

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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DOCUMENTS

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THE LEGISLATURE

OF THE

STATE OF MAINE,

DURING ITS SESSIONS

A. D. 1842.

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1842.

TWENTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE.

NO. 11.]

[HOUSE.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

INSPECTORS

OF THE

MAINE STATE PRISON.

[WM. R. SMITH & Co.....Printers to the State.]

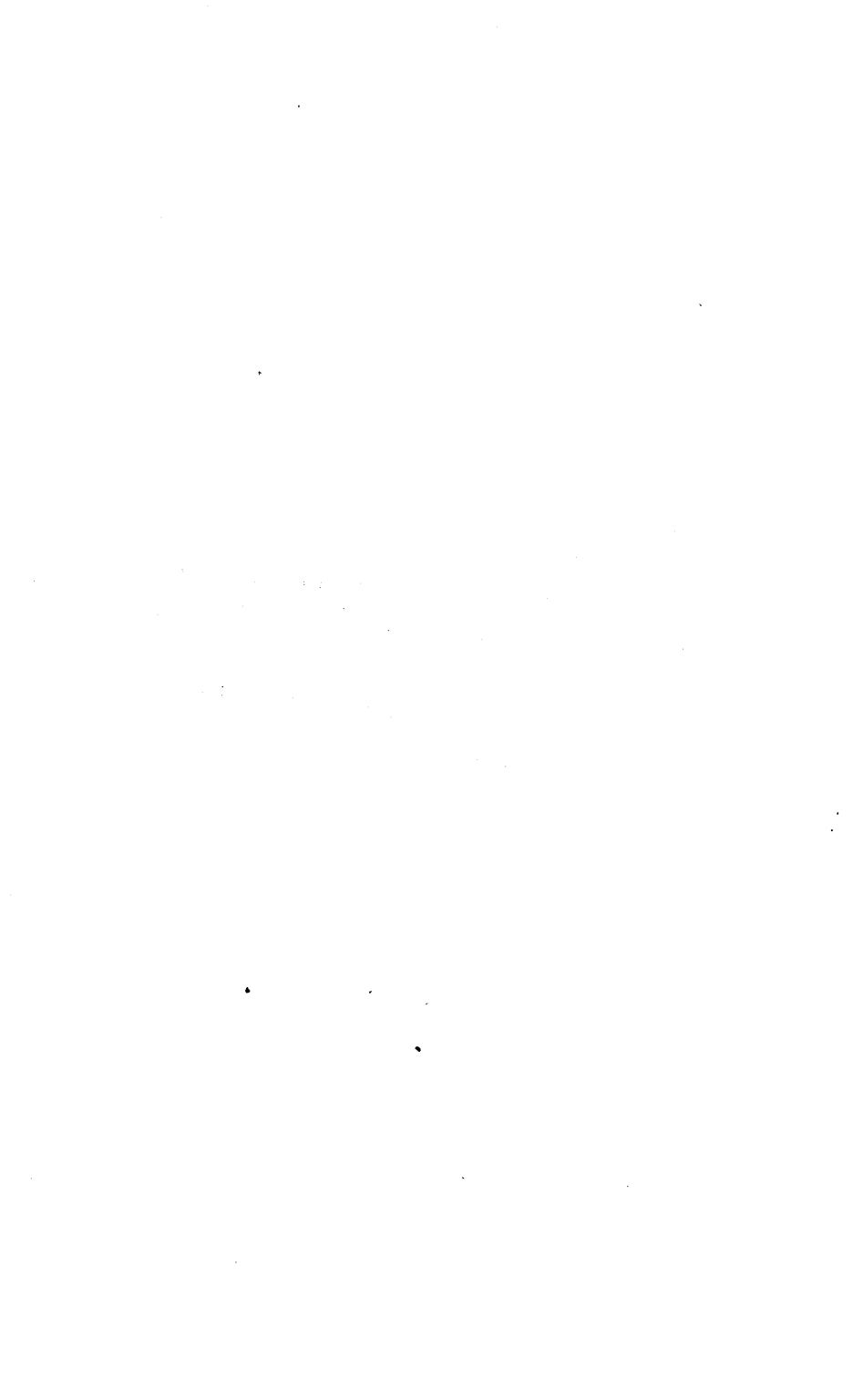
To the Senate

and House of Representatives :

The Inspectors of the State Prison having made their Annual Report, the same is herewith laid before you.

JOHN FAIRFIELD.

COUNCIL CHAMBER, }
January 29, 1842. }



REPORT.

*To the Governor and the Council
of the State of Maine :*

THE undersigned, Inspectors of the Maine State Prison, respectfully submit their REPORT, for the year ending December, 1841.

When the present Warden entered upon the duties of his office, (February 18, 1841) there were 62 convicts in the Prison, since which time there has been 12 received: 24 have been discharged on expiration of their sentences, and 8 have been pardoned, so that the whole number now is 42, including 2 female convicts. Of this number, none are upon the sick-list. 21 are employed in the shoe department—7 in the wheelright department—4 in the blacksmith department—4 in the cook and wash rooms, and 3 in tailoring.

Thirty two of this number are yielding an income.

Of the 42 convicts, 12 are under sentence for crime against the person, and the remaining 30 for offences against property and morals. Of this number 35 are Americans, and 7 are Irishmen.

The whole number of convicts committed since the erection of this Institution (July 2, 1824) are 750. Of this number 567 have been discharged on expiration of their sentences; 21 have died; 113 have been pardoned; 7 have escaped and not retaken, and 42 remain.

Until within three or four years the number of convicts confined in the Prison, have ranged from 80 to 100, and have sometimes exceeded that number. More recently, notwithstanding the increase of population, the number of convictions has been diminishing. Last year there were 12, and, as seen above, there are now in the Prison, under sentence, only 42. This shows a most gratifying diminution in crime, and improvement in public morals. May this not be attributable, in a great degree, to that great reform which is making such rapid progress in this and several of the other States?—a reform which places those whom it reaches in a condition to reflect upon their accountability to the laws, both human and divine, instead of stimulating those reckless passions which impel on the votaries of crime in their mad career. This great decrease in the number of convicts committed to the State Prison, naturally suggests the idea of such changes in the mode of employing them, as will admit of a corresponding diminution of the expenses of the Institution. In those Prisons where the income has sometimes exceeded the expenses, the number of convicts has been large, from two hundred to four or five hundred, and the number of officers required for their management has been much less, in proportion to the number of convicts, than, under the present arrangement, is admissable in this Prison. The most effectual, if not the only mode of lessening the expense of keeping so many officers employed, is, as the undersigned believe, to concentrate the labor of the convicts upon fewer branches of business. By closing the wheelwright and blacksmith's shop, two overseers might be dispensed with. We are aware that these two branches have appeared, according to some reports which have been made, to be the most profitable. But, from a careful examination of the subject, we are satisfied that the

boot and shoe making department is not only the most productive, but is the only branch which can be relied upon, and which can afford employment, without inconvenience, to a large number of convicts. It has been thought objectionable to the extension of the shoemaking department, that short periods for which most convicts are committed, do not admit of their acquiring a knowledge of the business, in time to be of much profit, before the expiration of their sentence. But when this is once made the principal employment, those committed for short periods, and unacquainted with the business, may be employed as waiters, or in the lime quarry, as occasion may require.

To close the two departments mentioned, would not only save the salaries of two overseers, but also diminish, by one half, at least, the labor of the clerk; in which case he could easily do the additional duties of Deputy Warden, and thus the salary of another officer could be dispensed with.

The number of officers, overseers, guard, &c., average *one* to every *four* convicts, (not including the chaplain, overseer in the lime quarry, or the Inspectors) viz: Warden, Deputy Warden, clerk, three overseers, three employed as guard, teamster and night watch; and we are satisfied that a much less number could perform all the duties required, provided the wheelwright and blacksmith business should be abandoned. Those two departments are always incumbered with unsaleable articles and materials, varying in amount from two to four thousand dollars, for which a debt is created, constantly augmented by accruing interest. A large portion of the articles manufactured in the wheelwright's department, embracing much of the labor of the blacksmith's department, remain on hand a long time, not finding a ready sale, and

when sold are often disposed of in barter, or on long credit, by which is incurred the hazard of bad debts.

On the other hand, the boots and shoes find a ready sale at fair remunerating prices for cash, and in season to meet the payments for the stock used. So great has been the demand the present year that the Warden has found it impossible to meet more than half the orders from regular customers. We are aware that those employed in the wheelright and blacksmith's shop last year, are stated by the former Inspectors, to have severally earned, by the day, *double* the amount averaged by those engaged in boot and shoemaking. But the late Warden, on the 5th page of his Report, remarks, that "*At the end of last year, (1840) it was satisfactorily ascertained that the shoemaking business was our best business ; therefore, a number of convicts have been placed there to learn the trade.*"

The Inspectors probably came to the result, stated by them, by placing high values on the articles from the wheelright's shop, then remaining on hand, while those from the shoemaker's shop we valued at what they already had been sold for cash. The Warden seemed to have taken a more practical view of the matter, and looked at actual, instead of estimated, results.

The stock now on hand may be thought by some an objection to closing the business of the wheelright and blacksmith. That it may be disposed of, we would suggest the propriety of allowing a wheelright to occupy the two buildings, paying therefor a reasonable compensation, and to purchase the stock, and hire the convicts now employed in that department. Still, the articles of iron, coal, white oak, and pine boards, amounting to quite a sum, may be sold at cost when-

ever thought advisable. The manufactured articles should be sold so soon as opportunity offers, some of them having *been on hand four or five years.*

It is not to be expected, that with so few laboring convicts, the Institution can be made to meet the expenses incident to its support. No more officers would be required to keep two hundred convicts employed, than are necessary for one hundred, or a less number. Many other expenses are not increased in the ratio of the increase of laborers employed. The smaller the number of convicts, therefore, the less will be the profit in comparison with the expenses. Notwithstanding that we have endeavored, during the past year, to introduce reform and economy in the management of the Prison, wherever it has been practicable, yet the expenses of the year have necessarily exceeded the income.

It is true that the late Warden, in his report of the operations of the Prison, for 1840, states an apparent excess or income beyond the expenses, to the amount of \$1,165 76. Yet on investigation it appears that in fact the expenses exceed the income. We find the sum of \$153 67 received for "old accounts" should have been credited instead of being debited. By correcting that error and estimating the articles and stock on hand at the close of the year, at the valuation of the Commissioners, made in February last, there would appear a balance against the Prison, instead of in its favor, of \$1,978 01.

At the commencement of the year it was believed that too great value was placed upon the lime rock then in the quarry, therefore the Warden discharged the overseer and transferred those convicts engaged in quarrying lime rock, to other employments, and directed an account of sales to be kept; the

result of which has been, to prove an over estimate of 17,556 casks of rock, amounting to \$1,755 60.

This one item alone (and there are others in the wheelwright department) change the whole character of last year's account, so that a balance appears against the Prison, instead of in favor. It is easy, as any one can perceive, to put such a nominal value upon the property on hand at any time, as to show an apparent excess of income.

The only way to show the yearly operations of the Prison with anything like correctness, is to estimate stock on hand at the close of the year, at the same value that was given to it at the beginning of the year; or in other words—to make the same articles bear the same price on both sides of the ledger. In this instance we can see no good reason for adding to the valuation of the Commissioners. In fact, so far as sales have been made, it has been found that the Commissioners over valued in some instances, and in but one instance made an under valuation, taking *actual sales* as the criterion. The only advantage, therefore, of adding to that valuation in making up an account for the year, is to show an *apparent* balance in favor of the Prison, while the *actual* balance is against it. It is not our purpose to call in question the management of the affairs of the State Prison by any officer that has had charge of it; but we mean merely to say that whatever apparent balances have sometimes been found in favor of the Prison, *it never has and never can pay its expenses*, with so few laboring convicts, while so great a disproportion of officers or overseers are paid to manage and keep them employed.

We are the more satisfied of this when we find that the most favorable results which have been exhibited, have been

sometimes arrived at through erroneous estimates, and wrong exhibits of the accounts.

No one would desire an increase of crime for the sake of making the Prison a source of revenue to the State.

While we rejoice in its infrequency, and feel a pride in the evidence it affords of the improving morals, industry, and prosperity of our citizens, we have only to introduce such improvements and economy, as may be consistent with the reduced number of persons whose misfortune it is to incur the penalties of the law.

In addition to concentrating the labor and reducing the number of overseers, &c., we would recommend that the keeping of a team and teamster be dispensed with, which is found to be an unnecessary expense, as the Prison cannot find sufficient employment for it. For the want of such employment, it has usually been *hired out*, by which accounts have been multiplied, rendering still more complicated the operations of the Prison. Simplicity in the arrangement and management of the concerns of the Prison, are essential to economy, and tend to preserve integrity and purity in the administration of its affairs. No team is now kept by the Warden, it having been recently disposed of, and we believe it would be for the benefit of the State to dispense with it hereafter.

The fence, enclosing the Prison yard, has become very much decayed, and unsafe, and will require rebuilding, although it may be repaired, so as to answer the purpose for a short time longer. It now encloses the buildings and quarry, covering an acre and a half of ground.

The Prison may be made more safe, as we believe, by building about two hundred feet of new fence within the

Prison yard, so as to enclose all the buildings, thereby lessening the labor of the guard.

The expense of erecting such a fence would not exceed \$150 to \$200, and there are materials now on hand belonging to the State, which are decaying, that might be appropriated to that purpose.

On referring to the account, hereunto annexed, it will be seen that it includes the sum of \$1,840 54, paid for rebuilding the shoemaker's shop, which was destroyed by fire on the 15th day of May last. It was thought advisable, in rebuilding, to add to its width, so as to accommodate a larger number of convicts in the shoe business, and to include a cook and wash room. It has been completed, is convenient and substantial, and answers the purpose for which it was intended.

In a former report, we recommended that an engine with suction hose be purchased for the use of the Prison. It is the opinion of many, who were present at the last fire, that, had there been an engine with suction hose, within the Prison yard, (there being an abundance of water) that both the buildings which were destroyed by fire, might have been saved *by the officers of the Prison*. We are satisfied that an appropriation for an article, so necessary to the preservation of so large an amount of property, always more or less exposed to fire, would be judicious. Had the Prison been supplied with an engine previous to the last fire, we are of the opinion, that it would have been a saving to the State of thousands of dollars.

Raising pork by the Warden, and charging it to the State Prison, has been a practice which we believe should be dispensed with. The amount which has usually been paid each

year, for this article, averages from two to four hundred dollars. At the commencement of the year, the present Warden purchased a number of pigs at the expense of the State Prison, which have been mostly maintained by the surplus food, usually left by the convicts, so that no purchases have been made during the past season of this article.

We have not, as has been the custom of former Inspectors, annexed an estimate of the probable expense of maintaining the Prison the present year, not being able to see any advantage to be derived from it.

We will, however, add, that should the convicts be employed in boot and shoemaking, and no more officers and overseers employed than is necessary, we are of the opinion that there will be no necessity of making drafts upon the State Treasurer, the present season. With the amount of \$9,000 stock on hand, and a balance of about \$2,000 due, upon the books of the Prison, it would be strange, indeed, if it should fail to meet its expenses. Still, if on the other hand, the present branches of business should be continued, and the sum of about \$2,000 paid out to unnecessary officers, the Warden must, from necessity, value upon the State Treasury for the usual advances.

IDD0 KIMBALL,
ELISHA SNOW,
WM. R. KEITH.

Maine State Prison, }
January 1, 1842. }

Dr. State of Maine in account with Maine State Prison, Cr.
Commencing February 18th, 1841, and ending December 31, 1841.

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STATE PRISON.

<p>Feb'y 18. To amount of stock on hand this day, 14,173 93</p> <p>deduct over estimate by Commissioners on articles sold, 478 21</p> <p>deduct over estimate by Commissioners on rock sold, 755 60</p> <p style="text-align: right;">1,233 81</p> <hr/> <p>paid convicts discharged, \$12,940 12</p> <p>paid officers' salaries, (excepting Warden,) 389 70</p> <p>paid transporting convicts, 3,490 79</p> <p>paid for fuel, &c. 400 00</p> <p>paid for clothing, 355 01</p> <p>paid for subsistence, 458 39</p> <p>paid for rebuilding shoe shop destroyed by fire May 15th, and the repairs incurred by fire, 1,639 09</p> <p>paid reward for apprehending and convicting Acres for setting fire to buildings, 1,840 54</p> <p>paid balance expense account, 350 00</p> <p style="text-align: right;">128 66</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: right;"><u>\$21,992 30</u></p>	<p>Dec. 31. By amount of stock on hand this day, \$9,170 20</p> <p>loss of personal property by fire, May 15th, 1841, 2,111 30</p> <p>fees received of visitors, 75 27</p> <p>received for coopering, being for stock left on hand last year, 286 99</p> <p>received for sales of ox team, after paying loss by keeping, 132 94</p> <p>received by sales by blacksmith, 814 51</p> <p>received for sales of lime rock on hand last year, but sold and delivered this year, 2,503 75</p> <p>received for sales by shoe department, 1,979 79</p> <p>received for sales by wheelwright, 743 04</p> <p>balance carried to new account, being against the Prison, but includes the sum of \$1,840 54 for rebuilding, and the sum of \$350 reward and expenses paid for apprehending Acres, for setting fire to buildings—those two sums deducted, will leave the sum of \$2,227 18 against the Prison, 4,174 51</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: right;"><u>\$21,992 30</u></p> <p>Amount received of Edmund Wilson, Esq., collected of old accounts, 153 83</p> <p>amount received of Benja. Carr, late Warden, balance of \$1,744 11, he received of State Treasurer, and left</p>
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Balance bro't down,	4,174,51
amount due to sundry persons on book account,	1,482,46
amount due to sundry persons for which they hold the notes of the past and present Warden,	3,389,52
amount of Warden's salary since February 18, 1841,	606 02
balance,	1,293 90
	<u>\$10,946 41</u>

in his hands after having settled his account at Prison, Feb'y 18, and paid to the present Warden,	125 04
received of State Treasurer by present Warden for account of rebuilding,	800 00
received of State Treasurer for offi- cers' salaries, since Feb'y 18th, not including last quarter, not yet re- ceived,	2,637 83
amount due from individuals on notes,	1,279 93
amount due from individuals on book account,	5,518 76
amount of Warden's salary received of State Treasurer since Feb'y 18, not including last quarter not yet re- ceived,	431 02
	<u>\$10,946 41</u>

MEMORANDA. Of the sum of \$6,798 69 due upon the Notes and Books of the Prison, about \$500, contracted during the year 1840, may be considered doubtful, and about \$50 of the year 1841.

In addition to the sum of \$2,111 30 loss of personal property by fire May 15 last, may be added the sum of \$1,600 estimated loss of real estate.

STATE OF MAINE.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, }
January 31, 1842. }

ORDERED, That 300 copies of the foregoing Communication and accompanying Document be printed for the use of the House.

(Extract from the Journal.)

WM. T. JOHNSON, *Clerk.*