

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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FIFTY-FIRST LEGISLATURE.

SENATE.

No. 37.

STATE OF MAINE.

The Committee on State Prison, to which was referred an order of the Legislature, authorizing said Committee to visit said institution and report thereon, ask leave to submit the following report.

Per order,

HENRY PENNELL.

The Joint Standing Committee on the State Prison, having visited that institution in compliance with the order of the Legislature, submit the following

REPORT.

The Committee, accompanied by Messrs. Chase and Dow of the Executive Council, and Mr. Prince, one of the Inspectors, left Augusta on the 1st of February, 1872; arrived in Thomaston on the same evening, and visited the Prison on the 2d.

We went through the various workshops where the convicts are employed, and saw them at their work. They were industriously engaged, and except for the parti-colored suits, the abstention from conversation, and an avoidance of direct gazing enforced by disciplinary rules, there was little peculiar in their demeanor to keep a stranger reminded that he was not in some well regulated manufactory of the free outside world. Those of our number who have been accustomed to visit the Prison in times past, think there is evident a marked improvement in the appearance of the inmates, as compared with former periods. They seem to be more diligent, more manly, and to manifest less doggedness than formerly. If this opinion is well founded, it is worth while

to consider whether to the plan of rewarding good behavior by the remission of a certain specified portion of time from sentence, (a system adopted we believe, at the suggestion of the present Warden,) this important change is not in a great degree attributable. It is certainly a motive for good conduct.

The cooking department was inspected, and inquiry made relative to the variety and quantity of food furnished the prisoners. All were satisfied that the rations are, in all respects, ample. The prisoners are also comfortably clothed.

The cells and dungeons were examined, and found to be scrupulously clean and in good order; but a sense of humanity leads us to hope that to the chilly recesses of the latter, especially in the winter season, offenders against the order of the prison may seldom be committed.

We examined the property purchased during the past year for the use of the Prison, and consider the appropriation of last year judiciously expended.

In relation to the disciplinary management of the Prison, we may say that it is as good as we can reasonably hope to attain, and is entirely satisfactory to us and highly creditable to the officers in charge.

For information in detail as to the moral, mental and physical condition of the prisoners, you are referred to the annual reports of the faithful Chaplain and Physician.

No change is proposed in the business management of the Prison. The Warden is of the opinion none is advisable, and while he makes the present system as successful as now, we think the Legislature will concur with him.

Some repairs are required for the Warden's residence and other buildings. An extension of the blacksmith shop and some change in the paint shop are necessary. It is desirable that the present limits of the prison-yard should be enlarged, and a new wall built along a portion of the northern side, both on account of the safe keeping of the inmates, and to afford room inside to extend the blacksmith shop and for other purposes. As the business of the prison has greatly increased, it is evident a much larger capital becomes requisite to conduct it to the best advantage, and the committee deem it wise that the Legislature make an appropriation of a moderate sum for the latter purpose. We therefore recommend the several following appropriations, amounting to \$15,000, viz:

For purchase of land, change of wall, and repairs and enlargement of buildings connected with the Prison, \$6,000; for working capital for the prison, \$9,000.

It appears there are certain lands belonging to the prison, some of which contain granite quarries. They are unused and their location and value are imperfectly known. They are distant and of no present use to the prison. The Committee recommend that the Warden, by and with the advice of the Inspectors and consent of the Governor and Council be empowered to sell these lands and quarries, and to convert the proceeds thereof to the use of the Prison.

We herewith present resolves to carry into effect the several recommendations above made, should the Legislature concur with us as to their propriety.

HENRY PENNELL, }
EDWIN SPRAGUE, } *Chairmen.*

AUGUSTA, February 8, 1872.

STATE OF MAINE.

RESOLVES in favor of the state prison.

Resolved, That the sum of six thousand dollars for
2 purchase of land, extension and rebuilding of wall,
3 enlargement of blacksmith shop and paint shop, repairs
4 of warden's residence and other buildings ; also nine
5 thousand dollars for increase of working capital, mak-
6 ing in all fifteen thousand dollars, be and hereby is
7 appropriated for the benefit of the state prison.

Resolved, That the warden of the state prison, with
2 the advice of the inspectors, and approval of the gov-
3 ernor and council, be and hereby is authorized to sell
4 and convey certain lands and granite quarries owned
5 by the state prison, and to convert the proceeds thereof
6 to the use of the state.

STATE OF MAINE.

IN SENATE, February 9, 1872.

Submitted by Mr. PENNELL, and on his motion laid on the
table and ordered to be printed.

SAMUEL W. LANE, *Secretary*.