

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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Seventy-first Legislature.

HOUSE.

No. 246

STATE OF MAINE.

RESOLVE in favor of the Young Women's Home of
Lewiston.

Resolved, That there be and hereby is appropriated the
2 sum of one thousand dollars, to be paid to the Young
3 Women's Home of Lewiston, for the use of said institution
4 for the year nineteen hundred and three, and one thousand
5 dollars for the use of said institution for the year nineteen
6 hundred and four.

STATEMENT OF FACTS.

The Young Women's Home of Lewiston was established ten years ago this month, and its object was to care for poor, homeless working girls who come to our city in large numbers seeking employment. Most of them are unsophisticated and totally unaware of snares set for unwary feet. This home is a haven of safety and protection for this class of girls, who greatly need it, and through its influence and protecting care, it has been the means of saving some girls from a fate worse than death. It is not a reformatory, but a home to prevent the need of a reformatory. From the remote country towns the sons go west largely, but the daughters go to the manufacturing cities, and as Lewiston has more manufactories than any other city in Maine, more girls naturally come here, where they are subjected to great dangers, especially when they first come, and the Young Women's Home of Lewiston was established for their care and protection.

This is not a local work, but a work for the state, and has helped and cared for more than seven hundred girls in the Home. The known residences of the girls are as follows: Androscoggin county, 55; Aroostook, 7; Cumberland, 28; Franklin, 21; Hancock, 3; Kennebec, 72; Knox, 7; Lincoln, 5; Oxford, 37; Penobscot, 12; Piscataquis, 5; Sagadahoc, 11; Somerset 16; Washington, 4; Waldo, 3; York, 18; Massachusetts, 20; New Brunswick, 17; Nova Scotia, 4; New Hampshire, 7; New York, 2; France, 4; Vermont, 3; Ohio, 1; Montreal, 3; Ireland, 7; England, 2, representing 121 towns in Maine. The residences of the balance were not taken, but it is presumed that the average would be about the same as those given. Out of this large number, only eight were residents of Lewiston. In addition to those cared for in the home there is a large number of working girls who visit the home to enjoy the privileges of the warm, cheerful living rooms, three in number, parlor, reading room and library. Some come for the use of the sewing machine, many to read, some for advice, some for social amusements,

and many for the evening classes which are taught four evenings in the week. Last year there were six thousand and seventy-six visits to the home for these purposes.

The Home has so far outgrown its accommodations that it now has the greatest need of more room in which to do this very necessary work for the State's daughters. The Home is not at all sectarian. Every girl is welcome, with or without religion, and the more destitute she is, the more welcome, yet it is not an institution to take up girls and carry them along, but a home to help girls to help themselves. If a girl in the home wishes, she can board herself and do her washing and ironing without extra charge. The Home does not keep them after they can earn more than six dollars per week, for then they can get good, respectable places elsewhere, and the association wants to help the girls that are less favored. If a girl in the home is ill, she has the best of care without extra charge, and the Home has done a great deal for many girls in this way. One poor girl was very ill there 107 days.

The girls come to Lewiston to work from fourteen years upward, and it can readily be understood that a Home like this is greatly needed. It is a work that will lead far into the future, for naturally many of these may be mothers of the coming sons and daughters—the better the girl, the better wife and mother. The ladies of the association have worked indefatigably to get the Home where it is, and the good it has accomplished is inestimable. The home cost \$8,500. The sum paid down was \$4,000, and a mortgage was put on it for \$4,500. Every room in the house except one has been renovated, the buildings painted and repaired on the outside, a bath room added, a new furnace put in, all of which has been paid without any aid from the State, and the association is free from debt. The house is finely located in front of the park, and very near the working district. It has only seven sleeping rooms, and beds have to be made on couches and on the floor often, and then cannot answer the calls. The Home is not one-half large enough to meet the demands,

but the lot on which it is situated is ample for the erection of a large annex. From fall until spring evening classes are held for girls in the Home, and also for working girls outside of the Home, in which are taught cooking, sewing, common English and sometimes book-keeping, all free to the girls. The Home has a fine library of more than a thousand volumes of well selected books, the leading magazines and daily papers (many of which are given), sewing machine and an employment bureau, the use of all of which is without expense to the girls.

The ladies do not ask the state to establish an institution; they have already done that, and demonstrated its great need and success. They have never asked for a cent from the state until two years ago, and they are most grateful for what was appropriated then, and are now anxiously and hopefully looking forward to the continuance of that appropriation. The ladies do not ask the state to relieve them of a burden, but to assist them in this important work which has outgrown their strength and means to carry on alone.

MRS. F. M. DREW.

STATE OF MAINE.

IN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

AUGUSTA, March 4, 1903.

Reported by Mr. PAGE of Skowhegan, from Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs, and ordered printed under joint rules.

W. S. COTTON, *Clerk.*