

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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# Sixty-Eighth Legislature.

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SENATE.

No. 24.

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## STATE OF MAINE.

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*To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives:*

Your committee, appointed to take into consideration chapter 121 of the resolves of the legislature of 1895, having fully considered the matter, would respectfully submit the following report:

The resolve, approved March 26, 1895, setting forth the requirements of the legislative body reads as follows: "Resolved, that the governor and council and the trustees of the Maine Insane Hospital be and are hereby directed to take into consideration the expediency of reducing the price of board at the Maine Insane Hospital, with a view of further equalizing the cost of the support of the insane of the State and further investigate the expediency of embracing the necessary amount for repairs and improvements in the general appropriations for said hospital and report with recommendations to the next legislature." The resolve logically divides itself into two sections. First, to inquire into the expediency of reducing the price of board; and secondly, if the above be considered

expedient, to take into consideration the necessity of embracing in the general appropriations for the benefit of said institution the necessary amount for its requirements in the direction of repairs and improvements, and submitting the same to the legislature.

There was considerable discussion in the legislature two years ago relative to the support of patients, which resulted in the passage of the above resolve. Members of the legislature, representing a constituency from some of the smaller towns, with limited taxable property, and being under the necessity of contributing to the support of a disproportionately large number of patients at the hospital, desired that the above matter should be fully considered, and, if suitable care and treatment could be rendered the patients, that the price of board might be reduced, and that the repairs and improvements, which have heretofore been maintained out of the general funds of the institution, might be cared for by a general appropriation of the legislature, thereby equalizing the support of the insane of the State. Your committee, regarding the proposition of such importance, deemed it proper that an intelligent and thorough investigation of the matter be made, have recently visited the asylum for the insane at Concord, N. H., several of the institutions in Massachusetts, and further consulted with the secretary of the State Board of Lunacy and Charity of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Through this procedure we obtained much information and many valuable statistics regarding the proper care and maintenance of the insane. We were received cordially by these various heads of the departments and found in them men of broad views and wide experience in their specialties, who had evidently given much thought and care to the methods devised for the comfort and well-being of this dependent class. We anticipated finding the existing conditions much the same in New Hampshire as in this State, hence it was thought proper to visit that institution, and make it the basis of our investigations. The state of New Hampshire has, in common with the State of Maine, but one institution; and it is practically supported in much the same way as our own. We found the price of board of patients a little in advance of our own; and the customary

maintenance of the repairs and improvements of the hospital is borne out of the funds of the institution, and in the same manner as applies to the Maine Insane Hospital. In Massachusetts we found the price for the board of patients at the various institutions was not so large as our own, but it is not the policy of the state that its public institutions should contribute any considerable sums towards repairs and improvements; and in consultation with the various superintendents, as well as with the secretary of the State Board of Lunacy and Charity, we learned the fact that the administration of each hospital estimated the cost for repairs and any new construction that might be necessary, and a general appropriation by the legislature was invariably made to meet the demand. This contribution, coming from the general funds of the State, makes it easy, so far as towns and individuals are concerned, to pay for the support of patients, and still secure for them the same care and treatment as in the system which prevails in New Hampshire and Maine.

The schedule which comprises the daily meals at the Maine Insane Hospital in variety and material compares favorably with any Hospital in New England; and there appears to be no good reason why the bill of fare should be changed, or its character and quantity in any way reduced. The cost of board varies in nearly every hospital in New England. In several of these institutions the revenue derived from private bequests, and large public appropriations, have reduced the price of board. Again, there appears to be less variety of food in those hospitals where the chronic cases are alone represented, or where the population is largely made up of this character of patients, and thereby the cost and price charged per week is less. Also there is not an uniform practice of aggregating the different expenditures which constitute the basis of the cost of board, so that comparisons are not always accurate. From a careful consideration and inquiry into the cost and price of board at other hospitals in New England, we find that the Maine State Insane Hospital has heretofore furnished board as cheaply as any other similar institution in the United States. Our high northern latitude of necessity increases the cost of

heating the Hospital, when compared with other institutions, and in a few instances the cost of material used is necessarily somewhat larger; but in no instance has the material practically been purchased above the wholesale market price.

An examination of the reports of the superintendent and the treasurer discloses the following material facts. The tables showing receipts for board per week from all sources, when aggregated, make the average price received per capita \$4.80.

The price paid by the State, cities, towns and individuals for the board of patients who have received the same ordinary care and treatment at the Hospital, has been per capita \$4.00 per week. This is eighty cents less per week per capita than would be necessary to pay, if all the expenses of the Hospital were borne by this class of patients. The classes who have heretofore paid over \$4.00 per week are persons of larger means whose conditions and demands require the special care of attendants. The class of private patients number twenty-two, and they have paid from \$8.00 to \$20.00 per week. There are fifty-six of the convalescent class who pay \$5.00 per week. From these sources of revenue the Hospital has derived the larger share of its profits. But the price paid by private and convalescent patients averages less per week than is charged by any other similar hospital in New England, and should not be lessened. The actual cost of board per capita, as shown by the total disbursements, appears to be \$4.58.

We have grouped together the legitimate expenditures of the Hospital, which enter into the necessary cost of running the same, and which under ordinary circumstances the aggregate receipts from the price of board of patients should pay. The expenses of the medical dispensary, greenhouses, house department, furnishings, interest and discount, when aggregated, would require a weekly payment from patients per capita of

	\$ .40 3-4
Subsistence, per capita, of	1.68 1-2
Heating and lighting, per capita, of	.63 3-4
Salaries and wages of attendants, per capita, of	1.04 3-4

Ordinary repairs and improvements from wear and tear	.26 3-4
Extraordinary repairs and improvements	.53 1-2
Total	<u>\$4.58</u>

The weekly income from the producing departments of the Hospital, as the farm, garden and dry goods, when divided per capita by the number of patients, produces a profit per week of \$.18. Net weekly profit and gain received from all other sources per patient \$04. Total \$.22.

This receipt from profits during the past year amounts to about \$8,000, and this amount has been used to pay the bills against the Hospital for improvements and extraordinary expenses, and if charged up to the board account would render the cost for each inmate for board per week \$4.80.

The committee would further recommend, in the line of equalizing the expense of maintaining the indigent insane, that, where municipalities have a valuation less than \$100,000, their unfortunate dependent insane population be supported by the State at the Hospital, if in the judgment of the Governor and Council it should be considered best to do so, on presentation of the facts by the superintendent of the Hospital. This would be a satisfactory method of relieving any seeming inequalities on account of burdensome expenses for the support of the indigent insane in ninety-six municipalities in the State. They would further recommend that a law be passed so that the Governor and Council will have the power, on presentation of the facts, if they deem it expedient, to have the Hospital expenses of a chronic patient, who has paid his own bills for a term of twenty years and become impoverished thereby, transferred to the State. The states of Massachusetts and New Hampshire have laws which reach and protect the above classes.

Your committee, after mature deliberation, have formulated and present the following conclusions:

We recognize the fact that an insane person should be regarded as a ward of the State. This consideration has been awarded to this unfortunate class by the legislative bodies of

all civilized countries for many years. If, then, this is the settled policy to be pursued, it must be apparent to all that the cost for the support of patients should be as equitably divided among the taxpayers of the State as possible, and that the maintenance of its institutions for the insane should be borne by the taxable property of the State. Admitting as we do the force of the above remarks, yet there are very important reasons why as yet the price of board at the Maine Insane Hospital cannot be reduced to a minimum, and why the State cannot at present fully equalize the burden of taxation. If the State should assume the responsibility of the entire support of its indigent insane, the demands for further treatment for this population would be so urgent that it would be necessary at once to erect suitable buildings for the care, probably, of nearly as many more patients as are at present provided for. It is apparent to all that, if the State contributed the entire support for its indigent insane, towns and individuals would at once require that all of this class, now found in private homes and almshouses, be provided for at the insane hospitals of the State.

In considering the first proposition of the resolve of the legislature of 1895, the trustees of the Hospital, after careful consideration and giving the matter much thought, have concluded to reduce the price of board and treatment at the Maine Insane Hospital for the indigent insane twenty-five cents per week per capita. This procedure, with the present number of patients, will reduce the annual receipts of the institution about \$9,000. The yearly expenses necessary to protect the institution from deteriorating, and to make such repairs and improvements as will promote proper sanitation, is necessarily large. A portion of the institution has been in existence for many years and requires constant repairs and improvements. In reducing the price of board for the purpose of relieving towns and individuals, the receipts will become so much curtailed, your committee have taken into consideration the second proposition contained in the resolve of 1895 and have, after careful investigation into the wants of the Hospital in the direction of repairs and improvements, appended the estimates for

its requirements for the years 1897-98 as follows, the same to be provided for by special appropriation of the legislature.

New floors in wards of old buildings,	\$2,000.00	
Painting wards,	1,000.00	
Moving horse barn, and for a new foundation and basement for same,	2,000.00	
New roads and walks,	2,000.00	
Grading from southern outlook to fill in ravine occasioned by removal of the barns,	2,000.00	\$9,000.00

This amount would satisfy the loss, occasioned by the reduction of twenty-five cents a week in board made by the trustees, and give the Hospital its usual amount to be expended for the above purposes.

Your committee are of the opinion that any further reduction of the cost of board at this time would be attended with financial embarrassment, and that it is not expedient; and they do not consider any new legislation with reference thereto to be necessary. The State has properly considered the financial interests of the poorer towns, and very generously pays from its public treasury \$1.50 per week for every indigent patient in the Hospital, leaving for cities, towns and individuals to pay the balance, which represents only \$2.50 per week. There are in the Hospital to-day 625 patients of this class. The committee would recommend that the legislature consider the requests of the trustees and superintendent, as set forth in their several reports, and make such appropriations as the best interests of the Hospital demand.

Respectfully submitted by members of the committee duly authorized by the Governor and Council and the board of trustees of the Maine Insane Hospital.

WAINWRIGHT CUSHING,

FREDERICK ROBIE,

BIGELOW T. SANBORN,

Committee.



STATE OF MAINE.

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IN SENATE, January 27, 1897.

Laid on table to be printed, pending reference, on motion by Mr.  
PARSONS of Piscataquis.

**KENDALL M. DUNBAR, Secretary.**