Kerr, 662.
Teachers'
Appendix,
Question 12.

We recommend that, subject to the essential conditions herein laid down being fulfilled, latitude should be allowed to School Authorities in regard to construction of classrooms in connexion with or separate from ordinary schools; and that no requirement should be made for separate construction, except in the case of separate lavatory accommodation, where required for ease of access and supervision. But on each of the following points, although we do not think that separate construction should be made an absolute requirement, we nevertheless think that it is to be recommended:—Playground, entrances and exits, cloakrooms, corridors.

(2.) Elevation.

Most rooms are on the ground floor, but there are exceptions in London and Leicester; and some of the rooms in use are unsuitable on account of their elevation. The ground floor is recommended by Dr. Kerr and by the teachers.

We recommend that it should be a condition of the recognition of all new premises that they should be on the ground floor.

(3.) Size of Classrooms.

Chard,
1361-5.
Whenman,
2786-90.
Chard, 15-10.
Moberly,
3585.

Most of the existing classrooms are built to accommodate 30 children at 10 or more square feet per child, but the average attendance in London is only 17. Consequently, the existing London classrooms are generally sufficient to afford 20 square feet each to 15 children in average attendance. Most witnesses agree that more space is required than for ordinary children.

We recommend that 20 square feet of area should be required for every child, and that no room should be less than 12 feet high.

(4.) Furniture.

(a.) Desks.—Dual desks are generally in use, single desks being preferred in exceptional cases. Single desks are recommended by Dr. Kerr, Miss Whenman, Mr. Martin, Mr. Du Port, and the teachers.

We recommend that single desks should be required for every child, suitably sized and sloped at an angle of 10 to 15 degrees. This will involve an almost complete removal of the desks at present in use, but we presume that they can be used in ordinary schools. For certain purposes, tables with trestles will also be useful in special classes.

(b.) Books and Pictures.—We have received little evidence as to the books used, which are chiefly those designed for infants and Standard I. children. Pictures are found in most of the rooms, and are generally regarded as necessary.

We hope that illustrated books and pictures, specially suitable for these children, will be more generally found as the demand increases.

(c.) Piano.—Pianos are provided in Leicester and Bradford, and at some of the London centres. They are considered beneficial wherever provided, and are greatly desired by teachers.

We recommend that pianos should be provided, and that the Department should require provision of some musical instrument for the purposes of singing and drill.

(d.) Means for Recreation and Physical Exercises.—These are liberally provided in most of the classes. Games of ball, skipping, battledore and shuttlecock, quoits, and skittles may be mentioned as suitable for the purpose.

(5.) Corridor.

Where more than one class is taught at a centre, a wide well lighted corridor which can be used for drill and for assembling should be required in all new premises.

(6.) Cost of Construction.

Chard, 1356.

The cost of construction in London is estimated by Mr. Chard in 19l. 0s. 6d. per head in one case and 22l. 4s. 2d. in another. The cost of building in the way which we have recommended must necessarily be more expensive than for ordinary children, as more space is to be allowed and buildings are to be erected for a smaller number. It will be necessary for the Department to fix the limit of the amount to be raised by loan for each child, and, after consulting the architect of the Department, we recommend that the limit should be fixed at 20l.

VOLUNTARY AGENCIES IN CONNEXION WITH SPECIAL CLASSES.

64. Mr. Loch and Miss Sewell have spoken as to the value of co-operation between charitable people and the School Authorities in connexion with the special classes. Miss Sewell, who desires to see a voluntary agency connected with every special class, points out that by this means necessary explanations can be given to the parents as to the examinations of the children with a view to their admission to special classes, and also as to medical treatment which may be necessary. We agree with these witnesses as to the value of the work which may be done by voluntary agencies in connexion with the special classes if acting in co-operation with the School Authority.

Defective
Children.
(Special
Classes.)

Loch, 5536.
Sewell,
6434-42.

Feeble-minded Children, for whom Provision is not made in Special Classes.

65. We have now completed that part of the subject which relates to the provision of special classes for feeble-minded children—a form of provision which is by far the most important of the means which we shall suggest for dealing with the question referred to us, and one which we desire to see extended as far as possible. There remain, however, feeble-minded children who may, for various reasons, be unable to attend special classes, and there remain also districts which are too small to provide sufficient children to maintain the special classes. Possible methods of dealing with these children appear to be—(1) to provide conveyance or guides to special classes; (2) to board out near special classes; (3) to maintain at institutions; (4) to make special provision in ordinary schools.

CONVEYANCE OR GUIDES TO SPECIAL CLASSES.

66. School Authorities have at present no powers to pay for conveying or guiding children to special classes; but they have both powers with regard to blind and deaf children. General Moberly desires to see these powers extended to defective children. Mr. Chard also speaks as to the necessity for providing for their travelling expenses. If these powers were possessed by School Authorities, the attendance at school of feeble-minded children might in many cases be more easily enforced. The School Authorities of towns would find such powers useful in outlying districts, insufficiently developed to support a special class of their own.

We have asked the teachers whether accidents have occurred to the children in coming to school, and although it is quite clear that the great majority of the children are able to come to school unattended, yet, on the other hand, several accidents—one of which was fatal—are recorded as having happened to the children on the way to or from class.

We recommend that powers should be given to School Authorities to provide for conveyance or guides for defective children to special classes.

BOARDING-OUT NEAR SPECIAL CLASSES.

67. If defective children are not within reach of special classes, even when powers of conveyance have been given to the School Authorities, the best practical means of providing for the children may often be to board them out near to a special class. This also is a form of provision which may be made for poor law children by the guardians. At present School Authorities have no power to board-out any except blind and deaf children. General Moberly desires that School Authorities should have boarding-out powers.

The Poor Law Schools Committee recommend boarding-out as one of the means for providing for feeble-minded children.

Boarding-out is recommended by Dr. Beach and Dr. Harris when the home is bad; Miss Blackmore; Mr. Loch (care being exercised); Mr. Van Praagh, for feeble-minded deaf children, in order to bring them near deaf schools; Mr. Colvill, but only for a few cases, and powers not to be compulsory.

The advantage of boarding-out as compared with institutions is that the boarded-out child under favourable conditions remains in touch with ordinary life, and comes in contact with ordinary children; and thus avoids the disadvantages which many of the witnesses have represented to us, and which we feel strongly, of secluding the feeble-

Moberly,
3620-5.
Chard,
1431-40.
Harrison,
7351-2.

Pooley,
6236-9.
Moberly,
3630.

Report, para
328.

Beach, 215-52.
Harris, 1181-90.
Blackmore,
1640-7.
Loch, 5162-70.
Van Praagh,
567-84.
Colvill, 664.
Colvill, 668.

Defective
Children.
(Special
Classes.)

mind child, during its school life, within the four walls of an institution. Careful regulations are, however, necessary to ensure successful boarding-out.

We recommend (1) that School Authorities should have powers of boarding-out defective children, but that such powers should be limited to children residing in districts where special classes cannot be provided. (2.) That the parents' consent should be a necessary condition. (3.) That the system of boarding-out should be administered under regulations to be laid down by the Education Department. (4.) That no special classes should be allowed to refuse admission to boarded-out children. (5.) That no money should be paid by the Education Department in aid of such boarding-out. (6.) That the Education Department should provide for inspection, either by Her Majesty's Inspector or by a person appointed for the purpose, of boarded-out children in their homes. (7.) That the School Authority of the district from which the child comes should contribute to the School Authority providing the special class, the payment to cover the proportionate cost incurred by the School Authority both in providing and in maintaining the special class; and that poor law guardians should similarly be empowered and required to make such payments to School Authorities in respect of boarded-out children attending special classes.

As regards the regulations to be laid down by the Education Department as to boarding-out defective children, we recommend the adoption of the regulations now in force as to boarding-out blind and deaf children, with this modification, that the defective children resident in the same home at the same time, whether boarded-out or not, should be limited to one, except in the case of brothers or sisters. Subject to this amendment, the regulations may be adopted, with the substitution of the word "defective" for the words "blind or deaf" wherever they occur.

The managers of the special classes are the proper persons to form or appoint the boarding-out committee; but we do not recommend that this duty should be made compulsory upon them.

MAINTAINING AT INSTITUTIONS.

68. School Authorities have at present no power to provide for the maintenance or education of defective children in institutions. General Moberly desires that School Authorities should be empowered to provide institutions for feeble-minded children.

The class of children in respect of whom provision by means of institutions has been recommended is as follows:—Neglected, ill-treated or starved; girls who leave school at 14 and require some special care in a training home to fit them for earning their living; very defective children in the country, a small residuum. Miss F. A. Cooper, in her evidence, has described the existing state of the training homes associated with the Society for the Promotion of the Welfare of the Feeble-minded, and the policy of that Association with regard to the development of these homes. At present the homes are chiefly occupied by persons over the age of 16; and we do not consider that the training of such persons comes within the terms of reference to us.

There are no training homes of a similar character for feeble-minded boys.

69. Generally speaking, we do not consider that large institutions are the best form of provision for the education of feeble-minded children. Dr. Walmsley, in his evidence, has referred to some of the improved cases in Darent and to the disadvantages of retaining them in such a place; and these disadvantages apply only in a less degree to the system of retaining feeble-minded children in institutions by themselves. Mr. Colvill has well expressed the disadvantages of institution life when applied to children who will have to try to earn a living in the country. "Defective children in the country are better fitted for their future by living at home in family life, and seeing all the sides of rural life and labour among their own people than by being drafted away to an institution necessarily very different in its arrangement from the ordinary rural home. In the institution all the manual work is of a more specialised type and under constant supervision, and the child is returned after a few years to things which have become unfamiliar and to people who have ceased to be friends."

Moreover, when once School Authorities begin to set up institutions for feeble-minded children, there is a risk that the line of discrimination may be drawn too low, in other words that they may send to such institutions children who are not merely feeble-minded, but imbecile, and may thus undertake work which lies outside their province, and may interfere with provision made for imbecile children by other means.

Defective
Children.

There are, however, cases of children admissible to the special classes as feeble-minded for whom an institution may be for a time preferable by reason of bad general health, or unsatisfactory home surroundings; or, again, by reason of some disabling physical defects, which prevent a child from attending day classes.

70. We recommend that School Authorities shall have the power of sending such children to certified institutions with the consent of the parents, but that institutions should only be certified on the following conditions:—

The homes to be exclusively confined to children, the number of whom must not exceed 20, and the age of retention not to exceed 16; the sexes to be separated as a rule for all purposes except meals and lessons and recreation under supervision; the homes at all times to be open to the inspection of Her Majesty's Inspectors and any visitors deputed by the School Authorities sending the children; the accounts to be audited by a professional auditor, and to be submitted in prescribed form; the premises to conform to building rules similar to those laid down for schools for the blind and deaf; and the instruction in all respects to be the same as in special classes, except that, as regards religious instruction, the conditions should be those applicable to industrial schools.

We do not anticipate that this power of sending children to institutions will be largely used. There may be some children who have attended special classes up to the age of 14, and for whom a temporary stay in a training home may be desirable, with the view of enabling them to earn wages. We recommend that, for children over 14 and under 16, homes may be recognised where the conditions as to instruction being the same as that given in special classes are not complied with. But the manual instruction should be such as would be approved in special classes, and the institution should be conducted in other respects in conformity with the rules laid down above. In such homes some elementary instruction should be provided satisfactory to the Inspector. We recommend that School Authorities should have power to contribute to such training homes.

71. It will be observed that we have not recommended that any power shall be conferred upon School Authorities to send children to homes for feeble-minded children without the consent of their parents. Children who are ill-treated can already be taken from their parents by the procedure of the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act, 1889, if the ill-treatment comes within certain limits defined by that Act; and it is open to School Authorities to set the law in motion. By section 5 of the Act a petty sessions court has the power to order a child to be taken out of the custody of any person having the custody or control of such child, and to be committed to the charge of a relation or other person willing to undertake such charge, if the parent or other person having custody has been (a) convicted of an offence under sec. 1 of the Act (*i.e.*, ill-treatment, neglect, abandonment, or exposure), or of any offence involving bodily injury to the child, and punishable with penal servitude, (b) committed to trial for such offence, (c) bound over to keep the peace toward the child. The person to whom the child is so committed is placed *in loco parentis*, and the parent cannot claim the child back, but the parent may be made liable to contribute to the child's support, except under (b) above.

We are not prepared to suggest further legislation in this direction on account of feeble-minded children as distinct from others.

PARENTS' CONTRIBUTIONS.

72. In the case of blind and deaf children, it is provided by section 9 of the Blind and Deaf Children Act—

1. Where a school authority incur any expense under this Act in respect of any blind or deaf child, the parent of the child shall be liable to contribute towards the expenses of the child such weekly sum, if any, as, regard being had to the provisions of the Elementary Education Act, 1891, may be agreed on between the school authority and the parent, or, if the parties fail to agree, as may, on the application of either party, be settled by a court of summary jurisdiction, and any sum so agreed on or settled may, without prejudice to any other remedy, be recovered by the school authority summarily as civil debt.

2. It shall be the duty of the school authority to enforce any order made under this section, and any sum received by a school authority under this section may be applied by the school authority in aid of their general expenses.

3. A court competent to make an order under this section may at any time revoke or vary any order so made.

We have already recommended that no payment should be required from the parent in respect of attendance of defective children at special classes. In respect, however,

*Defective Children.*Airy, 7302-1.
Loch 5573.

of the maintenance of defective children in institutions, boarding out, and the expense of conveyance or guides, we have found some difference of opinion among the witnesses as to whether the parents should be liable for such contributions as they are able to make. We think that the parents should contribute, and that the procedure adopted in the case of blind and deaf children should be extended to defective children. Similarly, the parents of defective children should not, by reason of any payment made by the School Authority in respect of the child, be deprived of any franchise, right, or privilege, or be subject to any disability or disqualification.

SPECIAL PROVISION IN ORDINARY SCHOOLS.

73. By far the greater proportion of feeble-minded children who are at present attending school at all are found in the ordinary schools. The unsatisfactory nature of the provision there made for them is well known to the Department.

In the circular which we issued to the inspectors, both in rural and in urban districts, we asked for information as to the best methods observed for dealing with feeble-minded children in ordinary schools. The replies were of a uniform character, and amounted to this: that though the children are, as a rule, treated kindly, little success is attained in their instruction. They are classified with some regard to age, so that the older scholars may not be in the lowest classes, but chiefly according to attainments. The children are given as much individual attention as possible, but this is described as not much, and often are taught by a monitor. They are taught the same subjects as other children, but in a lower standard in reading, writing, and arithmetic, and with little expectation of success in class subjects. They "pick up what they can," "take their chance," and "mark time"; generally taking an extra time in the infants' class and two years or more in a standard. They are easily amenable to discipline, and do not appear to be considered as much trouble. As to their subsequent fate there is no evidence.

Airy, 7236.
Colvill, 6580.Blackmore, 582-1695.
Willis, 6603-7.
Harrison, 7210-6.
Synge, 7619-52.

Miss Blackmore gave evidence before us as to the treatment of some feeble-minded children in her school whose teaching answers generally to this description. Some attempt is made to give them special attention by a pupil-teacher; but they make but little improvement, cause some disturbance, and would be better in a special class. The following Inspectors gave evidence to the same effect:—Messrs. Willis, Harrison, Airy, Fisher, and Synge.

Colvill, 6649, 6662
6701-10,
6759-60.

74. The only suggestion made for improving the provision for feeble-minded children in ordinary schools comes from Mr. Colvill. He recommends that in the case of defective children, a great deal of reading, writing, and arithmetic should be dispensed with and the child given some manual occupation, while the class is engaged on subjects beyond its powers. Desks or tables might be arranged for defective children, where they might sit under the eye of the teacher while the rest of the class are doing something else. The children should take certain lessons with the rest of the school, but might devote a third of each day to manual instruction, and some grant might be made by the Department to aid such special provision.

The difficulties in the way of carrying out these suggestions universally will be an additional demand upon the teacher of the rural school, who will ill be able to spare the necessary supervision, and who also cannot be expected to be qualified to teach all the forms of manual instruction that may be useful for defective children. The defective child occupied on manual instruction without proper supervision will gain but little benefit from his occupation. It may, however, be possible to find in some villages voluntary teachers willing to come forward, from charitable motives, and to devote a part of the day to assisting the manual instruction of defective children under the general supervision of the principal teacher.

75. We recommend that Inspectors shall make inquiry, when inspecting ordinary schools, as to the methods used for teaching defective children with a view of suggesting such special provision as may appear to be suitable.

Physically Defective Children.

76. We have already pointed out that most, if not all, the feeble-minded children come within the category of physically defective children. Unless some strong reason can be shown, we think that physical defect alone is not sufficient cause for the admission of a child to a special class, but that children of normal intellect, if they can attend school at all, should attend ordinary schools. A case is mentioned in Bristol of one boy brought to school by his mother, and carried up to the special

class, who is described as defective in his legs, but "all right in the upper part." We do not consider that the admission of such children to the special classes, to be taught with feeble-minded children, is proper. Children who are physically, but not otherwise, defective should, in our opinion, and in that of most of the witnesses, not be taught with feeble-minded children.

We come, however, to more difficult cases, such as are described by Miss Verrall, of children, who, without being mentally defective, are constantly ill and not capable of regular attendance or of hard work at school. Consequently they are very backward and require special care in teaching; and she is of opinion that the special classes are suitable for them, and that both they and feeble-minded children gain by their presence, and that if they did not attend these classes they would be absent altogether under a permanent medical certificate.

Dr. Warner also refers to children who are both dull and delicate, and who require special treatment; and Dr. Colman points out that the work of the ordinary school is too severe for some delicate children. Dr. Harris thinks that there are some such cases suitable for special classes; and Dr. Kerr would admit them, his rule being that any child who was unfit to be in the ordinary school, but could go to a special class and be educated, should go there.

The London School Board also desire that children should go to a special class who, by reason of physical defect, are unable to attend school.

We recommend that physically defective children shall be admitted to special classes if, owing to chronic ill-health they are not capable of receiving proper benefit from instruction in the ordinary school while capable of benefiting from instruction in the special classes.

POWERS AND DUTIES OF SCHOOL AUTHORITIES IN RESPECT OF PHYSICALLY DEFECTIVE CHILDREN.

77. Except in the case of blind or deaf children, School Boards have at present no power to pay for the conveyance of children to school or for guides to accompany them; nor have they any power to provide instruction outside the walls of a public elementary school. They have power to provide suitable furniture for children in school, and so may provide chairs suitable for crippled children in school, and probably also suitable chairs for carrying helpless children from one part of the school premises to another.

For districts not under School Boards there is no public body with any of these powers. Dr. Warner, Mr. Aldis, and General Moberly recommend that such powers of conveyance should be conferred upon School Boards.

We recommend that School Authorities should be empowered and required to provide means of conveyance to school of children who, by reason of physical defect, are otherwise unable to attend, and who are capable of profiting by the instruction; and that they should also provide guides where necessary. For children for whom ordinary schools cannot be made available by this means, we recommend that School Authorities should have powers of boarding-out near a school under regulations similar to those which we have recommended for feeble-minded children, and also of maintaining them at institutions where the instruction should be that of a public elementary school. Children of normal intellect should not be mixed with feeble-minded.

78. Physical defects may be so severe that children are neither able to be conveyed or guided to the ordinary school, nor able to bear regular instruction of the kind that will satisfy the conditions of a public elementary school.

We have considered whether any relaxation of the conditions of public elementary school-teaching can be recommended with the view of giving such children a certain amount of instruction under special arrangements. We do not, however, recommend that such instruction should be recognised by the Department. These children will, in most cases, be capable of occasional attendance at a public elementary school, and we do not think that instruction in the home or at the bedside, or in the hospital, can be undertaken by School Authorities. We agree with Mr. Loch that it is a fair field for voluntary effort; and we may refer to the interesting account given by Miss Sewell of her class for such children conducted by voluntary teachers in Southwark.

Feeble-minded Children who are Partially Blind or Partially Deaf.

79. The teachers report 61 such cases in the special classes. The case of a child partially blind is mentioned at Bradford. It appears likely, from the description

c 58268.

Defective Children.

Martin, 5154.

Warner, 711-4.
Aldis, 3194-5.
Ferrier, 5270, 5280-2, 5334-7.
Sewell, 6386.
Loch, 5570.

Verrall, 2318-22.

Warner, 734.
Colman, 6149-50.

Harris, 1031.

Kerr 417-50.

Warner, 711-4.
Aldis, 3194-5.
Moberly, 3620-5.

Loch, 5540-5, 5569-71.

Sewell, 6376-40.

Appendix B, 4.

Defective Children. of the children, that some of the cases mentioned by the teachers are blind within the meaning of the Blind and Deaf Children Act, which thus defines "blind and deaf":—

Kerr, 451-3, 533. "The expression 'blind' means too blind to be able to read the ordinary school-books used by children.

"The expression 'deaf' means too deaf to be taught in a class of hearing children in an elementary school."

There is, however, some difficulty in applying this definition to children of feeble mind, inasmuch as it is not at once evident to the unskilled observer whether the inability to read ordinary school-books, or to be taught in a class of hearing children, is due to defect of sight or of hearing, or to want of intelligence. In some cases, children are sent from the ordinary schools to the blind or the deaf schools, and are then passed backwards and forwards between these schools and the special classes for feeble-minded children.

It is necessary that exact regulations shall be laid down for dealing with such cases.

Van Praagh, 5591-606, 5643-6, 4607-21. We recommend that the medical officer shall decide in respect of any feeble-minded child, whether it is blind or not blind, deaf or not deaf within the meaning of the Act. Feeble-minded children who are blind or deaf should not be taught in special classes for feeble-minded children who can see or hear. They should be classified as blind or deaf and provided for under the Blind and Deaf Children Act; and it is desirable that separate provision should be made in a blind or deaf school or institution for dealing with such children.

Probably the most convenient way of dealing with feeble-minded children who are blind, and feeble-minded children who are deaf, will be to send them to some institution, already existing for blind or deaf children, which may be willing to open a special branch for the reception of such children and to make special provision for their education.

III.—EPILEPTIC CHILDREN.

NUMBER.

80. The number of epileptic children appears to be currently estimated at 1 per thousand, excluding epileptic lunatics, but otherwise including all cases, mild or severe. This agrees with the result of Dr. Warner's inquiry, in which he found 101 children epileptic out of 86,378 attending school, or .11 per cent., and with the result of our inquiries made through the inspectors in rural districts, who found 27 children epileptic out of 29,446. Of those afflicted with epilepsy, one-sixth are estimated to be severely afflicted.

Beach, 210-12.
Gaskell, 4400-1.
Colwill, 6580.

81. Epilepsy may be of all degrees of severity, and may affect children of all degrees of mental capacity; but little difficulty occurs where the epilepsy is not severe. In our inquiries, made through the Inspectors, we have found it difficult to obtain any information as to epilepsy, owing to the scarcity of its occurrence among children attending school. The fits appear rarely to occur in school, partly, perhaps, owing to the fact that the steady employment of school prevents them from occurring. When the fits do occur, the parents keep the children away from school until they are well. Dr. Walmsley thinks that the fits are alarming to ordinary children, and that, for that reason, epileptic children should not be sent to ordinary schools. Dr. Colman on the other hand, has a different opinion, and says he has no reason to suppose that the alarm caused by epileptic fits is a factor seriously to be taken into consideration. There is even less reason to suppose that the sight of ordinary epileptic fits are specially alarming to defective children; and the only consideration to be taken into account on this score is the possibility of injury to highly sensitive children and children pre-disposed to epilepsy.

Colwill, 6580, 6608-14.
Walmsley, 4062-8.
Colman, 6092-5.

The question, therefore, as to the best means of providing for the education of epileptic children can be decided almost entirely with reference to the interest of the epileptic children themselves.

Slight Epilepsy.

CHILDREN OF NORMAL INTELLECT.

82. There is a general consent among the witnesses that epileptic children of normal intellect should be left in the ordinary schools if the epilepsy is not severe.

Beach, 294-5, 288-11, 282-4.
Kerr, 527.
Gaskell, 4165-6, 4312, 4313.
Ferrier, 5214-51, 5273-9.
Colman, 6988-96.
Gaskell, 4361, 4196-9.

We have received some evidence that epileptic children at present are sometimes wrongly excluded from the ordinary schools. This may perhaps be due to unnecessary alarm felt by the teachers, arising from ignorance as to the proper treatment, and from fear lest the children should come to some harm in the school during a fit. The Code already requires that no child should be excluded from the school except on reasonable grounds, but, unless the parent complains to the Education Department, there is no way of ensuring that the children are not wrongfully excluded.

We recommend that epileptic children of normal intellect should be left in ordinary schools if the epilepsy is not severe, that is to say, if the fits are not frequent, or violent fits do not occur in school; that the Department should hold the exclusion of such children to be unreasonable; and that, if necessary, the report of the medical officer as to the frequency or violence of the fits, should be obtained in cases which are doubtful. We further suggest that instructions should be circulated amongst teachers of ordinary schools for the treatment of epileptic children, and we subjoin some instructions for the purpose. No special methods are necessary for the teaching of epileptic children in ordinary schools. They should go on with their ordinary work and should be well occupied; and the teacher should be careful not to overstrain them.

Defective Children.

Colman, 6972, 6111-
Ferrier, 5363-5.

Gaskell, 4356.
Ferrier, 5259-60.

Instructions to Teachers as to Treatment of Epileptic Children.

83. Children known to be subject to epilepsy (the attacks of which are commonly designated "*fits*") should be placed in the schoolroom in such a position that they can, without difficulty, be seen by the teacher. Unusual dulness, irritability, twitching of muscles, a look of oppression about the eyes, complaint of headache, should lead the teacher to suspect the possible approach of a fit, and, so far as it can be done without making the child too sensitive, special consideration should be shown to the pupil as regards application to lessons, and also as to his being so placed as not to hurt himself should he fall in a fit.

In the fully-developed attack the child loses consciousness completely, and falls suddenly, sometimes giving a wild cry, and there are convulsive movements of the limbs and features. Sometimes there is foaming at the mouth, and the tongue may be bitten, so that the foam is mixed with blood. In the convulsive stage of the fit the face is much congested; afterwards it becomes pale. The convulsed muscles afterwards become quite flaccid, and the change from one state to the other looks alarming, but is not dangerous. Some amount of stupor, or, at any rate, drowsiness, follows a fit.

Treatment.—Place the pupil on the floor, his head on a low cushion, where he cannot hurt himself by the convulsive movements. A wooden penholder may be placed between the teeth to prevent injury to the tongue by biting. At once loosen all tight clothing, especially about the neck. Nothing can be done to stop the convulsive movements, and no attempt must be made to give drink, or choking may result. The child must simply be watched till he comes out of the fit and with the precautions indicated above there is little danger. The child should be sent home under proper care, for a period of stupidity, sometimes leading to strange conduct, often follows the fit.

—There is a milder form of epilepsy (*petit-mal*) which manifests itself by mental confusion with some slight muscular twitchings of the features, a screwing up of the eyes, sometimes a drawing of a deep breath, but this form is attended by only very transient loss of consciousness. In such cases care should be exercised not to strain the child's attention. When there is a disposition to these slighter attacks inattention may be involuntary, due to mental disturbance from epilepsy, and must, therefore, not be visited with punishment or severe reproof.

EPILEPTIC CHILDREN WHO ARE ALSO FEEBLE-MINDED.

84. Many epileptic children are feeble-minded. Where special classes for defective children exist, it is usual to admit slight cases of epilepsy to them; and there is no evidence that inconvenience has been caused by the presence of feeble-minded epileptics in special classes.

We recommend that epileptics of feeble mind should be treated analogously to epileptics of normal intellect, and should be sent to special classes when the epilepsy is not severe.

Walmsley, 4072, 4327-9.
Gaskell, 4481-94, 4431.
Verrall, 2315-7,
Dale, 2508-84, When-
man, 2863-5.

GUIDES AND CONVEYANCE OF EPILEPTIC CHILDREN TO ORDINARY SCHOOLS AND TO SPECIAL CLASSES.

85. School Authorities have at present no power to provide guides or conveyance for epileptic children to ordinary schools or to special classes. We recommend that children subject to epileptic fits should be examined by the medical officer of the School Authority, and that if they are certified by him to be unable to journey unaccompanied to and from school without serious danger to themselves, the School Authorities should be empowered to provide guides or conveyance for them.

Gaskell, 4383, 4420.

Severe Epilepsy.

86. Children afflicted with severe epilepsy tend to become insane; but there remain the small number (estimated at one sixth of the total) who are afflicted with severe

Epileptic Children.

Ferrier, 5259-61.

Gaskell, 4353-4.

epilepsy and are not insane. Such children at present commonly do not attend school, both because it is dangerous for them to go through the streets unaccompanied by a grown person and because of the disturbance which they cause in school, and the refusal of the schools to receive them. Inasmuch as employment is necessary for their well-being, epileptic children who are absent from school deteriorate. Mr. Gaskell thus describes such children:—

“By far the worst cases that we have, and the most hopeless cases—the cases that are most unfit morally and mentally in any way to be at the colony—are those cases that have been epileptic from childhood. That is due, generally, but not always, to the fact that they have been uneducated. In some cases they have been educated, but, usually the home conditions of an epileptic are very bad. It is very difficult in a poor family to deal with an epileptic. Usually he is, on the one hand, spoiled, and yet, on the other hand, the family hold aloof from him. He becomes often more or less of an outcast, and feels a sense of aloofness from his relations. So he suffers from two almost opposite things, from that of being spoilt, and from that of feeling himself rather an outcast and a pariah.

“The want of education intensifies this in two ways. If a child is uneducated it causes him to be more at home, and more under these rather bad home influences, and at the same time it leaves his mind unoccupied, and I think that there can be no doubt that an unoccupied mind is the very worst thing for epilepsy. Certainly we find that the effect of occupation at the colony not only effects an improvement as regards their disease, but it improves them so much morally and mentally. Usually, when colonists come to us, they have a thoroughly downcast look, they seem utterly dejected; they seem to have felt that they have always been in a dependent position, and the occupation at the colony, and the feeling that they have something to do, takes their minds off this, and they rapidly assume a much more cheerful look.”

CERTIFIED HOMES FOR EPILEPTIC CHILDREN.

87. For the children described above the witnesses agree that special provision should be made. Dr. Beach, Mr. Lidgett, Mr. Gaskell, Dr. Ferrier, Mr. Loch, Dr. Colman, and General Moberly are all of this opinion, and no one has given evidence to the contrary effect.

We recommend that such special treatment should be provided in homes exclusively confined to children suffering from severe epilepsy; and we suggest that the regulations as to age, sex, religious teaching, audit, inspection, size of homes, powers of the Education Department to approve the general arrangements, should be the same generally as those recommended for institutions for feeble-minded children.

Premises.

88. The premises should, if possible, be built all on one floor so as to avoid the use of staircases.

It is necessary that they should be situated in the country, on a good pervious soil. We subjoin an adaptation of the building rules for schools for blind and deaf children, which we recommend to be applied to homes for epileptic children.

The following rules should be read in connexion with the General Rules laid down in Schedule VII. of the Day School Code as to drainage, warming, and ventilation.

Recreation Grounds.

Sufficient playing space must be provided. The recreation grounds for girls and boys should be separate. There should be a covered gymnasium, or large shed open on one side, provided with ample top light and ridge-ventilation, which, under supervision, may be used by boys and girls together.

Schoolrooms.

The area of schoolrooms should be (as a rule) not less than 20 square feet per child, and the cubic contents should be not less than 210 cubic feet. Their position should be on the ground floor, near the playground. Where boys and girls are taught in one room, the exits should be separate.

Day Rooms.

These should be of at least the same size as the schoolrooms.

Dining Rooms.

These should be of sufficient size to seat each child comfortably, with space for the passage of waiters. There should be a minimum of 10 square feet per child.

Dormitories.

The minimum width should be 18 feet, the minimum area should be 50 square feet per child, and the minimum cubic capacity 500 cubic feet per child. A separate bed must be provided for each child, with sufficient space between the beds. Windows should be carried up to the ceiling on two sides.

A dormitory should be supervised by means of a window in the bedroom of the officer in charge. In houses, or homes, having small bedrooms, the officer's bedroom should be closely adjoining on the same floor, and the doors of the bedrooms should be left wide open at night.

No boys over nine years of age should be lodged with girls, unless the dormitories are in a distinct wing approached by a separate staircase.

Boys under nine years of age may be lodged with girls, but must have separate sleeping rooms.

Each teacher should (as a rule) also have a separate room.

Sick Rooms.

These should be separate for each sex, should have S.E., S., or S.W. aspect, and should consist of two rooms in each case—viz., one for the patients and the other for the nurse, with facilities for cooking.

A detached building is also necessary for infectious cases, except in the neighbourhood of a hospital to which cases can be readily conveyed.

Baths.

These should be supplied with hot and cold water, and should be sufficient to enable each child to obtain a bath at least once a week in winter and twice in summer. There must be a separate towel for each child. Lavatory basins should be sufficient to enable each child to wash the hands, face, and upper portion of the body morning and evening. No two children may wash at once at the same basin.

Latrines.

For day.—The provision of closets should be 10 per cent. on the number of boys, together with a urinal; and 15 per cent. on the number of girls.

For night.—One or two closets should be provided adjoining the dormitories, but disconnected therefrom by a lobby having a current of air by windows on two sides.

Staircases and Corridors.

These must be fireproof.

Fire Escapes.

Where only one staircase exists, or where the dormitories are at some distance from the staircases, fire escapes should be provided.

Admission of Children.

89. For the admission of children to these homes it will be necessary to define the degree of epilepsy.

We recommend that children shall be admissible to the homes upon the certificate of the medical officer to the School Authority that, being capable of benefiting by education, they are unfit, by reason of epilepsy, to attend the ordinary schools or special classes for defective children. It would be well also that to this certificate there should be appended a note that the causes which render an epileptic child unfit to attend ordinary schools or special classes may be either that serious danger to himself or to other children, or serious disturbance to the work of the school would be caused by such attendance.

Medical Treatment.

90. The Department should be advised that the arrangements for the medical treatment of the children in the epileptic homes are satisfactory.

Elementary Instruction.

91. No special forms of elementary instruction are required for epileptic children of normal intellect. The instruction should, as nearly as possible, resemble that of an elementary school. The small size of the homes will almost necessarily involve small classes.

Manual Instruction.

92. While outdoor occupation is particularly desirable on account of the health of epileptic children, outdoor employment is not the most promising means of livelihood for an epileptic; and in his manual training, the importance of fitting him to earn a living should always be kept in view. The object should be, as Dr. Alexander points out, to find the vocation for which the child may be fitted or inclined; and thus, in choosing suitable manual instruction, the three conditions will be that the instruction shall afford proper training to hand, and eye, and brain; that it shall have for its direct object to fit the child to earn a living; and that it shall tend to the better

Epileptic Children.

Gaskell, 4383-4420.

Gaskell, 4361, 4406-9.

Ferrier, 5261. Gaskell, 4516-20. Alexander, 7842-3.

Epileptic Children.

health of the epileptic. More highly skilled forms of manual training than those provided for feeble-minded children may be suitable for epileptics; and it will be necessary to guard against dangerous tools or machinery; but otherwise, subject to these exceptions, the conditions laid down for manual instruction for feeble-minded children may be followed in the case of epileptics.

Cost of Epileptic Homes.

Cooper,
3399.

93. Miss Cooper estimates the cost of homes for the feeble-minded in the country at 20*l.* per head per annum. Epileptic homes will cost more, owing to the necessity of constant supervision and medical treatment; the cost of the epileptic home at Chalfont is estimated by Mr. Gaskell at 30*l.* per head, an estimate which may require to be increased, if proper provision is to be made for the same skilled teaching as the children would receive in public elementary schools, and also for manual instruction. Schools for the blind and deaf which are not provided by School Authorities are required, as a condition of being certified, to find not less than one-third of the annual expenses of maintenance out of private sources. The payments of parents are made not to the institutions but to the School Authorities, and they are, therefore, not available in making up the proportion of one-third required to be found from "sources other than local rates or moneys provided by Parliament." Conditions requiring a proportion of the expenses of ordinary schools to be met by voluntary contributions have since the passing of the Blind and Deaf Children Act been abandoned in day schools by the repeal of section 19 of the Elementary Education Act of 1876, and have never existed in the case of certified industrial schools under voluntary management. We know no sufficient reason why any such requirement should be made in the case of epileptic homes.

Gaskell,
4385.

94. School Authorities should be empowered to contribute in the same manner and on the same conditions to certified epileptic homes, both in regard to provision and maintenance, as to certified schools for the blind and deaf.

95. The provisions of the Blind and Deaf Children Act as regards parents' contributions should be applied to the case of epileptic children; and a similar proviso should be added saving the parents from any disqualification.

SCHOOL AUTHORITIES.

96. The School Authorities having power to provide for epileptic children should be the same as those whom we recommend for dealing with feeble-minded children, that is to say, those constituted under section 4 of the Blind and Deaf Act, 1893.

POWERS OF SUCH AUTHORITIES.

Moberly,
3690-5.

97. General Moberly recommends that School Authorities should have powers to provide homes for epileptic children, or to send children to voluntary homes. Mr. Gaskell is of the same opinion. Mr. Loch, however, thought that the powers of School Boards should be limited to maintaining children in homes provided by voluntary effort.

Gaskell,
4372.
Loch,
5413-5,
5505-5,
5571.

We recommend that School Authorities shall (as in the case of blind and deaf children) have powers both to provide homes and to contribute to the cost of maintenance and education in voluntary homes on such terms and to such extent as may be approved by the Education Department. Powers to provide guides and conveyance for epileptic children to ordinary schools should be also given as already mentioned. Powers to board out epileptic children are not required and should not be given.

98. As to conferring upon School Authorities the power of sending a child to a certified home without the parents' consent, it is already the duty of the School Authority to see that every child receives efficient instruction. In the case of epileptic children who can attend the ordinary school, School Authorities will fulfil this duty in the ordinary course, and will, if necessary, provide guides or conveyance. If, however, the epilepsy is such that the child has to be excluded from the ordinary school, such epilepsy would, under present conditions, be a valid excuse under the byelaws for leaving the child without instruction. In the case of blind and deaf children, the fact of blindness or deafness was by the Act of 1893 expressly declared to be no excuse. It would be possible to extend similar legislation to epilepsy, but it must be remembered that the two cases are not exactly similar, inasmuch as the only available

form of instruction provided at public expense for children prevented by epilepsy from attending ordinary schools, will be in certified homes; whereas day classes are provided for many blind and deaf children, attendance at which does not involve the child's separation from its family.

Epileptic Children.

General Moberly points out the importance of sending epileptic children to certified homes, and Mr. Penn Gaskell thinks that the School Authority should be empowered and required to send suitable cases to certified homes without the parent's consent, but subject to safeguards; and he suggests that a proper safeguard would be an inquiry before a magistrate.

Moberly,
3694.
Gaskell,
4410-20.

We agree with Mr. Gaskell, subject, however, to the condition that, in the case of epileptic children (as in the case of the enforcement of the school attendance of feeble-minded children over 14), the School Authority should have discretion, and should not be required by statute to take children from their parents in order to send them to certified homes. They should, however, have the power to do so; and if the parents' consent is not given, an inquiry should be held before a magistrate to decide whether the child is unfit to be taught in the ordinary school, or fit to be taught in a certified home.

POWERS OF THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

99. The Education Department should have the same powers of compelling School Authorities to do their duty, as in the case of blind and deaf children. The Department would not be concerned with deciding whether children should be sent to certified homes without the consent of parents, this not being included amongst the duties of school authorities, but being left to their discretion. The Department should, however, be advised that all the children under treatment in the home are suitable cases; and School Authorities should not be empowered to maintain in the homes children whom the Department regard as unfit for such treatment. Every School Authority should make a return from time to time to the Education Department as to the action taken with regard to epileptic children.

REPEAL OF POWERS OF GUARDIANS.

100. It is unnecessary to repeal any powers now possessed by guardians in regard to epileptic children.

EPILEPTIC CHILDREN WHO ARE FEEBLE-MINDED (THE EPILEPSY BEING SEVERE).

101. We have recommended that feeble-minded epileptics should be admitted to the special classes, unless their epilepsy is so severe as to make them unfit for such classes. It is to be desired that special provision should be made for feeble-minded epileptics who cannot be suitably taught in the special classes. For the present we recommend that all such cases, if not imbecile, shall be treated in the epileptic homes; and, in course of time, some classification may be possible, the feeble-minded children being separated from those of normal intellect. Meantime the best arrangements that are practicable should be made for teaching them with epileptics of normal intellect.

EPILEPTICS OTHERWISE AFFLICTED.

102. Epileptic children who are blind, deaf, crippled, or otherwise afflicted, must, if the epilepsy is severe, be classified and treated as epileptics. Their presence in certified schools for blind or deaf children would be dangerous both to others and to themselves, and even if the managers of such schools were willing to receive them, they could not provide the necessary treatment. It is to be hoped that at some of the epileptic homes arrangements may in time be made for receiving epileptic children so afflicted, and giving them the special instruction suited to their affliction.

Gaskell,
4377, 4437-
43.
Loch,
5460-2.

IV.—SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS.

103. We now proceed to sum up the changes which we have recommended, classified according to the authority by which they can be carried out, that is to say, by legislation, and by the administrative action of the Education Department and of the School Authorities.

Legislation.

104. Legislation is recommended to the following effect :—

- (1.) It shall be the duty of every School Authority to make such arrangements as the Education Department may approve for deciding (a) what children resident in their district, not being imbecile, are, by reason of mental or physical defect, incapable of receiving proper benefit from the instruction in ordinary schools, (b) what children are unfit, by reason of severe epilepsy, to attend the ordinary schools. (Such children are hereinafter termed respectively defective and epileptic.)
- (2.) It shall be the duty of the parent of any child who may be required by the School Authority to be examined for this purpose to cause the child to attend such examination.
- (3.) It shall be the duty of every School Authority to make for defective and for epileptic children resident in their district, for whose elementary education efficient and suitable provision is not otherwise made, such special provision as is in the opinion of the Education Department necessary.
- (4.) Such provision may be made in the case of defective children :—
 - (a) by means of day classes certified for the time being by the Education Department as special classes :
 - or
 - (b) by boarding-out, subject to regulations of the Education Department, in a home conveniently near to a special class ;
 - or
 - (c) by a home for defective children certified by the Education Department, and (in the case of epileptic children),
 - (d) by a home for epileptic children, certified by the Education Department.
- (5.) Every School Authority shall be empowered either to establish or acquire, and to maintain certified homes for defective and for epileptic children, or to contribute, on such terms and to such extent as may be approved by the Education Department, towards the establishment, or enlargement, or alteration, and towards the maintenance of certified homes.
- (6.) The School Authorities shall be the same as those constituted under section 4* of the Blind and Deaf Children Act, and shall have the same powers as are defined in section 5 of that Act, and may be required by the Education Department to contribute to other School Authorities in respect of children resident in their district, but attending special classes or certified homes in another district, the proportionate cost of provision and maintenance of such special classes or homes.
- (7.) It shall be the duty of School Authorities to provide guides or conveyance either to ordinary schools or to special classes for children who should attend such schools or classes, but are unable to do so without guides or conveyance.
- (8.) The duties of School Authorities shall not extend to children who are in the charge of guardians.
- (9.) Guardians shall contribute to School Authorities the proportionate cost of provision and maintenance of any special classes attended by children in their charge.
- (10.) For defective children over seven years of age in places where special classes are within reach of a child's home (including cases where a guide or conveyance is necessary), a parent's duty to cause his child to be educated shall be extended to causing it to attend such classes ; and for epileptic children over seven years of age the School Authority may, if they think fit, apply to a magistrate for an order requiring the child to be sent to a certified epileptic home, and upon such order being made, the parent's duty to cause his child to be educated can only be fulfilled by compliance with the order.
- (11.) In the event of a School Authority failing to perform their duty towards defective or epileptic children, the Education Department may proceed as provided in the case of failure of duty under the Blind and Deaf Children Act, section 6.
- (12.) The conditions on which a school may be certified under the Blind and Deaf Children Act, as laid down in section 7, shall be applied to homes for defective

* For the sake of convenience, the Blind and Deaf Children Act is printed as an Appendix to this Report.

- and for epileptic children, except that no requirement shall be made as to the proportion of the expenses to be defrayed out of private sources.
- (13.) Special classes shall be treated as public elementary schools.
- (14.) Homes for defective and for epileptic children shall, as regards religious instruction, be conducted in accordance with section 8 of the Blind and Deaf Children Act.
- (15.) The conditions of sections 9 and 10 (1) of the Blind and Deaf Children Act, as to the liability of the parents for contributions and their freedom from disability or disqualification, shall be applied to defective children boarded out by the School Authority, and to defective and epileptic children in certified homes.
- (16.) The period of compulsory education of defective and of epileptic children shall be extended to such age, not exceeding 16 years, as the School Authority in each case think fit.
- (17.) School authorities shall (if not already required to do so) make to the Education Department such returns as the Department require ; and the Department shall make to Parliament annually such reports upon their proceedings with regard to defective and epileptic children as they make under section 14 of the Blind and Deaf Children Act.

The word "imbecile," as used in the first paragraph of these recommendations, shall be taken to mean not capable of receiving proper benefit from instruction either in ordinary schools or in special classes.

Action of Education Department.

105. The action recommended to be taken by the Education Department is as follows :—

To issue minutes as to the arrangements approved by the Department for deciding what children are defective or epileptic ; as to certifying special classes ; as to boarding out defective children ; as to certifying homes (a) for defective and (b) for epileptic children ; and as to the scale of grants (if any) offered for such classes and homes, and for special provision in ordinary schools for defective children.

To give notice requiring the provision of special classes where they are necessary.

To consider whether a Medical Adviser should be appointed, whose duty it should be to advise the Department on all matters arising out of the education of defective and epileptic children, and to inspect homes and classes for such children when required.

To issue instructions to Her Majesty's Inspectors as to the action to be taken by them.

Duties of Inspectors.

106. Inspectors should be required to attend at the examination of children reported to be defective, to inspect and report upon special classes, certified homes, and boarded-out children, to report any cases of defective children improperly attending ordinary schools, to approve arrangements for special instruction of defective children in ordinary schools where no special classes are available, and to approve annually teachers of special classes.

Duties of School Authorities.

107. School Authorities should be required to appoint medical officers to advise them as to the discrimination of defective and epileptic children. Those who already employ medical officers will presumably entrust them with the duty ; and those who do not will arrange with some medical man to be their officer for this purpose. School Authorities will furthermore be required to make such provision as may be necessary by means of special classes, certified homes, boarding out, conveyance and guides, and to report their proceedings annually to the Education Department.

Duties of Managers.

108. Managers of ordinary schools should be required to report to the School Authority any cases of defective or epileptic children in their schools, and in places where other provision is not made, may propose some special arrangements for their instruction in ordinary schools, to be approved by Her Majesty's Inspector.

Recommendations.

Miscellaneous.

109. We suggest that the examination held by the School Authority should be utilised as a mode of admission to Darent and similar institutions, and that this recommendation shall be forwarded to the proper quarters for consideration.

110. Whether or not Parliament be asked to legislate with a view to giving general effect to these proposals, no doubt some special assistance would be looked for in the shape of grants from the Education Department; but we understand that it is no part of our duty to make specific recommendations on this head.

111. We cannot conclude our report without expressing our thanks to our secretary, Mr. Orange, for his unvarying attention and assiduity. We are under great obligation to him for his very able assistance throughout our investigations.

We have the honour to be,
Your Grace's obedient servants,

T. W. SHARPE, *Chairman.*
H. F. POOLEY.
A. W. NEWTON.
G. E. SHUTTLEWORTH.
WILLIAM ROBERT SMITH.
E. M. BURGWIN.
PAULINE D. TOWNSEND.

H. W. ORANGE, *Secretary,*
7th January 1898.

APPENDICES.

APPENDIX I.

MEMORANDUM giving EXAMPLES of some PHYSICAL DEFECTS which require the METHODS of INSTRUCTION to be modified in the case of FEEBLE-MINDED CHILDREN.

[Contributed by DR. SHUTTLEWORTH, a Member of the Committee.]

A.—*Defects in Bodily Development.*

1. Head small (under 20 inches in circumference, with contracted forehead).
- 2.—Palate high and narrow—or cleft.

B.—*General Constitutional Defects:*

- I.—Feebleness and delicacy denoted by deficiency of spontaneous movement; anæmia and mal-nutrition.

Varieties.

- (a.) Scrofulous children. (Indications: glandular affections, inflamed eyelids, &c.)
- (b.) Anæmic children. (Pale cheeks, eyelids, &c.)
N.B.—May be temporary condition after acute illness.
- (c.) Children suffering from heart disease (often congenital). (Short-breathed. Liable to become livid on exertion.)
- (d.) Children with syphilitic taint (inherited). (Complexion earthy. Scars around mouth, squint, and defect of sight).
- (e.) Cretinous children. (Dwarfs. Slow in response. Characteristic physiognomy.)
- (f.) "Mongol type." (Characteristic physiognomy. Coarse skin, oblique-set eyes, deeply-furrowed tongue, &c.)

II.—Rickety children. (Bossy skulls. Bowed legs. Bones thickened near joints. Pigeon-breast).

III.—Hydrocephalic children. (Enlarged globular heads, 22 inches and upwards in circumference).

IV.—Epileptic children.

C.—*Defects of Senses:*

- I.—Sensation.
 - (1.) Sensation dull.
 - (2.) Sensation abnormally acute.

Indications for Modifying Instruction.

Mental powers limited by size of brain: do not expect too much.
May interfere with power of articulation: judicious speaking lessons may benefit.

Avoid overstrain, physical or mental. Lessons and drill suitable for average "defective" child may be excessive for such.

Enlarged, inflamed, or suppurating glands may interfere with freedom of muscular movements.
Inflamed eyelids and eyes require care as to use of sight.

Avoid fatigue, to which such children are specially prone.

Avoid excitement and hurry. Such a child is best at a separate desk, and must be exempted from drill.

Expect only poor results from instruction, and do not be exacting, as brain is badly nourished.

Thyroid treatment (medical) wonderfully improves mental and physical activity; but ample time must be allowed for instruction to soak into such.

Not much originality, but plenty of imitative power. Instruction must be modified accordingly.

In physical exercises, range of motion may be limited by bony swellings. Allow for this in movements of drill.

Do not push instruction too fast; there is risk of exciting fits or recrudescence of dormant disease.

Be on look-out for indications of fit. (See special instructions, p. 31.)

Teach to catch bean-bags; grasp, hold, and throw balls, &c. Exercise in discrimination of rough and smooth surfaces.

Give child coarse work to do, e.g., hammering, gardening, coarse needlework.