

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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FIFTY-FIRST LEGISLATURE.

SENATE.

No. 4.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONERS ON AN INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL FOR GIRLS.

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives in Legislature of Maine assembled :

The Commissioners appointed by the Governor and Council, under a resolve approved February 25th, 1871, "to devise a plan for an Industrial School for Girls on the family system, and invite proposals of lands and money for the establishment of the same, with a recommendation as to location and the appropriation necessary on the part of the State to put in operation one school on the plan above mentioned," have the honor to submit the following report, together with the accompanying bill, for your consideration.

We do not deem it necessary or expedient to go over the ground anew covered by the report of Hon. George B. Barrows made to the Legislature of 1868, nor to review entirely the facts and arguments contained therein, which are so ably presented by him for the consideration of the people of Maine, and to which your attention is again respectfully called, but there are questions of moment connected with the establishment of reformatory institutions, and the application of ordinary prison discipline to offenders against the laws, that demand our closest scrutiny and wisest legislation.

The State is the guardian of its citizens, the conservator of their morals, the protector of their rights, the grantor of their privileges, and its obligation is to secure the greatest good of the greater whole. It cannot discharge this trust wisely without a careful study of the sources of its material and moral power, and a zealous care of the springs of social life on which its civil being depends.

Civilized nations are learning that there is a better way than to punish for revenge, and the old notion that punishment is reformatory, is well nigh exploded. These ideas had their origin in a remoter time when might made right, and passion ruled rather than reason, but governments have perpetuated this legacy of the past, though discarding its barbarous principle in almost every other species of legislation.

States are beginning to realize that it is cheaper and wiser to reform than to continually incarcerate; that prison walls and dungeon keeps have less influence over the depraved and viciously inclined than the moral power of christian principles; and that to make a criminal feel the wrong that is committed against society till it becomes an avenging consciousness in his own breast, is a surer way to reform than to make him smart under punishments that he fancies inflict a wrong on himself.

The application of humane and christian principles to the restraint of the wayward and neglected, becomes of ten-fold more importance when the young are the subjects of prison discipline. The State does not want to rear criminals to perpetuate crime; it desires good citizens instead, who shall be to it a source of wealth and power. Hence the poor-house is not a suitable home for neglected and homeless children; the work-house and jail are not fitting places for bad boys and girls; these, *too often*, are only schools of vice, and the cold charity of the world, as they see it through the grates and bars of prison walls, blunts the sensibilities of the soul and deadens all the moral faculties. If we ever expect mankind to be made better under the influence we may exert, it must be by appealing to the best and noblest passions of the soul, not the basest; there is a touchstone to every heart if we only stoop to find it, a latent force in every soul instinct with life, when the power of love warms it into being.

Considerations like these have put it into the heart of the philanthropic and benevolent, and induced humane and wise legislators to provide for reformatory as well as penal institutions, placing the former along side of and even before the latter, and the success that has attended those enlightened, christian efforts, attests the wisdom of the Divine injunction concerning man's relations to man: "As ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them."

States and nations have expended vast sums for the detention and restraint of the lawless and ungovernable, impelled to do so by a morbid fear for their own security, keeping up an incessant

filtering of the turbid waters of human society, but have hardly bestowed a thought upon the disturbing causes that are continually casting up mire and dirt at the fountain. Make the tree good and the fruit will be good also.

The result of such beneficent measures in criminal legislation remains no longer in doubt; the experiment has proved everywhere a complete success. More than 75 per cent. of those sent to houses of refuge, reform and industrial schools, and kindred institutions, are returned to society fitted to become useful and acceptable members thereof, instead of cursing it with the repetition of grosser crimes.

The experience of our own State in the establishment of the reform school for boys is to the point, notwithstanding the unsatisfactory condition of affairs that has sometimes existed there, tending to influence the public mind unfavorably against it. We should be loth to abandon that institution to-day, from what we know of its operations already, though the results afar off are not yet seen. What is true of such a school for boys becomes vastly more important when reckoned in favor of a like institution for girls, even as the power for evil influences is infinitely greater when exercised by a woman than by a man.

Your Commissioners are of opinion, that what is termed the *family system*, as distinguished from the *congregate*, is best adapted to the purpose had in view, though there are strong arguments that can be adduced in favor of the latter; and that homes for the accommodation of from 25 to 30 inmates, so situated as to be under one general superintendency, are best calculated to bring the children under that moral and industrious training that will fit them for usefulness hereafter.

The responses to our circular, inviting donations of lands and money for the location of the school, are so unsatisfactory or incomplete as to leave out the question of location entirely, and therefore render the further details of a plan unnecessary.

But three propositions of any kind have been made; one of a farm of 125 acres, with an entire set of new buildings thereon, to be had by purchase, at the original cost of the buildings, situated near the village of Welchville in the town of Oxford. Coupled with the offer was the additional inducement, that if the proposition was accepted a lady of the place would make a gift of one thousand dollars to the school. Another, a gentleman in Portland, proposes to donate a tract of land situated in Cape Elizabeth,

valued at one thousand dollars, provided the school be located thereon. There are also intimations that the city of Bangor will provide an eligible site, should the location of the school come within its limits, with the probability amounting almost to a certainty that its citizens will increase the donation by the addition of some thousands, making the entire gift equal to about ten thousand dollars.

Meanwhile the question comes up for consideration by us, whether this shall be a purely State institution, or under the management of a voluntary association in which the State has a joint interest by means of its legislation and patronage, and is recognized in the board of its chief officers. After considering the practical working of both methods in other States, and in view of past legislation in our own and the prospect for time to come, we are inclined to recommend the incorporation of a voluntary association, believing that by a concert of action it would be able to incite in others an interest, and accomplish for itself all, and more, than could be done by the State alone.

In conformity with this opinion, we present the accompanying bill and resolve.

BENJ. KINGSBURY, JR.,	} <i>Commissioners</i>	
EDWIN R. FRENCH,		} <i>on an Industrial</i>
SAMUEL GARNSEY,		

STATE OF MAINE.

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD ONE THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-TWO.

AN ACT

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in Legislature assembled, as follows :

SECTION 1. That and
2 their associate subscribers be and are hereby consti-
3 tuted a body politic and corporate by the name of The
4 Maine Industrial School for Girls, and by that title shall
5 have perpetual succession, and may sue and be sued,
6 may plead and be impleaded in the courts of this state
7 and elsewhere ; may have, use or change a common
8 seal ; may receive, hold or convey any estate, real or
9 personal, that may come into their possession, and
10 which property, together with the funds granted to or
11 held by said corporation for the purposes herein named,
12 shall, with the income thereof, be exempted from
13 taxation ; may act as a guardian to the person of any
14 girl who, between the ages of seven and fifteen years,
15 shall be committed to its charge according to law for

16 the physical, mental and moral training of such girl,
17 which guardianship of such girl shall supercede any
18 other guardianship of parents or guardians during the
19 time that such girl is under the charge of this corpo-
20 ration, and no longer ; and may make such by-laws
21 and appoint such officers and agents as shall be speci-
22 fied in such by-laws, or, as may be necessary to carry
23 out the purposes of the corporation ; but it is hereby
24 provided on the part of the state, that the governor,
25 secretary of state, and superintendent of common
26 schools shall be, *ex officio*, of the principal officers of
27 the corporation.

SECT. 2. The said corporators shall meet for the
2 first time at the call of five of the corporators herein
3 named, to organize this corporation, adopt by-laws and
4 transact such other business as shall be necessary and
5 proper.

SECT. 3. This act shall take effect when approved.

STATE OF MAINE.

IN SENATE, January 15, 1872.

On motion of Mr. SPAULDING of Sagadahoc, laid on the table
and ordered to be printed.

SAMUEL W. LANE, *Secretary.*