

## Education Meets a New Challenge

By ELIZABETH DOTSON

A few years ago two children were committed to Fairview Home—state home for the feeble-minded. This would have been an irreparable mistake if they had not been found by the state medical and educational staffs. These children did not have low mentality—they were merely handicapped by defective hearing. They were, therefore, quickly transferred to the State School for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing, where they made rapid progress.

Such a catastrophe will not occur again for state employees working through the Program for the Education of Handicapped Children are constantly vigilant to discover the needs of such boys and girls and to help them become happy, normal and independent individuals. Blind children are prepared to return to public high schools where they gain the confidence necessary to enter group activities — swimming, skating, working with other young people. Deaf students, taught to speak and to read lips, are no longer isolated from social intercourse. Children confined in their homes are tutored to keep abreast of their classmates. This is one of the greatest opportunities Oregonians offer their young people.

This Program for the Education of Handicapped Children was inaugurated in 1941 with provision of funds for a survey of needs in Oregon. An unquestionable necessity was revealed and the program became a law by vote of the 1943 state legislature. By this law the program was made state-wide under the supervision of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; already-established agencies were empowered to cooperate with the new program, and an appropriation of \$140,000 was made. The 1945 legislature showed confidence in the administration and accomplish-

ments of the system by appropriating \$200,000 for the present biennium.

A close and harmonious cooperation is maintained between all agencies working with handicapped children to prevent duplication of activities and use of state funds. Under the coordination of Dr. Verne Bain, Director of Special Education, the program operates through public schools, the State Schools for the Blind and for the Deaf and Hard-of-hearing, the State Child Guidance Clinic and the Crippled Children's Division of the University of Oregon Medical School, the State Board of Health and the County Health Departments, and the State System of Higher Education. Each agency is alert to discern needs and to bring cases to the attention of the proper supervisors and the central director.

Assistance is given to any child (aged 6 to 20 years) in the public schools, who, after a physical examination, obtains a certificate of need from a registered physician. If a boy or girl is deaf or hard-of-hearing, blind or partially sighted, crippled or has a speech defect, he or she is given attention by specialists in these fields and the services of special schools. Speech difficulties are more prevalent than any other handicap, although adjustment of this defect is one of the newest fields of correction in Oregon. Tuberculosis, rheumatic fever and heart disturbances result in low vitality cases for which rest periods are arranged and lighter study loads planned. Tutors and instruction manuals for parents help to teach those confined to their homes.

Maladjusted students, though intellectually normal, have extreme learning, behavior and emotional difficulties. Non-readers are a large part of this group; and being unable to read,