

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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DOCUMENTS

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THE LEGISLATURE

OF THE

STATE OF MAINE.

1866.



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1866.

FORTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE.

SENATE.

No. 32.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON REFORM SCHOOL.

The Committee on the Reform School, by authority of the Legislature, visited that institution February 12th, 13th and 14th.

We carefully inspected the different work rooms and everywhere found systematic industry. The inmates present an orderly appearance. They are kept at work daily, six hours, at their studies and recitations in the school rooms four hours, and allowed for recreation two hours in winter and four hours in summer. The discipline in the school rooms is admirable and much pains seems to be taken to reform and instruct the boys. The school exercises were highly creditable to both teachers and scholars and would not suffer in comparison with our district schools. Singing is practiced.

The health of the boys is good. Their food is plain. We recommend improvement in the bill of fare.

A graded bill of conduct is kept and boys in the first grade are allowed favors and privileges which are denied to those in the lower grades. This helps to induce good behavior. Washing and changing clothes are attended to. The moral and educational influences of the institution appear to be excellent and must exercise a powerful influence on the future life of most of the inmates. All are required to join in asking the divine blessing at meals.

There are numbers of bright, intelligent, active boys there, who if good homes could be furnished them, would become useful citizens. The boys are not all necessarily vicious. Some have erred from want of proper care and because bad associations were around

them, and such, no doubt might, if they could be taken into good families prove trustworthy and meritorious.

The principal labor performed there this winter appears to be making small shoes and bottoming chairs. Some of the smaller boys are employed in making the clothing and knitting the socks for the inmates.

The trustees propose to do considerable in making bricks during the coming season, and also to introduce the braiding of straw, hoping that will prove to be a more lucrative employment than bottoming chairs. They also propose to do considerable farming. The horses, cattle and hogs are in good condition.

The buildings need repairs to make them comfortable. Evidently, the heating and cooking apparatus should be repaired, and the furnaces rebuilt and enlarged and the boiler re-set, in order to economize fuel and to afford suitable heat to the dormitory to protect the inmates from the cold. Other changes are very necessary for sanitary reasons.

It is evident that the Reform School will not become self-sustaining. There are several reasons for this among which are the facts that the boys are too young and small to earn a subsistence; that many of them are little acquainted with labor, when they are sent there, and soon as they are well taught to work, many of the best of them are necessarily discharged as reformed or are apprenticed.

We met there three of the trustees, Messrs. N. Woods, J. W. McCobb and A. P. Emerson. These gentlemen are giving much and careful attention to the wants of the institution, and are evidently men of ability and well adapted to their positions.

We recommend that a night watch be employed for the protection of the property, as it is impracticable to insure it; and it is also necessary for the safety and care of the inmates.

The trustees estimate the appropriations necessary for the support of the institution for the coming year and to make the repairs that are of pressing necessity, at the sum of nineteen thousand dollars.

Your Committee respectfully recommend that for the year commencing April 1, 1866, the amount of sixteen thousand eight hundred dollars be appropriated for the support of the school, and two thousand two hundred dollars be appropriated for extra repairs on the building and heating and cooking apparatus.

REFORM SCHOOL.

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The Committee are unanimously and decidedly of the opinion that the interest of the State demands that the Reform School be sustained and liberally supported.

HENRY BOYNTON, }
JOHN D. HOPKINS, } *Chairmen.*

STATE OF MAINE.

IN SENATE, February 16, 1866.

Read and accepted, and on motion of Mr. BOYNTON, 350 copies ordered to be printed for the use of the Legislature.

THOMAS P. CLEAVES, *Secretary.*