

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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DOCUMENTS

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# FORTY-FIRST LEGISLATURE.

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SENATE.

No. 12.

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## REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON REFORM SCHOOL.

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The Committee on the Reform School, having attended to the duties imposed by an order from both branches of the Legislature, directing us to visit the school, inquire into its management and discipline, and thoroughly investigate its finances, submit the sub-joined report.

The Committee were at this institution a part of Thursday, Friday and Saturday, the 30th and 31st of January, and 1st day of February, where we received the kind and hospitable attentions of the very gentlemanly Superintendent, the Hon. Seth Scamman, and his assistants.

During this time, we had a pretty good opportunity to become acquainted with the moral, religious and educational functions of the institution, and some opportunity to investigate its financial operations.

With the former we are entirely satisfied; with the latter not so well satisfied.

The time of the boys is devoted each day as follows:—To sleep and rest,  $8\frac{1}{2}$  hours; to devotional exercises, incidental duties and recreation,  $5\frac{1}{2}$  hours; to labor, 6 hours; to study, recitations and school exercises, 4 hours.

On Sunday they have a Sunday School and other religious exercises. To these several duties they repair under the direction of their Superintendent and his assistants, with military precision and promptness.

The school where the boys are instructed in the various branches usually taught in our primary schools, is graded.

The senior department, under the care of Mr. Berry, employed at a salary of \$500 per annum and subsistence, whom we thought to be an excellent teacher and well qualified for the important duties of the position. In this department he has a female assistant.

The junior department, under a Miss Parker, to whom we credit a respectable discharge of her duties as instructress. She receives a salary of \$156 per annum.

At the commencement and close of each day, the Bible is read, Divine Grace is invoked, and they all with one accord, join in singing. They seemed as happy as boys could be.

The exercises in reading, spelling and defining, the recitations in grammar, arithmetic and geography, in connection with the devotional exercises named, could not fail to impress the visitor of the wisdom and philanthropy of the founders of this powerful engine of education and reform.

In the workshop, the boys were bottoming chairs with cane, at five cents a piece, under the more immediate supervision of a graduate from this institution, who is now employed as overseer, at a respectable salary. They appeared active, and each apparently endeavoring to rival all the rest in first raising the hand, which is a signal for more cane, their very faithful overseer, always upon the watch to supply when the first allotment is exhausted. Many of the boys were able to bottom six of these chairs per day.

Two lessons in each week, are given in penmanship, and a large number of the boys are good writers.

Nearly all of them seem to appreciate the kindness of their teachers and the value of their opportunities, evincing a good determination to become educated and respectable citizens. A large number are good mathematicians and grammarians, and with a continuation of their interest, will become qualified at the age of 18 years to instruct in the branches usually taught in the town schools.

Retrenchment in every department of our government, so far as possible, by an exercise of the most rigid economy, without crippling the operations of any profitable department, is in the opinion of your Committee a desideratum.

To this end we gave the Reform School, with all its appendages, our special attention; keeping in full view its indispensability, whatever the cost may be.

In accordance with the report of the Superintendent, the Committee are satisfied that the farm has been improved, year by year, under his superintendence, and is now in a good *comparative* state of cultivation.

We would however recommend with all proper deference to the Superintendent, an increased energy in adopting for a portion of the farm, a kind of crops, such as would require the largest amount of hand labor, and yield a corresponding value of products.

Currants, strawberries, cabbages, onions, and many other kinds, by investigation will be found to be adapted to the land, and should at once be applied, not by the rod or rood, but by the acre and ten acres, with the purpose of harvesting from \$400 to \$500 per acre, instead of from \$30 to 40, the present result.

Thus you will afford during the summer months, constant employment for the boys, permanent in its character, and in no way dependant upon the fluctuations always attendant upon manufactures and mechanical labor.

The management of this farm, as exhibited by its list of products on page 21 of the Eighth Annual Report of Trustees and Superintendent, appears to be very similar to that of farms of similar size throughout the State, and where the whole help is not equal to more than four good laborers.

To this management we except; and submit for the consideration of the people of Maine, that now at the end of eight years, with three constant hired laborers during the whole time, and a hundred and thirty boys more or less, from 7 to 18 years of age, there has not manifestly been in the conduct of that institution a wanting in the "spirit of dash."

We suggest the propriety of appropriating at least twenty acres of said farm to gardening and the cultivation of the above named and similar crops, believing that this portion of the farm alone, taxed to its utmost capacity, may be made to yield an annual income sufficient for the purchase of all the groceries needed on the farm, (to wit, the sum of \$4,000.) In the city of Portland, a distance

of three miles, will always be found a ready market for such productions.

The outlay for the inauguration of this system, would consist mainly in hand labor, an abundance of which will always be at hand.

Additional fertilizers would be required it is true, a supply of which may be obtained by a liberal use of muck, which is there deposited in large quantities.

The system of cultivation indicated, would afford employment for the boys during the six summer months and of such a character as to conduce to health and moral reform.

The six winter months remain undisposed of, and by dictation of the laws of climate, the labor of the boys must be performed in the shops, in such business as can be obtained.

Your Committee recommend, that such a system of mechanical labor be introduced, as would afford them the best opportunity to learn useful trades, and would also afford the best remuneration for their services, that they may be the better prepared when they leave to buffet their way against life's uneven current.

By reference to the report aforesaid, we find that the Treasurer charges himself with \$669 received for boys' labor, and credits himself with \$352 as paid for boys' labor, leaving a net to the State of only \$317 for their labor for the financial year ending March 31st, 1861, not including that done on the farm.

The Board of Trustees have estimated their labor for the year ending April 1, 1863, at \$500.

In other words they say, that for the six winter months, with an investment in the way of salaries of more than \$4,000 on the part of the State, these 130 boys cannot be made to earn in any business which they can obtain, more than 2½ cents in each day towards their own board.

This calculation is based upon the hypothesis that their united services are to be applied to the farm the six summer months.

It was once said by one of our most eminent statesmen, that the wealth of a country consists "as much in its brains as its hands." We have any amount of the latter at this institution; and are unprepared to say there is any deficiency in the former. But we do

say that the tax payers of Maine have a right to demand a smarter exercise of both kinds of capital.

The Committee believe these boys ought to earn at least 10 cents each per day, and do not adopt the idea that employment can't be found. A thing so highly proper, so beneficial, and so profitable to the school and the State, must and should be done. The use of this so common a phrase, "I can't do it," has stifled many of the finest intellects the world ever knew.

At 10 cents per day, 130 boys in six months would produce a revenue of more than \$2,000 instead of the mere nominal result, \$317, for the last financial year.

Your Committee are impressed with the firm conviction that by these and other improvements which may be made, this institution may be made self-sustaining, less the amount paid as salaries.

Somewhat out of the usual course, the Committee have deemed it a part of their legitimate duty to examine the estimated resources and expenditures for the financial year of this institution, commencing April 1, 1862, and terminating April 1, 1863, as exhibited on page 7, of Report of Trustees.

## EXPENDITURES.

Provisions and groceries for 13 boys at \$35 each, . . . . .	\$4,550 00
Clothing for same, at \$15 each, . . . . .	1,950 00
Furniture, fuel and lights, . . . . .	2,000 00
Buildings, improvement, farm, and labor, . . . . .	2,800 00
Salaries, . . . . .	3,200 00
Miscellaneous, . . . . .	1,800 00
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	\$16,300 00

## RESOURCES.

Estimated amount from cities and towns, . . . . .	\$1,500 00
"    "    from boys' labor, . . . . .	500 00
"    "    from farm and other sources, . . . . .	500 00
"    "    for bricks, . . . . .	2,800 00
Appropriation, . . . . .	11,000 00
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	\$16,300 00

To the first item in this table (\$4,550) add the resources of the farm, less \$500, estimated to be sold therefrom, and you have an approximation to the amount really estimated for the subsistence of the 130 boys and 16 officers, teachers, assistants and laborers.

The farm is said to be rapidly improving, and will therefore furnish more towards the subsistence next, than it has the last year. In view of this fact, we think this item ought to be reduced to \$4,000.

The next item is \$1,950, estimated as the amount required to clothe 135 boys. The rise in cotton and other fabrics required for the boys clothes, is believed to be nearly offset by the reduction already and prospective, in the number of boys from last year. The amount expended last year was \$1,401. Treasurer's Report, page 8.

This amount we believe to be sufficient for the next year, and therefore estimate clothing at \$1,401. The boys make and mend their own clothes.

The third item is for furniture, fuel and lights, estimated at \$2,000. The amount of coal consumed is 100 tons, at a cost of \$515; 100 cords of wood, at a cost of \$400; 6 barrels of oil, at a cost of \$150. This amount, \$1,065, will cover the expense for fuel and lights. Furniture is a word which has a very broad signification, but from the good condition of that which we examined, we are of opinion \$435 will be sufficient to keep it good, and make any additions necessary. Thus we deduct from this item \$500.

The next item is buildings, improvements, farm and labor, \$2,800. The buildings are in good repair; a large amount of fence has been built the last year, and \$2,000 is believed to be sufficient for the purposes named. We therefore deduct \$800.

Salaries are next estimated at \$3,200. This item has been examined with considerable care. The amount of each officer's salary is determined by the Board of Trustees, subject to the approval of the Governor and Council.

The salary of the Superintendent is now fixed at \$1,000 and the Matron's at \$200. The wife of the present Superintendent holds the office of Matron.

This yields to Mr. Scamman and wife, \$1,200. Their subsist-



ence and that of their three children, house, furniture, and horse and carriage use, are furnished by the State. Their duties are responsible and onerous, requiring persons of ability, yet we do not hesitate in saying that a deduction of at least \$200, ought to be made from their united pay.

The duties of the Assistant Superintendent, who is teacher in the senior department, are more onerous than any other officer of the institution. He has the oversight, night and day, of the inmates, sleeping in the dormitory, within hearing of the boys, where a dim light is kept continually burning through the night. Each boy takes his single bed in his own separate apartment, and his door is fastened. The duties of this officer are continuous. In case of sickness it is his duty to attend and look after their comforts. His pay is not a cent over a fair compensation. With the number or pay of the other officers' salaried, we are not prepared to find fault.

Upon examination, we find that the Trustees receive 10 cents per mile each way for travel, and two dollars per day for their services. It is necessary that they make a large number of visits per year, thereby giving them a large taxation for travel, and which discriminates largely in favor of a Trustee living in a remote part of the State. We advise the alteration of the law by which they may be allowed their actual travelling expenses and the per diem now given; and also a change giving the appointment of Superintendent to the Executive, and that his salary be fixed by law; and also creating the office of Treasurer, and providing that the Superintendent shall also fill said office without any additional compensation therefor.

The last item is Miscellaneous \$1,800 We find that the Treasurer paid under this head last year about \$1,500, and therefore a saving may be made from this estimate of from three to five hundred dollars.

In conclusion, we recommend from the calculations and figures aforesaid, that an appropriation be made to support this institution of eight thousand dollars for the financial year commencing April 1st, 1862, and terminating April 1st, 1863.

Per order of the Committee.

E. G. HARLOW, *Chairman.*

STATE OF MAINE.

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IN SENATE, Feb. 14, 1862.

On motion of Mr. HARLOW of Oxford, ordered that the Report of the Committee on Reform School, be laid on the table, and printed for the use of the Legislature.

JAMES M. LINCOLN, *Secretary.*