

CHAPTER 194—H. F. No. 1167.

An act to give the state board of control general duties for the protection of defective, illegitimate, dependent, neglected and delinquent children, with authority to act as guardian of children; and to provide for child welfare boards in the several counties of the state to aid in the performance of such duties.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Minnesota :

Section 1. Board of control may have legal guardianship of children.—The state board of control shall have powers of legal guardianship over the persons of all children who may be committed by courts of competent jurisdiction to the care of the board, or to institutions under its management. After commitment to its guardianship the board may make such provision for and disposition of the child as necessity and the best interests of the child may from time to time require; provided, however, that no child shall be placed in an institution maintained for the care of delinquents who has not been duly adjudged to be delinquent; and provided further that the board shall not be authorized to consent to the adoption of a child who is committed to its guardianship on account of delinquency.

Sec. 2. Illegitimate children.—It shall be the duty of the board of control when notified of a woman who is delivered of an illegitimate child, or pregnant with child likely to be illegitimate when born, to take care that the interests of the child are safeguarded, that appropriate steps are taken to establish his paternity, and that there is secured for him the nearest possible approximation to the care, support and education that he would be entitled to if born of lawful marriage. For the better accomplishment of these purposes the board may initiate such legal or other action as is deemed necessary; may make such provision for the care, maintenance and education of the child as the best interests of the child may from time to time require, and may offer its aid and protection in such ways as are found wise and expedient to the unmarried woman approaching motherhood.

Sec. 3. Duties in behalf of children.—Executive officers.—It shall be the duty of the board to promote the enforcement of all laws for the protection of defective, illegitimate, dependent, neglected and delinquent children, to co-operate to this end with juvenile courts and all reputable child-helping and child-placing agencies of a public or private character, and to take the initiative in all matters involving the interests of such children where adequate provision therefor has not already been made. The board shall have authority to appoint and fix the salaries of a

chief executive officer and such assistants as shall be deemed necessary to carry out the purposes of this act.

Sec. 4. County child welfare boards.—Appointment of agents.—The state board of control may when requested so to do by the county board appoint in each county three persons resident therein, at least two of whom shall be women, who shall serve without compensation and hold office during the pleasure of the board, and who, together with a member to be designated by the county board from their own number and the county superintendent of schools, shall constitute a child welfare board for the county, which shall select its own chairman; provided that in any county containing a city of the first class five members shall be appointed by the state board of control. The child welfare board shall perform such duties as may be required of it by the said board of control in furtherance of the purposes of this act; and may appoint a secretary and all necessary assistants, who shall receive from the county such salaries as may be fixed by the child welfare board with the approval of the county board. Persons thus appointed shall be the executive agents of the child welfare board.

Sec. 5. Agents where no child welfare board.—In counties where no child welfare board exists the judge of the juvenile court may appoint a local agent to co-operate with the state board of control in furtherance of the purpose of this act, who shall receive from the county such salary as may be fixed by the judge with the approval of the county board.

Sec. 6. Additional duties of agents.—Agents appointed pursuant to sections 4 and 5 may also, when so directed by the county board, perform the duties of probation and school attendance officers, and may aid in the investigation and supervision of county allowances to mothers.

Sec. 7. Expenses of members and agents.—The traveling and other necessary expense of the several members of the child welfare board, while acting officially as members of such board, and of the executive agents while exclusively employed in the business of the board, shall be paid, so far as approved by the county board, out of the general revenue fund of the county in the same manner as other claims against the county.

Sec. 8. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after the 1st day of January, 1918.

Approved April 10, 1917.