

SUPT. WHITE OF KANSAS.

The following extracts are from a paper read by Mr. Cyrus E. White, superintendent of the Kansas School for the Deaf, at a conference of the board of control of superintendents of the Kansas State Institutions, February, 1910, and published in the Annals for March, 1910:

Classification.

In this connection, I would like to ask, is it fair to the deaf, who are already handicapped by Providence, for man to place a still greater handicap upon them by classifying them with the penal, correctional and charitable institutions of the state? No body who knows anything about our institution would think of classifying it as penal or correctional, but it is often surprising to find out how little is known about it by the general public. A messenger boy who had an important message to deliver to a state school for the deaf met a couple of teachers going away from the institution. He asked them if any of the "dummies were running around loose about the building." When assured that he would not be hurt and that he would find some one in the office he took courage and pressed forward. * * * Every normal child is entitled to a free education. We do not have to pay to send our children to the public schools nor to the high school. Not even in the large cities, where the poor children are furnished with breakfast, does anyone think of calling our public schools charitable. Then, gentlemen, in the interest of

fairness, why should you look upon the deaf of your state as objects of charity and speak of our school as a charitable institution? All that we ask for them is a free education—the same as the normal child receives. If, because of their deafness, special instruction is required by trained teachers and it is cheaper for the state to collect all the deaf children into one school and give them their board in addition to what is done for their more fortunate hearing brothers, why is the one any more an object of charity than the other? Not only that, gentlemen, the classification creates a prejudice in the public mind which it is almost impossible to eradicate. I appeal to you not to let this matter pass by simply saying that the taxpayers of the state do not care whether the deaf and the blind are classed as charitable or educational, so long as it makes no difference in their taxes. We want them to care. We want the taxpayers to know the difference between a charitable and an educational institution, and when they know the truth the truth shall make them free—free from the prejudice of public opinion; free from the thought of having to seek a position, the duties of which they are well qualified to fill, with the feeling that they are objects of charity, and if they are given a job it is simply because of sympathy. They do not want sympathy. They want an opportunity to prove their fitness for the positions sought. Remove this barrier, as has already been done in several other states, and place our school among the educational institutions

of the state, where it properly belongs—with the University, Agricultural College and Normal schools—and you have given the deaf of your state an even chance in the battle of life to make good.

Here is a class of people the majority of whom lost their hearing in childhood through some serious illness, and are therefore to be branded for life by the general public as freaks, and without protest and apparently with the sanction of our legislators they are allowed to be classed with the paupers, insane and criminals. * * *

Public sentiment is quick to know and to feel what offends it. The verdict rests with the best and most enlightened. Our statesmen will surely judge, and their judgments will not often be wrong. * * *

About two years ago the educated deaf and their friends throughout the country were making an aggressive campaign against the ruling of the civil service commission when all deaf persons were refused the right to take examinations for positions which they could fill and were filling at the time. Such a storm of indignant protest was aroused that the ear of the president was finally reached and he ordered a reversal of the decision—giving all deaf persons the right to compete for positions in the governmental service where deafness was no bar. This is all that the deaf want, or that we who are interested in them are asking for. We simply want to see them have a "square deal."

RESOLUTIONS BY THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF THE DEAF.

The following resolutions were adopted by the National Association of the Deaf, in convention at Norfolk, Va., July 4-6, 1907:

Resolved, That schools for the deaf should not be known and regarded, nor classified, as benevolent or charitable institutions. On the contrary, they should be known and regarded, and classified, as strictly educational institutions, a part of the common school system of the state under the advisory supervision of the regularly constituted school authorities, instead of being supervised by wards of charity, legislative benevolent committees, and the like, which tends to foster a spirit of dependence in the pupils and marks them as the objects of charity, wards of the state, etc., which they are not any more so than children with hearing who attend the public schools;

Resolved, That we enter our vigorous protest against the constant association and comparison in convention assemblies of whatever nature, and in published reports, etc., of deaf children with the feeble-minded, the epileptic, the insane, the incorrigible, the physically deformed and diseased, inmates of penal institutions and others of like classes generally referred to as "defective," a term which we present as approbrious when applied to deaf, used as it commonly is, to designate mental, moral and physical degeneracy.