

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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FIFTY-FIRST LEGISLATURE.

SENATE.

No. 50.

The Committee on Reform School, in accordance with the custom of their predecessors, and an order of the Legislature, have visited that institution and ask leave to Report.

By previous arrangement, the Superintendent of said institution met your Committee on Thursday, Feb. 1st, 1872, at the railroad depot, in Portland, who, with teams in readiness, immediately conveyed said Committee to their place of destination.

Your Committee, not deeming it necessary to go into detail, would say, that they examined with a great deal of care, the buildings with their surroundings, in all their parts, and from their knowledge of such institutions, were unanimously of the opinion that the Reform School comes fully up to their expectations. Neatness, order and discipline were everywhere apparent.

There are at the present time 129 boys who are recipients of the State's bounty, ranging from seven to seventeen years of age. Some noble countenances were to be seen among them. They all responded with an alacrity which showed that they were taught to respect as well as obey. They applied themselves to the several branches of business to which they were called with a dexterity that showed they had the necessary metal in them to make something in the future besides hangers-on, and outcasts of society; and, though they may now be an expense to the State, should they live to grow up, a larger portion will pay the cost, and some of them with interest.

The thorough manner in which the boys performed their work, the correctness and knowing certainty with which they recited their lessons, with some exceptions, were particularly noticed and highly approved by your Committee, speaking well for those who have them in charge. To all appearance, both from observation and inquiry, the boys appeared to be contented and happy.

Your Committee, deeming the education of the boys of paramount

importance, visited the schools with especial reference to the utility of that branch of the institution.

The primary school, taught by Miss Wales, appeared very creditable to her as a teacher, showing that her labors were useful and well applied.

The intermediate school, taught by Miss Dresser, was very interesting and much admired, not only for the useful and practical manner in which questions were put, but also the clear, decided and knowing certainty with which they were answered, showing to a demonstration to your Committee that the teacher has not mistaken her calling.

The grammar school, taught by Mr. Brown, in some of their exercises, did not come up to the expectation of your Committee, and we would most earnestly recommend that a more thorough understanding of their subjects be impressed upon the minds of the pupils.

Changes having been instituted the past year in the hours of work, sleep, and recreation, also in their food and clothing, nothing further in that direction is now recommended.

We saw nothing amiss in any of the officials or employees, and we would not forget to mention the Superintendent and lady, who appear to be well qualified for the responsible position which they occupy.

The farm stock looked in good condition, showing that their keepers know how to supply their wants. The farming tools, such as are for summer use, are all carefully housed.

The Reform School being a child of the State, it will ever require her fostering care. With that in view we would make a single suggestion. While your Committee would not admire the character of the soil of the farm, being informed by the Trustees that it is for the most part composed of stiff clay, therefore, taking things as we find them, not as we might desire them to be, would recommend, that the Superintendent cultivate that crop which will yield the largest revenue to the State. Put the surface in proper shape and condition, top dress with a mixture of ashes, plaster and well rotted manure, and let the main crop be hay. Your Committee have no fears of the result of the above recommendation, from their own practical knowledge in such matters.

The Trustees say in a supplementary report, which your Committee have carefully examined, that a further appropriation is

REFORM SCHOOL.

necessary to carry out and complete the improvements commenced last year. Those improvements are mainly called for in the laundry, viz., a washing machine, wringer, mangle and dry room.

Believing that the part that remains undone to be important to complete the first design, and as there is steam power sufficient to propel the machinery, we recommend an appropriation of sixteen hundred dollars for the purpose of completing said improvements, which sum will be in addition to the annual appropriation. The Trustees say in their report that an appropriation somewhat larger than the expenses of last year will be necessary to defray the current expenses for the coming year.

As the prices for food and clothing, from the present appearances of the market, will be lessened rather than increased, and as the present number of the boys is some twenty-five less than one year ago, with the number gradually growing less, your Committee see no good reason why the annual appropriation for current expenses should be much increased over former years.

We therefore recommend an appropriation of twelve thousand six hundred dollars for the necessary expenses of the State Reform School for the ensuing year.....\$12,600 00

Also sixteen hundred dollars for improvements in laundry 1,600 00

\$14,200 00

JESSE DAVIS,
 E. C. FARRINGTON,
 D. J. SAWYER,
 LUTHER PERKINS,
 DAVID BARKER,
 ISAAC PARTRIDGE,
 W. H. EVANS,
 W. W. BRAGDON,
 SAM'L D. WADSWORTH,
 HORACE HARMON,

} Committee.

STATE OF MAINE.

RESOLVE in favor of state reform school.

Resolved, That the sum of twelve thousand six hundred dollars for the ordinary expenses of the school, including additions to the library; also, for improvements in laundry sixteen hundred dollars, making the sum total of fourteen thousand two hundred dollars, be and is hereby appropriated for the benefit of the state reform school, for the fiscal year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and seventy-three.

STATE OF MAINE.

IN SENATE, February 14, 1872.

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

SAMUEL W. LANE, *Secretary*.