

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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DOCUMENTS

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THE LEGISLATURE

OF THE

STATE OF MAINE,

DURING ITS SESSION

A. D. 1844.

AUGUSTA:
WM. R. SMITH & Co., PRINTERS.

1844.

TWENTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE.

No. 49.]

[SENATE.

REPORT

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON THE INSANE HOSPITAL.

[WM. R. SMITH & Co...Printers.]



REPORT.

IN SENATE, March 5th, 1844.

THE Joint Standing Committee on the Insane Hospital, to whom was referred the Reports of the Trustees, Steward, and Superintendent of that Institution, also other matters relating to that subject, have considered the same, and now ask leave to

REPORT:

Your committee have well considered the bill referred to them, in relation to the change of the government of the Institution, and are unanimous in the opinion that it ought not to pass. The present law has been in operation but one year. By the last Legislature, the government of the Institution was taken from the Governor and Council, and vested in a board of Trustees.

This change was recommended by a committee, consisting of the Hon. Nathan Weston, Hon. Williams Emmons, and Hon. Stephen C. Foster, who were appointed by the previous Legislature, for the purpose of investigating the affairs of the Hospital. This change was also recommended by the Directors, in their Annual Report of the same year. The committee on the Insane Hospital, of the last Legislature, after mature deliberation, reported a bill embodying the measure, which passed both branches of the Legislature, almost without a dissenting voice, and became a law.

Many considerations induce us to believe, that this was a wise measure, and well calculated to promote the true interest of the Institution. In the management of such an Institution, nothing is more to be deprecated, than frequent changes of its officers. Its character, and its results, will depend, very much, on the character and views of those who direct its operations—but much time, and much effort, are required, in order to establish this relation, to animate

those who are engaged in its service, with the spirit of the ruling authority; to establish a wholesome system of discipline, founded upon a due regard to the wants of the patients, and to become acquainted with the architectural construction of the building, to meet existing deficiencies, by suitable improvements, to obtain the confidence of the community, in the skill, kindness, and care, which preside over its operations.

All this cannot be accomplished in a few months, or years. Thus to impress upon the Institution the character of those who manage it, is the work of a much longer period. No one can help feeling, therefore, that to make the tenure of these officers depend on the fate of a political party—to change them all by every change in the political complexion of the State government, would be ruinous to its best interest. This result would be so certain, that probably no Executive would ever think of placing the officers of the Insane Hospital on the same footing with most others in his disposition. Yet whenever removals become necessary, as in the nature of things may occasionally occur, the necessity of it would seldom be so obvious or urgent, as to prevent suspicion. Such is the feeling of community on such subjects and on such occasions, that if political biases were supposed to exert an influence on the measure, no matter how pure the motive of the Executive might be, yet being a political body, it would be charged with being governed by political considerations. This alone would justify the change of last year. But there are other considerations of no inconsiderable weight. It is obviously better that those who are charged with the supervision of the Hospital, should be selected expressly and exclusively for that object, and serve long enough to become thoroughly acquainted with the duties of their office. Of course, they should be suitably qualified for the office—they should possess a spirit of benevolence which will inspire them with the interest and fidelity which is requisite in the discharge of their peculiar duties—a certain tact for dealing with the humours of the insane, with whom they daily come in contact, and a moral and intellectual standing, that will secure confidence in their opinions. In the hands of such Trustees, we do believe that the Hospital will

continue to prosper, and become, to the fullest extent, a blessing to the State.

All subjects of general interest in relation to the Hospital, are embraced in the elaborate reports of the several officers under whom the Institution is placed, which renders it superfluous for the committee to enter into the particulars of its affairs.

It is well known that there is a large farm belonging to and adjoining the Institution, but it is not so generally known that this farm was, at the time that it came into the possession of the State, and even at the present time, in such an exhausted and dilapidated condition, that before it could be rendered any way profitable, it was, and is yet, necessary to expend much upon it before it can be brought to that state of fertility and tilth, as to give such a return as the size and natural resources of such a farm ought.

It contains about eighty acres of what is capable of being made first rate arable land—ten of these acres are now occupied by the buildings, yards, &c. &c.—ten of them is a swamp of very shoal soil—the remaining is capable of being made first rate by a judicious application of suitable means.

It is now destitute of one of the first requisites of a farm, viz: good and substantial fence. The east part is almost destitute of fence. Fourteen acres of this part of the farm are now ploughed up, with a view of ameliorating and improving it by manuring and cultivation. In consequence of breaking up so much, and not having a sufficient quantity of fencing stuff, it will be necessary to hire pasturage for what stock is kept at the establishment.

This stock consists of six cows, two horses, and in the summer, one yoke of oxen. The evil occasioned by the poverty of the farm, does not stop here, for instead of being able to cut hay sufficient for this stock, it must be purchased. This is an item of expense which ought not to be incurred, and would not if the farm could be brought up in its productive powers. Instead of six cows, the Institution ought to keep not less than ten. It has been found that the milk from that number of cows could be advantageously used as an article of diet for the patients, for they nearly all prefer it to any other food once per day, and sometimes call for it when it

cannot be had. A small lot of the land which formerly produced hardly five hundred of hay per acre, has, by the skilful management of the Steward, been so improved in its strength of powers as to now yield nearly two tons per acre.

The arrangements for manufacturing manure are very good. Stercoraries or pits have been constructed to collect the wash of the Hospital, and ten hogs are now kept, and are so situated as to manufacture material submitted to them into the best dressing for land. The Institution have always raised and fattened hogs enough to supply all the pork needed.

There is an orchard belonging to the farm, consisting of 150 trees. These have been recently grafted with choice fruit, and will in a few years, in all probability, afford a sufficiency of excellent fruit for the use of the establishment.

It will be evident to every one, that if the proper means can be had and applied to the resuscitating the dormant powers of the farm, and to the purchase and setting material for fence, so as to enclose the farm into convenient lots, and thereby be enabled to preserve and protect the crops raised, and to have the territory belonging to the Institution under the command, if we may so speak, of the Steward, it can be made profitable in a great many ways, and a liberal expenditure will be sure to give a liberal return.

There is another subject connected with the business upon the farm, which is not well understood, and which may not be amiss to consider in this place. It is the employment of such patients as can do something in the way of labor upon the farm, and *paying them wages*. It is true that many patients can be employed more or less in agricultural labor. As a remedial agent this kind of exercise is in the highest degree useful and salutary—but when it is considered that such labor, from the necessity of the case, must be desultory, and that a person must be always employed to watch those who are allowed to take this exercise, and that oftentimes, under sudden paroxisms, or *freaks*, if it may be so called, to which such unfortunates are subject, tools are often broken, injured, and labor not faithfully performed, that it is utterly impossible to graduate any sort of rates of payment; and we are of opinion, that no

friend to the prosperity of the Institution, ought to require or expect wages or payment for labor done—that the principal benefit derived from such persons, is gained by the individual alone, in the health derived by the bracing and manly exercise of his body in the open air.

Your committee are happy to announce to you, that the object in the erection of the Institution, is being realized, and its friends have every reason to be satisfied with their exertions and sacrifices towards its completion and maintenance.

Its advantages for the cure and comfort of the insane, are becoming better appreciated, and it only requires to be better known, to have every ward in the building filled with patients.

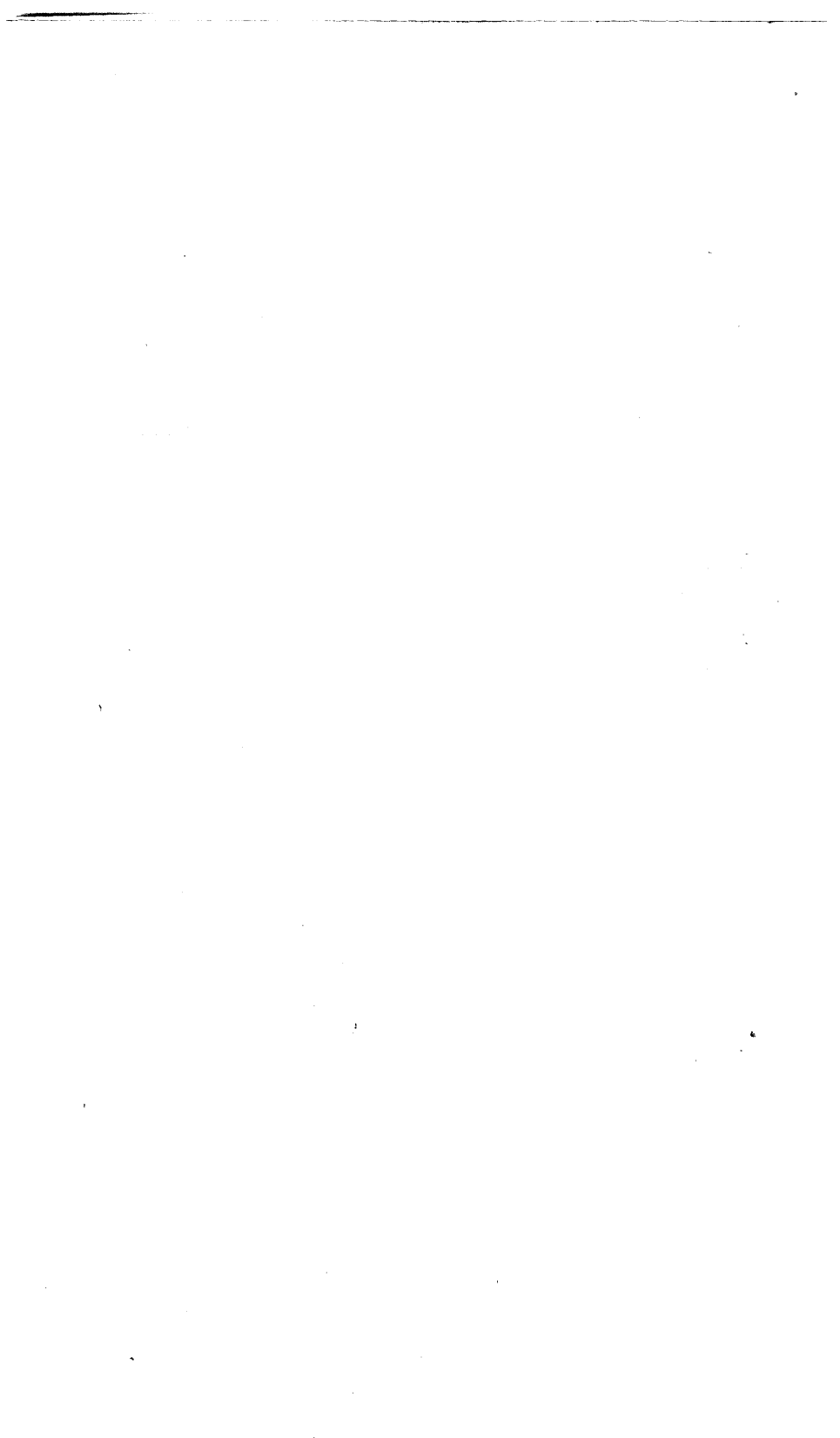
So far as your committee could judge, great attention is paid to the comfort and well being of the patients, and every means used by the officers and attendants, to promote their happiness. The patients mostly appear cheerful and contented, and seem conscious of kindness shown them, by those under whose care they are placed.

If any one doubts the importance of such an Institution for the insane, they have only to visit ours upon the other bank of the river, and then visit the insane confined in dens, or chained to bolts in cold, unfinished rooms, scattered over the State, to convince them of its utility.

The Trustees feel desirous that the Institution should, as far as possible, support itself; therefore they have asked for no new appropriation for the present year—they only ask that the balance withheld from the last year's appropriation, may be reappropriated, to be expended for the use of the Institution, under their direction, as originally intended. Your committee therefore recommend that their request be complied with, and that three hundred and fifty dollars be paid to the Treasurer of the Hospital, to be expended for the use of that Institution.

They therefore submit the following Bill. All of which is respectfully submitted.

GEORGE PARCHER, *Chairman.*



STATE OF MAINE.

RESOLVE making an appropriation for the Insane Hospital.

RESOLVED, That there be appropriated and paid out
2 of the State treasury for the use of the Insane Hos-
3 pital of this State, the sum of three hundred and fifty
4 dollars, to be expended under the direction of the
5 Trustees of said Institution.

STATE OF MAINE.

IN SENATE, March 5, 1844.

ORDERED: That 300 copies of the foregoing Report and
Resolve, be printed for the use of the Legislature.

JERE HASKELL, *Secretary.*