

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

The following document is provided by the
LAW AND LEGISLATIVE DIGITAL LIBRARY
at the Maine State Law and Legislative Reference Library
<http://legislature.maine.gov/lawlib>



Reproduced from scanned originals with text recognition applied
(searchable text may contain some errors and/or omissions)

Sixty-Second Legislature.

HOUSE.

116.

STATE OF MAINE.

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD ONE THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED AND
EIGHTY-FIVE.

To the President of the Senate and House of Representatives.

The Joint Standing Committee on State Prison ask leave to submit the following report:—

The Committee, accompanied by members of the Legislature and State Prison Inspectors, visited that institution on the 29th and 30th days of January, A. D. 1885, and made a thorough examination of the different departments as the limited time set apart for that duty would permit.

The Committee also made an examination of the excavation located in the rear of the wood and paint shops, within the enclosure of the prison walls. This excavation, or quarry as it is sometimes called, is four hundred and ninety feet in length and one hundred and forty feet in width, with an average depth of forty-four feet, requiring about one hundred and five thousand cubic yards of earth or stone to fill the same—there is at present an average depth of about twelve feet of water.

We also made a thorough inspection of the Blacksmith Shop and outlying buildings. We found the Blacksmith Shop in very bad condition, the floor uneven, the building thrown out of shape, poorly lighted, and of insufficient size to ac-

commodate the workmen, who are now crowded together; also being a lack of room for some six forges in addition to the present number, which are sadly needed. There is also a lack of room for the storage of iron and steel, the consequence of which is that much damage to the stock is sustained by being stored, as it now must be, in wet and damp places, subject as it is to rust.

The general condition of the Prison appeared excellent. The work in the Carriage Department was progressing orderly and systematically under the direction of competent overseers. We found the work being done in a thorough manner, and the workmanship compared favorably with the work done in the best carriage shops in New England.

The general appearance of the work shops, and especially the interior of the Prison proper and cells, we found kept in a very orderly and cleanly condition.

In accordance with the joint order of the Legislature to inquire into the sanitary condition of the Prison, your Committee made a critical and thorough examination, and from such examination, and information derived from the attending physician and from the records of the Prison, we found the health of the prisoners unusually good, having had but one case of typhoid fever during the past fifteen years; but for the further sanitary protection of the Institution your Committee would recommend a partial fill of the excavation here-inbefore named in the rear of the wood shop, be made, using for that purpose the labor of the convicts. Also that sealed vaults be made and so placed that access to them may be had, in order that they may be kept in a cleanly condition, and especially during the warm months.

In regard to filling the excavation your Committee do not deem it advisable, as the expense would be so large, (\$50,000 or more).

The Committee found the water supply inadequate for the Institution, and would recommend that the State join with the city of Rockland and Thomaston in bringing water from Oyster River, thereby securing an ample supply for all purposes of the Prison which may hereafter arise.

The feasibility of introducing steam as a heating and motive power for the Institution, as presented to the Committee by order of the Legislature for their consideration, has been by us carefully considered, and we arrived at the conclusion that it would be impracticable, when State, county and municipal taxation is so oppressive, to expend any considerable amount of money at the present time.

From the examination made of the Blacksmith Shop, your Committee would recommend an appropriation of fifty-five hundred dollars, to be expended under the direction of the Warden and Prison Inspectors in the erection of a new building, to be built of wooden material of sufficient capacity to meet the demands of the Institution, and for the purchase of modern forges.

Some of the other outbuildings were found to be somewhat out of repair, and we would recommend an appropriation of two thousand dollars, for such repairs and painting, one thousand dollars to be expended in the year eighteen hundred and eighty-five and one thousand dollars in the year eighteen hundred and eighty-six.

The prison library in the opinion of your committee needs replenishing, and as good literature is not only a pleasing pastime but tends towards discipline and aids to improve the mind of the unfortunate inmate and perhaps help to lift him to a higher plane in life when he shall be liberated from "durance vile," we would recommend an appropriation of two hundred dollars to be expended towards replenishing the prison library.

The examination by the Committee of the finances of the Institution was an important factor connected with their visit.

They devoted all the attention possible, which their limited time would allow to that duty, but of course could not make an examination so exhaustive as they would have done if more time had been at their disposal, and in consequence are obliged to base their report to some extent upon the report of the Warden and Inspectors.

Upon such an examination as was made and by reports we found the financial condition of the Prison to be upon a sound basis, the old indebtedness having been entirely liquidated and a contingent fund of four thousand two hundred and thirty-one dollars and fifty-six cents (\$4,231.56) which stands to the credit of the Institution.

The cost of running the Prison has materially lessened during the past four years, as shown by the report of the Inspectors, being nine thousand two hundred dollars for the year 1884.

The Committee are of the unanimous opinion that the State has been most fortunate in the selection of the officers of the Institution, and they feel that they would have failed in their duty did they not say a word of commendation,

The books of the Institution were kept in a systematic manner by the clerk, Mr. Wentworth, which enabled us to determine the business condition of the Prison, and also the methods of Warden Bean, who seems to happily combine the requisite qualifications of a careful business manager and strict disciplinarian. Your Committee are convinced that he is well suited to the responsible position which he occupies.

The present Warden receives a salary of fifteen hundred dollars per annum, and by examination of reports of like institutions in other States, it appears that in a large number of the prisons the pay or salary of the warden is in excess of the salary of the Warden in our Prison, and also the provisions for the warden's table are furnished by the State, which is not the case in Maine. And while we recognize and are of the opinion that the present salary is small, yet we do not feel like

STATE OF MAINE.

IN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, }
February 18, 1885. }

Presented by Mr. LIBBY of Burnham, and on motion of Mr. DICKEY
of Fort Kent, tabled and ordered printed.

NICHOLAS FESSENDEN, *Clerk.*