

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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DOCUMENTS

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THE LEGISLATURE

OF THE

STATE OF MAINE,

DURING ITS SESSION

A. D. 1856.

PART SECOND.

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1856.

THIRTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE.

SENATE.

No. 34.

REPORT

OF THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE

STATE REFORM SCHOOL.

IN compliance with an order of the Legislature, the Committee on the State Reform School, has visited and examined said school and by leave

REPORTS:

The number of inmates at said school at the time of the visit of your committee, was two hundred and thirty-five, committed for the various offenses and from the different counties in the state, as shown by the last annual report of the superintendent. Your committee, as far as it was enabled so to do, carefully examined as to the character and condition of the inmates, the effect of the discipline and governmental influences of the school upon them, and the manner in which the government of the school, in its variety and details, is conducted and executed. By law the trustees are required to cause the boys under their charge in the school to be instructed in such branches of useful knowledge as may be adapted to their age and capacity, and to be employed in some regular course of labor, mechanical, manufacturing or agricultural, or a combina-

tion of them, according to their age and strength, disposition and ability, so as best to secure their reformation, amendment, and future usefulness. In view of this requirement, such rules, regulations and by-laws, have been from time to time established, and now exist, as are well calculated and adapted to promote its avowed purpose. By a systematic arrangement, the inmates have certain fixed times for sleep, for labor, for instruction in the schools, for healthful exercise and recreation, and for moral and religious teachings, so that their time is all profitably employed. They have no idle time. The institution contains four graded schools. Your committee visited all the school rooms, in which were assembled the scholars of the respective schools. The scholars of all the schools were then assembled in the chapel, where the committee examined them in their various studies, and listened to their recitations under the direction of their proper teachers. The studies attended to are the same usually taught in our public schools. The examination was highly pleasing and satisfactory. Many of the scholars are well advanced in their studies; all have made good progress since the time of their commitment, and manifest a love for and attachment to their books and studies, rarely seen in any school; and the committee became fully satisfied that great care and attention have been bestowed upon the inmates in the school of the institution. There are in the institution three departments of labor, to wit: farming, mechanical and domestic. Mechanical labor embraces all the work in the tailor's shop, in the shoemaker's shop and in the carpenter's shop. The boys were examined by the committee in the workshop whilst there at work under their proper teachers. Here, as well as in the other labor departments, great attention is bestowed, and habits of profitable industry are acquired. By the examination of the school in its various departments, the committee became satisfied that the government, instruction, employment and discipline of the inmates, are of that character best fitted to reform and to improve. The trustees for the last year have regularly visited and examined the school. All

things connected with the school, as they appeared upon this visit, are satisfactorily indicative of the fact, that all the officers of the school have honestly and faithfully discharged their respective duties to the State, and to those under their care and charge; and particularly that the Superintendent, Mr. W. R. Lincoln, has performed all the various and arduous requisitions which his office imposes upon him, in such a manner as to deserve from the committee its testimony in favor of the ability and fidelity of that officer. The books of account and register appear to have been kept with great care and accuracy. The property of the institution in the hands and under the charge of the Superintendent, is in good condition and well taken care of. Since the trustees, agreeably to an order of the House of Representatives, have laid before the Legislature a statement in detail of the expenditures of the institution for the last year, it becomes unnecessary for the committee to report specifically in relation to the particular objects and purposes of this expenditure. It is apparent that it was made for legitimate and necessary purposes, connected with the school and its efficient prosecution.

The supply of water for the ordinary uses of the school is not sufficient—and in case of fire would be altogether inadequate to save the building from destruction. At some seasons of the year, in order to obtain a supply sufficient for common use, no small amount of labor and expense are necessarily incurred. By a suitable expenditure, water in abundance for all purposes, may be conducted from a stream near by, to the school buildings, but under present circumstances the committee do not think it advisable to recommend any appropriation for that purpose. The committee entertain the opinion that the appropriation recommended and asked for by the Trustees in their annual report, is in no degree too large, and also express the hope that the Legislature will cheerfully make that appropriation. Following the worthy example of several other States of the Union, and actuated by high and noble purposes, the Legislature of 1853 passed the act by which this school was

established. Its great object was to educate to some extent, and to reform, juvenile offenders, and thereby fit them to become useful members of society. At the time when the question for establishing the school was discussed, many persons honestly opposed the enterprise, doubted its success, and denied its utility,—others viewed it as of doubtful policy and expediency, and as an unsafe experiment,—but the results are such as to fully satisfy all who will carefully examine, that all such doubts and misgivings were unfounded. The success and great usefulness of this institution are no longer questionable. It is in reality one of the most useful, benevolent and economical institutions of the State, and on account of it we may well entertain feelings of laudable pride, and self commendation. The proper end of human punishment is not the satisfaction of justice, but the prevention of crime, and this can be effected in no way so readily as by reforming and educating the offender. In this school are constantly collected its hundreds of inmates, young men and boys, who in some way by offending against the laws of the State, have subjected themselves to the infliction of the penalties of the law. They are capable of becoming good men and valuable citizens. Here they are so managed and instructed as to awaken the moral sentiment, imbue them with a love of virtuous action, and fit and qualify them for future usefulness and happiness. By the influences of this school thousands of the young men of the State will be saved from lives of crime and infamy, and will be made to occupy through their lives, stations of respect and usefulness. The money of the State cannot be applied for a more meritorious and laudable purpose,—and it is to be hoped that the same liberal and enlightened policy that has heretofore characterized the legislation of the State in relation to this institution, will be continued,—and that its generous patronage will be so bestowed as to enable the school to accomplish, in the most efficient manner, all the humane and beneficent objects which were had in view by those who were friends to its formation, and for which it was designed and established.

The Reform School Building is one of the most elegant and perfectly proportioned edifices in the State. It is situated in Cape Elizabeth, at the distance of about three miles from the city of Portland. The building is of brick, on a stone foundation, with slated roof, and is in the form of a Latin Cross. The main central building is octagonal, having three wings, one extending north-west, seventy-five feet, one extending south-east, seventy-five feet, and the other, being the front wing, extending north-east, forty-five feet. The wings are three stories high and forty-five feet wide. At the corner extremity of each wing are octagonal towers, thirteen feet across and five stories high, extending two stories above the wings. The main or central building is the same in height as the towers, is surmounted by a cupola, and is sixty-five feet across from side to side. In the basement it contains the kitchen arrangement, consisting of large and extensive conveniences for cooking, washing and ironing, also the boys' bathing-room, and the furnace for heating the school rooms, &c. In the east wing is the dining-room, occupying the whole bigness of the wing. In the west wing are a store-room and two cellars. The central building, in the next or principal story, contains four school-rooms, each 32 by 30 feet in size, calculated for the accommodation of sixty pupils in each room, furnished with the modern seats for school-rooms, and so arranged by means of large sliding doors, that they may be thrown into one room. The east wing contains the tailor's shop, 40 by 45 feet, and a play-room, 40 by 25 feet. The west wing contains the shoe shop, 45 by 65 feet. This story is thirteen feet high. The next story is twenty-two feet high, and the whole area of the central building and the east and west wings are occupied as a dormitory. Running through the centre of each wing are blocks of dormitories three tiers high, each room being 4 by 8 feet in size, one hundred and seventy-six in number, and accessible by corridors. The open area in front is 13 feet wide. The whole of the open area in this story of the central building is occupied by the smaller boys, sleeping in common. The next story of the

central building contains the chapel, 60 by 40 feet, and the Hospital 62 by 22 feet in size. The front wing is occupied by the officers of the institution. The yard in the rear of the building is 100 by 200 feet in size, surmounted by a high stone wall. The barn, erected the last year, is a most perfect building of the kind, and may well be denominated a model barn, and is highly creditable to Mr. Lincoln, the Superintendent, who planned and superintended its construction. In size it is 130 feet long, 46 feet wide, with wings extending 32 feet. Besides a barn proper, it contains a granary, store-houses, pig-gery, carpenter shop, tool house, a large room for drying clothes, and a large and excellent cellar for vegetables and manure.

The farm contains one hundred and sixty acres. By the liberality of the city of Portland, this farm was purchased at a cost of nine thousand dollars, and by its deed of gift, conveyed to the State to be used for purposes connected with the Reform School there established. For this act of munificence for an object so noble and meritorious, that city is deserving of high commendation. The committee in making its visit was accompanied by the trustees of the school, for whose politeness and attention, together with that of the other officers, the committee expresses its gratitude.

H. J. SWASEY, *Chairman.*

STATE OF MAINE.

IN SENATE, March 26, 1856.

ORDERED, That 1,050 copies of the accompanying report be printed for the use of the Legislature.

WM. G. CLARK, *Secretary.*