

tendent is vested with the power of appointing all subordinates. Cases are not infrequent where the governor of the state, directly and indirectly, has dictated the appointment of all officers and employes, including scrub women. This has resulted in changing all officers and employes, in removing existing officers and employes, and putting in their places inexperienced persons of the same or of another political faith.

A multitude of cases might be cited where men have thus been appointed at the head of insane hospitals, institutions for the feeble-minded, prisons, schools for the deaf and blind, homes for orphans, who had no knowledge whatever of the duties, who had never set foot inside of such an institution, who had had no training or experience, either in private or public life, for the duties devolving upon them.

In case the power of appointment rests with the board of trustees, under-officials and employes are often given places as a reward for political or personal service.

When the superintendent is vested with the power of appointment, such power is generally nominal, as the suggestions, requests or demands of the board, or the power appointing the superintendent, as to all appointments, must be complied with by him if he would hold his position.

Defects in Appointment System.

There are two fatal defects in this system of appointment of subordinates: First, it results in placing in position persons wholly unfitted for the duties of the place; and, second, persons appointed by the governor or by members of the board, or at their request, know that they hold their places by virtue of a power other than the superintendent, that he is powerless to discharge or remove them because they can appeal to the appointing power to keep them in place.

Under such a system, carried out as it invariably is, the natural, if not the necessary, tendency is to fill the various positions to suit the controlling power, regardless of fitness or efficiency. If the chief executive officer has been selected by the legislature, he finds, when he enters upon the discharge of his duties, that his ante-election promises are as numerous as the places he has to fill. Under this system of selecting chief executive and other officers and employes, the effects are deplorable. It tends to debauch the public conscience; to fill institutions with unnecessary employes; to prevent proper discipline among employes; to render proper accountability on the part of subordinate officers and employes to their superior officers impossible. If the subordinate officer or the employe holds his place by virtue of influences beyond the control of the chief executive; if, as is too often the case, he is independent of the superintendent, we may expect him to follow the instructions of the superintendent, only when it suits his fancy or convenience. It is a system which, instead of commanding respect from subordinates to those in authority over them, breeds contempt for superior officers and tends to confusion and insubordination.

It is utterly subversive of proper and economic management. Under it skill, experience, faithful and efficient service too often count for nothing unless the applicant chances to have the aid of some powerful politician. As a result, the innocent inmate suffers, and is offered up as an experiment for the novice, and the state is disgraced because it has cherished, built up and perpetuated a

system which regards politics and political spoils, in her public institutions as more important than the proper, efficient and humane treatment of the inmates.

Extravagance of Public Funds.

The system also tends to create an unnecessary expenditure of the public funds. It presents an ever-present temptation to employ help, whether needed or not, to make places for political favorites, to deal in the purchase of supplies with those tradesmen who represent personal or political interests, and the institution is indeed fortunate, if it does not pay far more than it should for supplies, as political influence is apt to be an expensive luxury when paid for in cold cash from the public treasury.

Humane Care Paramount.

The paramount consideration in the management of these institutions, is the proper and humane care of inmates. No right-thinking tax-payer will ever object to any expenditure of money which is reasonably necessary or proper to accomplish that end. He does, however, properly object to a wasteful or unnecessary expenditure of the public funds. He has a right to expect and to demand that, in the conduct of the business of the state, and in the operation of its public institutions, the strictest economy shall prevail, consistent always with maintaining the highest standard of care of inmates. It is a matter of the utmost indifference to the great majority of the citizens of the state whether John Jones or William Smith hold positions in a public institution; they do not now nor have they ever demanded, that political debts shall be paid at the expense of the state, or to the detriment of its wards. What they want is honesty, efficiency and economy in the administration of such public trusts.

It must be conceded that any system which tends to impair a high standard of care for the unfortunate wards of the state, or which induces wastefulness or an unnecessary expenditure of the public funds fails to meet the demands of this enlightened age, and should be speedily superseded by something promising better results.

Mode of Control Objectionable.

Manifestly the mode of control under consideration is open to both objections. It does not require an expert in the care of the defective or criminal classes to know that inmates will not be properly cared for under any system when, to satisfy political considerations, there is a change in the management of an institution every few months. Such frequent changes and wholesale removal of officers and employes of an institution, serve no useful purpose. Why should we look with complacency on a system which, at every change of party ascendency, demands the official scalp of every opponent holding such a place, and spares not the skilled physician or nurse who ministers to the sick, the chaplain, the cooks and the domestics? It would be as reasonable, and quite as consistent to remove all institution officials at every change of the moon. What greater moral crime can a political official be guilty of, than placing the life and health of one whose reason is dethroned in the hands of one who is innocent of all knowledge or experience, relating to the more serious mental ailments? No one claims that such acts are proper, but many seek to justify them on the ground of political neces-

sity. Has it come to such a pass that party supremacy must be maintained at the expense of proper and humane care of these unfortunates? Will not the millions of people of our great country, whose sympathy goes out to the unfortunate and the suffering, call a halt to this practice of making the conduct of our public institutions to depend upon the political fortunes of some man or party? Shall the public institutions continue to be used as a political football, or shall they be removed entirely from the domain of politics, and placed upon the just, enduring, and humane foundation of efficiency and economy? The reader will say, how can such a change be accomplished? First, people interested in such a reform must awaken a public sentiment which will insist upon such a change; then needed legislation must follow.

Suggestions for a Change.

Keeping always in view the maintaining of a high standard of care for inmates, the same rules and principles should be applied in the management of such institutions as the successful business man or private corporation follows. In the selection of officers and employes, let the only test be ability, experience and efficiency. Enact a law in each state placing all institutions for the care of defectives, delinquents, dependents, and criminals under one board of not over three persons. Give them ample authority, and hold them to the strictest accountability. Permit them to appoint no officers except the chief executives. Allow the chief executive, at each institution, to appoint and remove his employes at his pleasure. Make it a crime for any member, officer, or employe of such board to exert any influence whatever on the managing officer of an institution, in the selection of his officers or employes. Make it a crime for any member, officer or employe of the board, or any officer or employe in an institution under its charge, to exert his influence in any manner to induce another officer or employe of the state to adopt his political views or to favor any person for office, and also make it a crime for any such to contribute money or other thing of value, to any one for election purposes, and for a violation of the above, remove the offender from his position. Also make the one who collects money from such person for political purposes guilty of a crime. Do you say that it cannot be done? Such has been the law in Iowa for almost three years, and such the method of management of her state institutions. It has been a success from every point of view. The inmates have been better cared for than ever before, and at less cost.

Banish Politics.

Having investigated this system thoroughly, the legislature of the state of Minnesota has just passed a law similar to the Iowa statute. Politics have been eliminated in Iowa from the management of her institutions, with the result that the standard of care has been improved, and the character and efficiency of officers and employes show a great improvement. A like system of control exists in Wisconsin, where like results have been obtained.

The proper limits of this article will not permit of a more elaborate discussion of this question. It is of great importance. It should command your thorough investigation. Let us banish politics from these places.—Judge L. G. Kinne, in *The World Review*, April 20, 1901.