

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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Fifty-Seventh Legislature.

SENATE.

No. 1.

REPORT.

AUGUSTA, December 31, 1877.

*To the President of the Senate and
Speaker of the House of Representatives :*

The Board of Visitors, ex-officio, named in the act of incorporation, would report, that in accordance with a vote of the Board of Directors of the Maine General Hospital, "That the Board of Visitors be requested to make full investigation of the financial and business management and condition of the Hospital, and make public report of the result of their examination at their earliest convenience during the present month," they attended for the purposes indicated, at the hospital building at Portland, on the 20th inst., all the members of the Board being present.

After an address from the chairman of the Board of Directors, to the effect that charges had been circulated detrimental to the reputation of the Hospital, and that the Directors courted the closest scrutiny into its management, an invitation was given by the Board of Visitors for any specific charges that might be made.

In response to this invitation, without direct charges being preferred, certain criticisms of the management of the Hospital were submitted from a physician of high repute and recognized ability in his profession, long a friend of the Hospital, and intimately acquainted with its history, such criticisms going principally to the following points :

1st. That the cost of the hospital per week per patient, (in its first year \$17.41, in 1876 \$14.80, and the last year \$13.84), was excessive, and compared unfavorably with other institutions of the same kind.

2d. That a resident physician was unnecessary to the welfare of the institution, the substitution of a steward in his place being more economical, and promising equal efficiency.

3d. That the present system of heating was more expensive than the present needs of the institution seemed to warrant.

In response to the first of these criticisms the resident physician submitted a carefully prepared statement, showing that the daily expense for food, help, and other necessaries, were guarded with much care by himself, and always subjected to the most rigid scrutiny of a Board of Directors, composed of the most prudent and successful business men of Portland. He also proved very satisfactorily, that the cost per week per patient was on account of the small average number of patients, while, taking the expenditures of the last two years as a basis, with the hospital full, this cost would be less than that of all similar institutions in the country, with but one exception.

2d. The substitution of a steward in place of a resident physician, as suggested, would secure, it appears, a saving of but little over five hundred dollars per annum. With so small a saving it is difficult to see that any gain could be made by replacing the present head, a physician of admitted qualifications, with any person less acquainted with the theory and practice of medicine. This Board readily concurs in the suggestion made at the hearing, that the knowledge of such substitution by the public would injuriously affect the good name and reputation of the hospital.

3d. In reference to the heating apparatus, while it is quite possible that if the present small number of patients had been anticipated at the time of its adoption, a more economical system might have been sought, yet, it being already in use, any change would seem to involve a great loss. And it is the concurring testimony of Dr. Hill, and all who expressed an opinion on the subject, that the system of heating and ventilation now in use is the best yet invented, and such as would be imperatively required if the hospital were full.

At the close of the hearing, the Board of Visitors were conducted through all the departments of the hospital, and carefully inspected the system of heating and ventilation, the admirable plan of drainage, and the kitchens, and wards and rooms of the patients.

As a result of this hearing and examination, this Board can

only state its approval of both the general plan and the management of the institution. If any errors of judgment can be shown, they are few and of little consequence, and such as will remedy themselves as the institution grows older. The citizens of Portland, even those few who have felt compelled to criticize its management, are warm friends of the hospital, feeling a pride in it, and a deep solicitation for its success. The most skilled and prominent of the business men of the city control its affairs, and spare no time, efforts or expense to secure its prosperity. With good reason they regard its future as assured, and its embarrassments only such as will call for State assistance for a very few years. It is a noble charity, in which our citizens may well take pride, and to which the State may worthily extend its fostering care.

SELDEN CONNOR, Governor.

THOMAS W. HYDE,

President of Senate.

EDW. B. NEALLEY,

Speaker of House Representatives.

STATE OF MAINE.

IN SENATE, January 8, 1878.

On motion of Mr. NEALLEY of Penobscot, laid on the table
and ordered to be printed.

S. W. LANE, *Secretary.*