

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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Sixty-Seventh Legislature.

HOUSE.

No. 187.

STATE OF MAINE.

RESOLVE in favor of the Portland School for the Deaf.

Resolved, That the sum of eighteen thousand dollars
2 be, and the same is hereby appropriated for the purchase,
3 repairs and furnishing of a suitable dormitory for the use
4 of the Portland School for the Deaf, the title of said dor-
5 mitory to remain in the state; provided the city of Port-
6 land shall furnish suitable school rooms for said school,
7 free of cost to the state, so long as said school shall remain
8 a part of the school system, and under the superintendence
9 of the school board of said city, and the state may termi-
10 nate such arrangement with the city, whenever it shall
11 deem it best for the interests of the school, said appropri-
12 ation to be expended under the direction of the governor
13 and council.

STATEMENT OF FACTS.

The Portland School for the Deaf was founded in October, 1876. Three pupils only availed themselves of the advantages afforded by the establishment of the school. After much solicitude and inquiry, Miss Mary H. True, a teacher of long and successful experience, was placed in charge, but resigned at the close of the year and was succeeded by Miss Ellen L. Barton, a teacher of experience, whose strength of character, earnestness and thoroughness of purpose and untiring devotion to the physical, mental, and moral welfare of the afflicted children under her charge, can but call for our greatest admiration and respect.

At the time Miss Barton assumed the management of the school, from the nucleus of three pupils, the attendance had increased to nine, and under her efficient leadership the attendance steadily increased until 1889, when the members were augmented to fifty-five, the largest number ever enrolled.

Consulting a tabulated list, it is found the attendance each year was as follows: 1876 and 1877, 3; 1878, 9; 1879, 10; 1880, 19; 1881, 18; 1882, 26; 1883, 30; 1884, 37; 1885, 40; 1886, 48; 1887, 50; 1888, 47; 1889, 55; 1890, 48; 1891, 45; 1892, 43; 1893, 45; 1894, 39.

Under the former management, the school has been classified as a pure oral school, and it has been claimed that instruction was given according to the German method—through and by speech only.

Last year, however, the eclectic or combined system, as used at Hartford, was adopted, as more practical and beneficial to the deaf as a whole, and that greater mental development and advancement could be more readily attained and with less expenditure of time and money by the combined system than by the pure oral method.

Since the last report has been published eighteen new pupils have been admitted, making an enrollment of fifty-

nine—equalling the greatest that has been in the history of the school. They are distributed in counties as follows: Cumberland, twenty-three; Oxford, two; Androscoggin, six; York, four; Somerset, two; Penobscot, seven; Aroostook, two; Franklin, one; Waldo, three; Hancock, four; Washington, one; Kennebec, two; Piscataquis, one; Sagadahoc, one.

The pupils are not now sent from the school without any knowledge of trades or mechanical skill. At the opening of the fall term the pupils were admitted to the Manual Training School, recently established in Portland. While this met the needs of some, it was thought more practical results could be obtained by placing the older pupils in shops and manufactories, and in consequence there may be numbered among the boys the following artisans in embryo: Blacksmiths, 2; painter, 1; candy maker, 1; saddler, 1; carpenters, 3; shoemakers, 2; tailor, 1; broom maker, 1.

Most of the older girls are engaged in dressmaking, while one may be found in the leading millinery establishment in the city, and another learning the art of photography. The plan is still in its infancy, but reports from employers are encouraging and speak well for the intelligence, industry, and energy of the pupils of the school.

The school is in a growing condition, yet more can be done. A suitable home should be provided where these children can be constantly under the guidance and supervision of the teachers of the school. The little, helpless, dependent deaf children taken from their homes and deprived of mother-love need something more than can be given, when they are placed in a boarding house with eight or ten rough working-men, good, kind, motherly women though they are who may have them in charge. Beside one is never sure of the influences and temptations that may arise. Moral development, in a great measure, must be neglected under present conditions. One can readily comprehend also that deaf children are often placed in peril going and coming from school; more than this danger from contagious diseases may be averted.

STATE OF MAINE.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, }
February 22, 1895. }

Reported by Mr. PLUMMER of Dexter, from Committee on Education,
and ordered printed under joint rules.

W. S. COTTON, *Clerk.*