

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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FIFTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE.

SENATE.

No. 56.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON REFORM SCHOOL.

The Committee on the Reform School having visited that institution, in accordance with an order of the Legislature, hereby submit the following report :

We inspected the various departments of the institution as thoroughly as it was possible to do in the limited time necessarily bestowed upon it.

We were first conducted through the work-shops, where some sixty-five boys were employed in cane seating chairs, a light, clean, agreeable employment, but one ill adapted to the development of any mechanical ingenuity, or to form the basis of a useful trade, and we respectfully suggest whether it would not be wise to introduce some mechanical employment in which the boys might become proficient, and at which they would be able to find some means of support when discharged.

A boy leaving the school with no knowledge of any kind of labor but caning chairs, would, if thrown upon his own resources, as must often be the case, be obliged to beg, steal, starve, or subsist on the cold charity of the world. From six to ten boys are employed in the sewing room. They make and repair all the clothing and bedding, knit and repair the stockings. This department appears to be well managed by Mrs. Myrick, who has had charge of it for five years. An examination of some of the cloth being made up for winter suits, led some of the members of the committee to think it was not so heavy and strong as it should be for boys' wear in cold

weather. Six boys are employed in the boys' kitchen. This important department is under the management of Miss M. C. Shaw, who has been employed in the institution in various capacities for twenty-two years. The cooking is done by steam; the utensils were scrupulously clean; order and system was observable throughout this department.

Adjoining the kitchen is a very large boiler, which furnishes the entire establishment with an equable temperature. A steam pump has recently been purchased for forcing water into the boiler and for extinguishing fires.

The dormitory is a large, well-ventilated, pleasant apartment, the beds were clean and tidy, and the appearance was one of comfort and cheerfulness.

The hospital adjoins the dormitory, a small pleasant apartment, having but one occupant at the time of our visit.

The barn and stock received the attention of the committee, and were found in good condition, indicating system and care on the part of the farmer.

We were surprised to find that there were kept upon the farm only fifteen cows. Upon inquiry it was stated that it had been the custom for a few years past to sell the hay off the farm, or a large portion of it, thereby reducing the number of cows. The committee suggest that the hay be consumed upon the farm, and the number of cows increased.

We were invited into the boys' dining room at supper time, and saw them partake of their frugal meal, consisting of bread and molasses.

The committee could but contrast the scene with that at their own homes, to the meals their own children were wont to partake, and unanimously join in recommending a more generous and palatable bill of fare. While we urge the strictest economy in expenditures generally, and hope to see it practiced, we recommend a more generous and varied diet, and better and more substantial clothing for these unfortunate boys.

We find that there are employed in and about the institution, receiving pay from the State, seventeen persons, whose

salaries aggregate six thousand dollars. A list of the officers and employees, their duties and compensation, is appended to the report. There are in the school one hundred and twenty-six boys, and one officer or employee to every eight boys.

We think the number and compensation of the officers and employees can be materially reduced without detriment to the successful management of the school or the efficiency of the employees.

The Reform School is one of the established and permanent institutions of the State ; it has been in operation twenty-six years ; the State has appropriated in its support, exclusive of the appropriation for buildings, nearly \$400,000. The important question arises, what are the results of these large expenditures ?

Nearly 1500 boys have received the reformatory influence of this institution, have gone from its walls into the world, and are, if living, between the ages of eighteen and forty-five years. They have become men and citizens of the State. It would be a matter of great interest to the State to know what proportion of them have become good citizens.

We noticed in the service at night an absence of any prayer on the part of any officer of the institution, to which we feel called upon to refer.

This is a reformatory institution, and every influence to that end should be brought to bear upon these unfortunate children of adverse circumstances. The people of this State are a religious people, not necessarily belonging to the church, but believing in the religious sentiment upon which all reformatory work is based, they would have some officer of this school every morning and evening, in the presence of these wayward boys, ask of the good Creator and Father of all, His protection and guidance.

J. S. BERRY, *for the Committee.*

Pay Roll of the Officers of the State Reform School.

NAME.	Duty.	Time.	Salary.
George W. Parker	Superintendent	One month ..	\$83 $\frac{1}{2}$
Mrs. S. C. Parker	Matron	"	\$16 $\frac{2}{3}$
C. L. Parker	Assistant Superintendent...	"	\$50
J. A. Briggs	Overseer 1st Chair Shop.....	"	\$25
A. M. Sturdivant	Overseer 2d Chair Shop.....	"	\$25
Charles Babbidge	Overseer 3d Chair Shop.....	"	\$25
E. L. Babbidge	Teamster.....	"	\$25
N. Davis	Farmer.....	"	\$25
Edwin Lobdell	Engineer.....	"	\$25
J. H. Spaulding..	Watchman.....	"	\$25
Miss Alma Brackett.....	Teacher.....	"	\$4 a week.
Miss Olive Hobbs	Teacher	"	"
Miss Lillie Jaques.....	Overseer dormitory.....	"	"
Mrs. C. E. Reed	" front kitchen.....	"	"
Mrs. M. C. Shaw	" back kitchen.....	"	"
Mrs. B. A. Myrick.....	" sewing room.....	"	"
Miss Nettie Milliken.....	" laundry	"	\$3 a week.

STATE OF MAINE.

IN SENATE, March 5, 1880.

Report accepted, and tabled to print under motion of Mr. PAR-
CHER.

C. W. TILDEN, *Secretary.*