

MEDICAL INSPECTION

BILL AS PROPOSED BY THE SOUTH CAROLINA MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

PROVISIONS IN FULL

Requires Examination of Every School Child Who Has Not a Certificate from Board of Health or Family Physician.

Below will be found the full bill known as The Medical Inspection Bill passed by Governor Blease at the last session of the Legislature.

To provide for a System of Medical Examination of School Children and Students Attending Public Schools and Colleges within the State.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

Sec. 1. The Board of School Trustees shall appoint one or more physicians to act as official medical examiners hereinafter called school physicians under the terms of this Act, at each and every public school, and college within the State, and shall provide said physicians with all proper facilities for the performance of their duties as such examiners: Provided, however, that nothing herein contained shall be construed to require or authorize such appointment at any school or college already employing a regular physician for its school children or students.

Sec. 2. Every school physician shall make a prompt examination and diagnosis of all children or students referred to him as hereinafter provided, and such further examination of teachers, janitors and school buildings as in his opinion the protection of the health of the public may require.

Sec. 3. The teacher shall cause to be reported to a school physician for examination and diagnosis every school child or student returning to school without a certificate from a board of health, or where no such board exists a physician, after absence on account of illness or from unknown cause; and every school child or student who shows signs of ill health or of suffering from contagious or infectious disease shall be so reported, unless at once excluded from the school by principal or teacher.

Sec. 4. The school physician shall report to the appropriate teacher and the teacher shall notify the parent or guardian of any school child or student who may be suffering with any defect or disease. Whenever a school child or student shows symptoms of smallpox, whooping cough, diphtheria, scarlet fever, measles, chicken pox, mumps, influenza or any other contagious or infectious disease, such school child or student shall be sent home immediately by the teacher, or as soon as safe and proper conveyance can be found, and the teacher or principal shall at once notify the local board of health, where one exists: Provided, however, that nothing in Section 4 shall prohibit the proper authorities from sending cases suffering from the above mentioned diseases to a hospital connected with an institution with facilities for the care of such diseases.

Sec. 5. The school physician of every school and college shall separately and carefully examine and test every school child or student in the institution which he serves at least once every school year, as near the beginning of the session as can be agreed upon by the principal, teacher and examiner, to ascertain whether such school child or student is suffering from defective sight or hearing, tuberculosis, malaria or hookworm disease, or any other disability or defect tending to prevent the full benefit of scholastic work requiring a modification of such scholastic work in order to prevent injury to the school child or student and to secure the best educational results. The examiner shall notify the teacher in charge of any school child or student suffering from a defect or disease requiring treatment, and he shall keep a physical record of each school child or student in such form as the board of health shall provide. He shall also furnish to the teacher a duplicate record to be kept as a permanent record of the school.

Sec. 6. The State Board of Health shall formulate rules and regulations for the guidance of the said physicians and the board of trustees shall prescribe a basis of reasonable compensation for said physicians, which shall be paid in each school district out of the school funds thereof in the same manner as other school expenses.

Sec. 7. All acts and parts of Acts inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed.

Sec. 8. This act shall go into effect immediately upon its approval by the Governor.

Explanation of Bill
The South Carolina Medical Association, the legally authorized guardians of the public health in South Carolina, desires to urge upon the voters their earnest consideration of the bill to Provide for a System of Medical Examination of School Children and Students Attending Public Schools and Colleges Within the State. This is the Senate and House of Representatives last session, but unfortunately was voted by the Governor.

The first question that one naturally asks is, why should the State expend money in preparing with great care after scrutinizing the Laws Regulating the Examination of Children in Various States of the American Union, as well as foreign countries, and we believe that taking all things into consideration, is probably the best bill to meet the conditions that exist in this State.

However, if any one can suggest a better bill to meet the same conditions, we wish it distinctly understood that we are not wedded to this particular one. A bill was passed by both Houses in regard to the matter is, whether conditions exist that warrant the passage of either this, or any other bill upon the same subject. The conditions certainly seem to exist everywhere else, as laws have been passed in nearly every civilized State, making such examinations compulsory. We know that where these examinations are being conducted, as Charleston, Columbia, Spartanburg, Seneca and other places that from 50 to 70 per cent of the children examined are found to have more or less serious defects. From data collected by the Hook-worm corps which is operating in practically every county in the State, we are convinced that the figures already quoted for certain places in the State, very much under-estimate the conditions that exist in the rural districts. We further believe that the death rate among the children in South Carolina, is unnecessarily high, and we know with the cooperation of the Executive and Legislative Departments of the State Government, we can materially lower the death rate. We are now aware of the fact that we have most of the diseases common to sub-tropical climates. Many of these affect the growth and development of children to an alarming degree, especially is this true of Hook-worm disease, a most widespread disease in our State. An official of the Health Department tells us that so far this year, there have been treated 2,500 cases among white children in two counties in this State. This does not mean that these are, by any means, all of the cases among the white children in these two counties, nor does it mean that this was the only defect found in these children. Ask any teacher of your acquaintance if there are not quite a large proportion of the children in his or her school who for one or more reasons are not making satisfactory progress. If the answer be true, it will be yes. There is a reason in each child's case. Such explanations as sick, absent, lazy, indifferent, backward, inattentive, stupid all find a common explanation in physical defects.

Since the State is committed to the education of her children let us go further and see that she commits herself to their preservation and care.

Some of the advantages we claim for the system, we shall briefly outline below:

1. It saves the lives of many children by early detection of future serious maladies, and children suffering from infectious and contagious diseases, which enables us to isolate them so that other children will not become diseased.

2. In early life these defects are usually not serious and are easily cured, but if left to run their course, they either jeopardize the child's life, or seriously impair its development.

3. The defects most generally found are seldom suspected even by the most observant parent or skilled physician, unless the latter examines for them, and they are therefore, like "a thief in the darkness" striking when one least expects danger and robbing the child of its inherent right to enjoy that period of life, while if the defects are cured, the child will become normal and probably lead a useful life.

4. Some of the defects are of such a nature that the nervous system becomes perverted, and when the child grows up it may be a nervous wreck, or may become addicted to drugs or whiskey. A review of the Juvenile Criminal Courts of Chicago, New York and other great cities, reveals the information, that practically all criminal children are the victims of serious physical defects, and often when such cases are properly treated, such tendencies disappear and the children lead useful lives.

5. It is definitely settled that where such examinations are made and the information revealed is taken advantage of, that liquor drinking and similar vices rapidly decrease and convictions for crimes show a marked decline.

6. Children with physical defects cannot make satisfactory progress in their studies and are therefore, a serious impediment to a school, inasmuch as under our system the average progress is considered the normal progress, and with the high percentage of children suffering from defects, the average is necessarily low.

7. School room duties to a child suffering from a physical defect are a bore and often a punishment—the result being that such poor progress results that the child falls out discouraged, prejudiced and an enemy to the school. Such a child goes out into the world unprepared to meet its exacting duties and is doomed to disappointment, bitterness and failure.

8. Medical examination of school children banishes from the school room truants and laggards and makes efficiency the standard.

9. Under this system each individual child is given the opportunity to make the best of his life.

10. As an economic measure, it should appeal to every tax-payer, as it takes less money to educate healthy children than to attempt the impossible and try to educate unsound children. The State gets a dollar's worth of education for each dollar it spends.

11. This system gives all of the advantages to the children of the poor man, that the money of the rich man can purchase for his children.

12. No injustice is done either the child or parent by any simple system that can make the child healthy and happy.

There are some who, for various reasons, oppose the passage of this bill. We wish to state, however, that it is generally because they misunderstand its objects, and we have carefully noted the reasons assigned and present them below with our answers:

Probably the most frequent objection is, that the time is not ripe for such advanced legislation and the Rural Districts are not prepared for it. The time seems to have arrived in practically every civilized land to extend the helping hand to an unfortunate or suffering child, and we believe, that as the Rural Districts are most in need, there being a proportionately greater number of children having defects there than elsewhere, it is our duty to make whatever efforts we can to relieve their afflictions. Moreover, we are not willing to acknowledge that South Carolina are less deserving and should have fewer advantages than children elsewhere. The Rural Districts are prepared to take advantage of every opportunity that is available for the welfare and happiness of its children.

The next most frequent objection is, its life, nor has he the right to deny the parents their rights and the family physician his prerogative. We submit that neither position is tenable. No parent has a right to deny his child his life, nor has he the right to deny his child the opportunity to spend a useful and happy life. We further submit that each parent has a distinct obligation to himself, his child and the community, and that this obligation requires that he give his child such opportunities as well as make him a good citizen and not a drunkard and perhaps a criminal. If a parent would deny his child these simple opportunities, then that parent is so obviously neglectful in his duty, that the State for its own welfare and protection, should insist upon saving the child from such a moral pervert. The family physician is usually a high type man, and above all unselfish. His daily duties bring him in constant contact with suffering children and he, most of all, would welcome any system that would free their little bodies from pain and would raise up for the State strong men and women to solve her serious and perplexing problems.

Let us presume, however, that he (the physician) is a selfish man. The bill specifically provides that the examiner shall not treat any defect found, nor even report it to the child or parent, but he shall report it to the teacher, who in turn reports it to the parent, and the parent, alone, determines whether the child shall be treated.

The third objection urged is that the State has no right to pass such paternal legislation. Most states seem to think that they have this right, since most of them have passed similar bills. All states have the right to pass laws for its own protection and for the up-building of its citizens.

The fourth objection is one seldom urged, but dangerous because of the base insinuation that is conveyed by those evil minds that suggest it. We refer to the manner and mode of examination as conducted by the examiner. In the first place, the examinations are invariably conducted in the presence of the teacher and several of the child, the examiner asks certain questions, none of them ever creating the slightest embarrassment, and then tests the hearing and the eyesight, examines the skin of the face and the hands, the mucus membranes of the mouth, nose, throat and finally the teeth. The efficiency of the examination depends largely upon whether the examiner is an acute observer. That is all there is to it. Of course, if Diphtheria is suspected, a culture is taken from the throat which clears up the doubt. If the child appears tubercular, a very simple skin test is made which determines the matter.

In conclusion, we trust that for the sake of progress and enlightenment, that each voter will consider, most carefully this question, and pay childhood that debt that each man owes to it. We hope, that despite the bitter-

age of, that liquor drinking and similar vices rapidly decrease and convictions for crimes show a marked decline.

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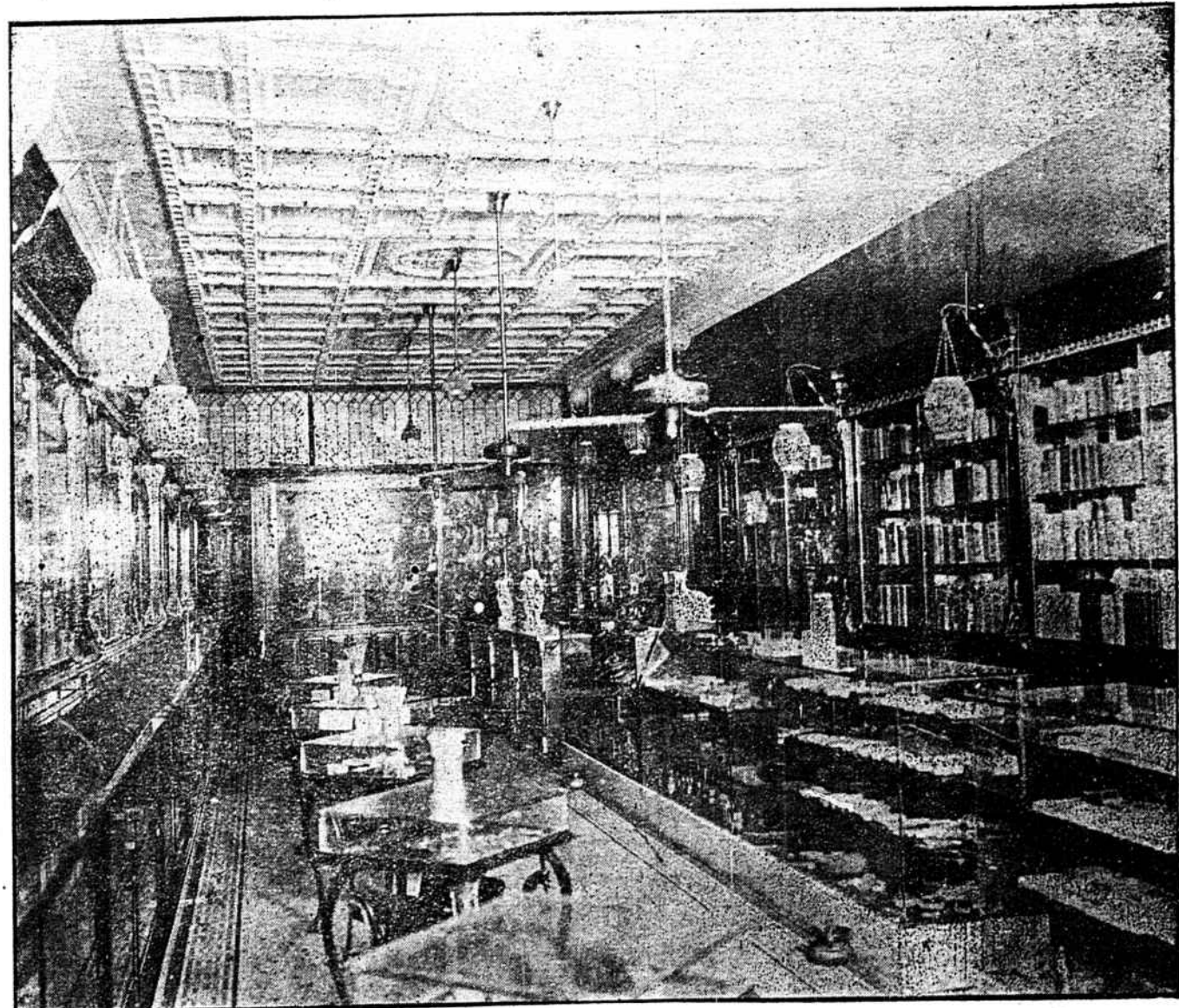
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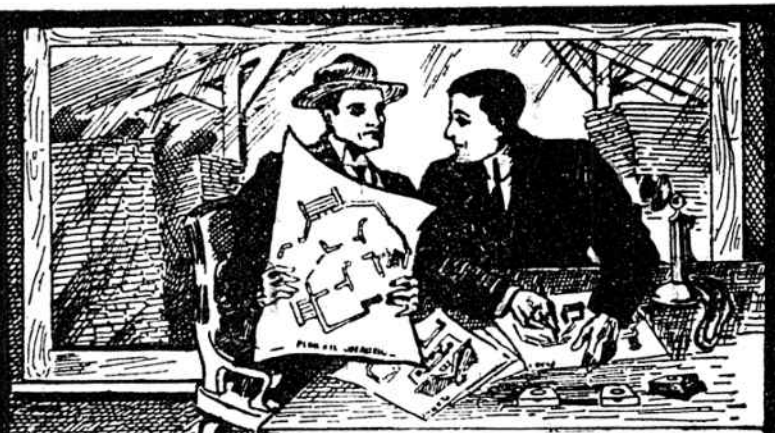
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ness engendered in political campaigns, that this question may not be considered a political question, but one of statesmanship, founded upon good sense as well as mercy, and that we may conclude that even tho' opportunities may have been denied us, they shall not be denied our children. Let us strive to drive away suffering and sorrow from children's paths. Let us labor unceasingly in the splendid cause of promoting sobriety and right living by building up strong minds in strong bodies. See to it that you cast your vote for no man that would deny your child any advantages that the State can offer him. Ask each candidate how he stands.

Obesity.

Obesity is nearly always the body's rote of censure for eating too much food, or taking too little exercise, and it is only necessary properly to balance the income and expenditure in order to keep a well-nourished body. It is important to note that it is usually around those muscles which are rarely exercised in any adequate manner that fat accumulates, e. g., the abdominal muscles.—Alexander Bryce, "Life and Health."

Wall of the Pessimist.

On the whole, and with recognition of size as a determining factor, the choice appears to lie between a short fat and a merry one, or linked together long drawn out. If you whiff about singing and dancing and improving each shining minute of the shining hour, like skylarks and nightingales, you die of senility at the age of eight. But a creature like a torpse, that can sit and do nothing for days on end save wink its eye once, may watch the rise and fall of dynasties, and feel no older at the end of it.—Exchange.

Bones Act as Barometer.

The merits of bone as an indicator of fair or foul weather have been vouched for by the captain of an Italian steamer carrying a cargo of bones from the South American port of Buenos Aires to New York when the ship was sailing toward a storm the skipper stated, recently, the bones creaked and moaned, and when fair weather was ahead they were silent again.

Censorship in Russia.

It is pleasant to learn—the story is current in many a Russian household—that the cookery books which had been condemned because a recipe contained the words "perfect freedom," words which were used in reference to some culinary process, have escaped further mutilation and have been selling without hindrance. On the other hand the list of books which continue to be suppressed is long and varied.

Eating Fish in Lent Aided Navy.

The connection between fish eating during Lent and a strong navy may appear remote, but to Elizabethan statesmen it seemed vital. So much so that a law was passed compelling everyone to eat fish on every day of Lent. The reasons set forth in this enactment made no mention of religious observance. It stated the queen needed ships for defense and the fishing industry furnished men at all times in readiness for her majesty's service.

One of the Largest Elephants.

A recent writer in the Field newspaper gives the dimensions of an old Indian elephant, which would scarcely have been much inferior in size to a mastodon. According to his account the animal measured 11 1/2 feet in height at the shoulders, 25 feet 5 inches from the tip of the trunk to the end of the tail. The distance from the tip of the trunk to one eye was 7 feet from one eye to the tail nearly 18 1/2 feet, and the tail was 4 1/2 feet in length. The tusks were 5 feet 2 inches long.—Harper's Monthly Magazine.

To Make the Boy Orderly.

If you want your boy to be orderly provide him with a place of his own wherein he may keep his baseball implements, sporting paraphernalia, tools and the thousand and one other articles dear to his boyish heart. The possession of a locker to which he alone carries the key is sure to stir the pride of every ambitious boy, especially if he is allowed to build it.—Housekeeper.