

of suitable character, and possess, or have reasonable assurance of securing, the funds needed for their support. The only practicable plan of securing this end is to require the approval by a State Board of Charities or other body exercising similar powers, of the incorporation of all child-caring agencies, including the approval of any amendments of the charter of a benevolent corporation, if it is to include child-caring work; and by forbidding other than duly incorporated agencies to engage in the care of needy children.

*State Inspection.*

6. The proper training of destitute children being essential to the well-being of the State, it is a sound public policy that the State, through its duly authorised representative, should inspect the work of all agencies which care for dependent children, whether by institutional or by home-finding methods, and whether supported by public or private funds. Such inspection should be made by trained agents, should be thorough, and the results thereof should be reported to the responsible authorities of the institution or agency concerned. The information so secured should be confidential, not to be disclosed except by competent authority.

*Inspection of Educational Work.*

7. Destitute children at best labour under many disadvantages, and are deprived in greater or less degree of the assistance and guidance which parents afford their own children. It is important, therefore, that such children be given an education which will fit them for self-support and for the duties of citizenship, and the State should provide therefor. In order that this education may be equal to that afforded by the schools attended by the other children of the community, it is desirable that the education of children in orphan asylums and other similar institutions, or placed in families, should be under the supervision of the educational authorities of the State.

*Facts and Records.*

8. The proper care of a child in the custody of a child-caring agency, as well as the wise decision as to the period of his retention and ultimate disposition to be made of him, involve a knowledge of the character and circumstances of his parents, or surviving parent, and near relatives, both before and at the time the child becomes dependent and subsequently. One unfortunate feature of child-caring work hitherto is the scanty information available as to the actual careers of children who have been reared under the care of charitable agencies. This applies both to institutions, which too frequently lose sight of the children soon after they leave their doors, and home-finding agencies, which too frequently have failed to exercise supervision adequate to enable them to judge of the real results of their work. It is extremely desirable that, taking all precautions to prevent injury or embarrassment to those who have been the subjects of charitable care, the agencies which have been responsible for the care of children should know to what station in life they attain, and what sort of citizens they become. Only in this manner can they form a correct judgment of the results of their efforts.

We believe, therefore, that every child-caring agency should—

- (a.) Secure full information concerning the character and circumstances of the parents and near relatives of each child in whose behalf application is made, through personal investigation by its own representative, unless adequate information is supplied by some other reliable agency :
- (b.) Inform itself by personal investigation at least once each year of the circumstances of the parents of children in its charge, unless the parents have been legally deprived of guardianship, and unless this information is supplied by some other responsible agency :
- (c.) Exercise supervision over children under their care until such children are legally adopted, are returned to their parents, attain their majority, or are clearly beyond the need of further supervision :
- (d.) Make a permanent record of all information thus secured.

*Physical Care.*

9. The physical condition of children who become the subjects of charitable care has received inadequate consideration. Each child received into the care of such an agency should be carefully examined by a competent physician, especially for the purpose of ascertaining whether such peculiarities, if any, as the child presents may be due to any defect of the sense organs or to other physical defect. Both institutions and placing-out agencies should take every precaution to secure proper medical and surgical care of their children, and should see that suitable instruction is given them in matters of health and hygiene.

*Co-operation.*

10. Great benefit can be derived from a close co-operation between the various child-caring agencies, institutional and otherwise, in each locality. It is especially desirable that harmonious relations be established in regard to the classes of children to be received by each agency; the relations of such agencies to the parents of children received; and the subsequent oversight of children passing from the custody of child-caring agencies. The establishment of a joint bureau of investigation and information by all the child-caring agencies of each locality is highly commended, in the absence of any other suitable central agency through which they may all co-operate.

*Undesirable Legislation.*

11. We greatly deprecate the tendency of legislation in some States to place unnecessary obstacles in the way of placing children in family homes in such States by agencies whose headquarters are else-