

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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DOCUMENTS

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THE LEGISLATURE

OF THE

STATE OF MAINE.

1864.

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1864.

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# FORTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE.

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SENATE.

No. 19.

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## REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON STATE REFORM SCHOOL.

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In obedience to the instruction of the Legislature, the Joint Standing Committee on the State Reform School have visited that Institution for the purposes indicated, and ask leave to present the following

### REPORT:

That a careful personal examination of several departments of the Institution, and obtaining such information in regard to the other departments as the circumstances of the case would admit, led to the conclusion that it is accomplishing in a good degree the benevolent and praiseworthy object for which it was established, and should still receive the fostering care and liberal patronage of the State.

The time spent at the Institution by your Committee was from nine o'clock on Friday morning until ten o'clock A. M. the succeeding day, availing themselves of the privilege of bestowing some special attention to the various departments and the exercises of the different hours of the day, not excepting the hour of rising, the place for washing, the table, and time of retiring.

In the School Room, system in arrangement and exactness in order in all the exercises in the opinion of your Committee approach very much nearer perfection than what is exhibited in this regard in our public schools generally. Thoroughness in teaching is a prominent feature in the efforts of Mr. Libbey, the Assistant Superintendent of the Institution, who has charge of this department under the supervision of Mr. Scamman, the Superintendent. He is an able, agreeable teacher, and his method of imparting instruction cannot fail to be impressive and to produce a lively

interest in the minds of his pupils. The writing books showed a carefulness in the use of the pen, and a neatness not surpassed by any ever observed by the Committee. This caution on the part of the boys is stimulated and encouraged by marks of merit by the Superintendent. In the various branches of an English education the boys are making commendable improvement. The singing connected with the school exercises, and with the morning and evening religious devotions, is an item not to be overlooked by the Committee nor undervalued by the State. Mr. Libbey is an experienced teacher of vocal music, and of the one hundred and sixty boys present all but about twenty are able to unite with him in this pleasing exercise, aided by the melodeon, skilfully managed by a daughter of the Superintendent.

About two thirds of the boys occupy the large school room and are taught by Mr. Libbey and a female assistant, while the primary department, consisting of the remainder, is conducted by a female teacher superintended by Mr. Libbey.

The officers and teachers appear to devote themselves faithfully and efficiently in promoting the best interests of the boys committed to their care, enforcing discipline mildly, yet firmly and judiciously, and so as to secure the respect and good will generally of those under their care. In order to discriminate a bill of graded deportment is kept by which boys in the higher grades are allowed privileges and favors very pleasant and desirable, presenting strong incentives to good behavior and close application, diminishing the necessity for corporeal and degrading punishments, and leading to self respect and self government. It is however found necessary to resort in some instances to corporeal punishments, but not with undue severity, as we were assured from different sources.

The boys are required to rise in the morning at the sound of a bell at half past five o'clock, and are allowed for dressing, washing, breakfast, reading the scriptures, prayer, &c., until seven o'clock, at which time they repair to the school rooms and devote two hours to study, then after a short time for recreation go to the work shops and other departments of labor, and with the exception of a recess of fifteen minutes work until twelve o'clock; from that time until one o'clock is devoted to dinner and recreation. From one to four o'clock to labor, excepting a recess of fifteen minutes, and then one hour for supper and play, and two hours, from five to seven o'clock, for study; then an hour for evening de-

votions, settling delinquencies and misdemeanors, and at eight o'clock they retire for the night.

The boys are at all times in the presence of some one of the officers, teachers or overseers, whether at work, study, play or at their meals, who manifest an interest in their comfort, reformation and general welfare, while the boys yield a cheerful and willing obedience to the rules and regulations of the Institution.

Of the one hundred and sixty boys about sixty are employed in the shoe shop under the care of two men to superintend the work, and earn from ten to thirty cents each, per day, of six hours. Twenty-five or thirty are employed in the chair shop on cane seats for chairs, under the care of one man, earning about the same as those in the shoe shop; and about thirty of the smaller class, averaging not more than nine years of age, are employed in the sewing room, under the care of a competent female, at work making and repairing clothes and bedding, and knitting socks, performing all the work of this kind necessary for the inmates of the institution. The balance of the number work about the barn, upon fire wood, in the cooking department, washing and ironing, so arranged and distributed, under the care of competent persons, as to perform nearly the entire labor in and about the premises.

We noticed with much pleasure and admiration the exact system and fine military precision observed in many of the movements of the boys in the various exercises of the day and evening, and particularly in going from the large school-room to the dining hall, whither they proceed in double file, in regular order, each one taking his accustomed seat at the table, remaining in a standing posture, until all have arrived at their places, when by a signal from the man in charge, there was a brief and comprehensive expression in concert of obligation to the Author of all blessings, after which all were seated and partook of the food in preparation, which in quality is well adapted to health, and in quantity abundant. It was particularly gratifying to learn that only two cases had occurred for the term of two years, in which it was necessary to call a physician, one a fractured arm, and the other a case of slight poison. Your Committee are of the opinion that this almost uninterrupted state of health is at least in part attributable to their plain wholesome food, their regular and suitable physical exercise.

Each boy is furnished with two suits of clothes — cheap but such

as to secure health, decency and comfort. All are required to observe religious exercises each day, and on Sunday to attend the more public services of the chaplain in the forenoon, and to receive Sabbath School instruction in the afternoon from a corps of benevolent and kind-hearted teachers and superintendent from the city of Portland.

The large and spacious brick building for the accomodation of the officers, teachers and inmates we found in tolerable repair and condition, but will need a small sum for repairs on two or three of the rooms. We made a brief examination of the barn and other buildings belonging to the premises, and also the stock, consisting of horses, oxen, cows and hogs, belonging to the farm. The barn is a very superior and commodious one which, with other outbuildings, we found in good repair, and the stock, particularly the oxen and cows, which are in excellent condition and very fine grade. A portion of the stone and brick wall inclosing the play-ground for the boys, needs to be rebuilt the coming season, and will require an outlay of three hundred dollars or more.

Although the season of the year is unfavorable for making critical examination of the farm, we are satisfied that under the management of the present able and efficient Superintendent, it is increasing in value and in its contributions to the wants of the institution, the total income of which for the last year, being about four thousand dollars.

There has also been a decided improvement during the year past, in the income from the labor of boys in the shops, as more profitable work has been obtained, and no lack of supply.

We regard the Superintendent as eminently qualified for the discharge of the responsible duties of his position, and the officers, teachers and overseers generally, performing the duties assigned them with credit and ability.

Your Committee would here express their firm and abiding conviction of the great benefits resulting from this philanthropic and benevolent enterprise, furnishing valuable instruction to the ignorant and misguided, elevating the degraded and neglected, and reforming the reckless and vicious.

In closing the Report we would tender our sincere and grateful acknowledgment to the Superintendent and his interesting family for their cordial reception and hospitable entertainment during our visit to the institution.

For the financial condition of the Institution we will refer members of the Legislature and others to the Trustees' Report for 1863, and to meet in part the current expenses of the coming year recommend an appropriation from the State Treasury of ten thousand dollars, and herewith submit the accompanying Resolve.

CHARLES BEALE,  
LUTHER SANBORN,  
J. B. WALKER,  
CONSTANT QUINNAM,  
PHINEAS LIBBY,  
M. F. HAMILTON,  
JOHN J. STEWART,  
EMERY F. JOY.

In view of the large amount of work performed in the shoemaking department, and in view of the profit resulting to the manufacturer, your Committee recommend that the Legislature direct the Trustees to inquire into the expediency of establishing a manufactory for this purpose, and that provided said Trustees should decide to establish such manufactory, an additional appropriation of five thousand dollars be made from the treasury for that purpose.

Per order,

CHARLES BEALE, *Chairman.*

## STATE OF MAINE.

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RESOLVE in favor of the Reform School.

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*Resolved,* That the sum of ten thousand dollars be  
2 and is hereby appropriated for the support of the  
3 reform school for the financial year ending April first,  
4 eighteen hundred and sixty-five, and no further sum  
5 shall be drawn from the treasury therefor during said  
6 year.



STATE OF MAINE.

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IN SENATE, March 11, 1864.

Reported by Mr. BEALE, from the Committee on Reform School,  
and on motion of Mr. BRADBURY, laid on the table and 350 cop-  
ies ordered to be printed for the use of the Legislature.

EZRA C. BRETT, *Secretary.*