

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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DOCUMENTS

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OF THE

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# FORTIETH LEGISLATURE.

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SENATE.

No. 5.

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## REPORT

OF THE

### COMMITTEE ON INSANE HOSPITAL.

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The Joint Standing Committee on the Insane Hospital, to which was referred so much of the Governor's message as relates to the Insane Hospital, report that we have made frequent visits to the institution, and with careful scrutiny have examined all its internal arrangements and general management, and the facilities for the convenient and successful administration of the duties of those who manage its affairs, and are constrained to express our gratitude to those who founded this humane institution, the admiration of philanthropy and the pride of our State.

The beneficent effects of the Hospital upon the community, as well as upon its inmates, were never more fully realized in any former period of its existence, and the causes which heretofore have operated to prejudice the public mind and weaken the confidence of the community in hospital treatment for the insane, seem to be nearly removed.

Your Committee commend a wholesome vigilance on the part of all, who have the care and supervision of the institution, that no abuse shall be allowed to creep in, which may tend to impair its efficiency in the restoration of the insane or the confidence of the public.

A strict observance of the great rule of kindness, which we regard as the *sine qua non* in the care of lunatics, is by no means neglected by the officers of the Hospital. We find the galleries neat and cleanly, and the food abundant and wholesome; the stock and barns exhibiting abundant proofs of economy and thrift, under the direction of a prudent and capable Steward.

Your Committee would gladly stop here, but humanity dictates us to proceed farther, and investigate what method to adopt, to furnish *good air*, as well as wholesome food, for the large number of human beings who are placed there by a virtual guaranty of the State, to furnish all the means for their restoration which justice and mercy demands.

In our walks through the galleries we find them so destitute of the means of suitable ventilation, that the odor was intolerable, and the air wholly unfit for respiration any considerable portion of the time; and the means of warming so feeble, that in a large portion of the winter months, it is impossible to raise the temperature above sixty degrees; and it is to these two important points, *heat* and *ventilation*, to which your Committee would direct the attention of the Legislature.

The utility and importance of ventilation is conceded by all, who have thoroughly investigated the subject. In modern times it is regarded especially necessary in all buildings where large bodies of men are accustomed to congregate; in all prisons for the confinement of criminals; in all hospitals for the sick and disabled; in all asylums for the blind, deaf and the insane.

*Pure air* is required as much as food and raiment. Without it we cannot begin to live—deprived of it we die. By inspiration, the vitalizing portion of air (oxygen) is transmitted to the lungs; there a chemical union takes place between it and the blood, by which the blood is purified, heat is produced, and new energy is communicated to the whole system, a kind of combustion occurs, and its products are expired in the form of carbonic acid gas, with vapor. This, like a poison, contaminates the surrounding air, rendering it unfit to be breathed again, unless new supplies are furnished to displace the old. The serious consequence resulting from breathing the same air repeatedly, with no opportunity to obtain a fresh quantity of the invigorating element, was well illustrated in

the case of the "*black hole*" of Calcutta, where some three hundred were confined in a small room, and nearly all died in great agony in a few hours, from suffocation.

No one, we think, can visit our Insane Hospital without becoming convinced, by a strong appeal, addressed, to at least, one of his senses, of the absolute necessity of *forced ventilation* in that institution.

It contains at the present time, about two hundred and fifty inmates—nearly all of whom, at this season of the year, are necessarily confined within its walls the whole time. Not being thoroughly warmed it is impracticable to open the windows in winter; hence they must breathe the same air again and again, which produces headache, oppression, erysipelas, typhus fever and dysentery.

Possessing diminished intelligence, the insane are uncleanly in their habits and apparel, and the air becomes corrupt by respiration, perspiration, by various exhalations, so that it is foul, rank. "It smells to Heaven," and as these unfortunate persons cannot make known their own wants, every dictate of pity and humanity loudly calls for provision to be made by the Legislature, for thorough, efficient ventilation, and for communicating the necessary heat to every apartment of the Hospital.

A Committee of the Trustees of the Hospital, having visited several asylums for the insane, made a report to your Committee, which furnishes a plan in detail, of *forced ventilation*, which is adopted, and in successful operation in three Hospitals in Massachusetts, one in Rhode Island, and in nearly all the public buildings at Washington and at Philadelphia.

No question can exist in the mind of any one who has investigated the subject, as to the superiority of this over every other mode hitherto adopted. It supercedes the necessity of all furnaces in the building, with their risk and inconvenience.

As the Hospital has been arranged with hot water works for warming it, which in the summer months would still produce a sufficient degree of heat without ventilation, your Committee deem it advisable to retain these fixtures and simply increase the heating power within the hot air chamber by means of steam in such amount as will allow the application of the *Fan*, for forcing the warm air into the galleries. Among the changes that would be made in the

present arrangement, would be the removal of two boilers, and the common furnace, now in the front part of the building.

By this change, five fires now under the building would be discontinued.

The Committee of the Trustees say—The additional convenience and apparatus required for fitting up, and carrying into effect, this plan, would be a building for steam boilers, engine and *Fan*; two new boilers with necessary appendages; twenty thousand feet of steam pipe; a steam engine and fan; and the construction of an air duct, to lead from the boiler house to the Hospital, and from one wing of the Hospital to the other wing; and small passages for the ingress of cold air into the chambers containing the heating pipes.

The estimated cost of the proposed improvement, is in items as per sheet A.

The general neglect to supply good air in the most important public institution in our State, seems to indicate an unaccountable apathy in the public mind on this important subject; yet any one, capable of bestowing a reasonable thought upon it, must at once perceive the absolute necessity of furnishing a constant, full and free distribution, at all times and seasons, of *fresh, pure air*, for its dependent and unfortunate inmates. We believe all the means which have been, or may be devised, for the treatment of the insane, fall into insignificance when compared with pure air of a suitable temperature.

To secure this end, your Committee do not hesitate to pronounce the plan, to which we have so briefly and imperfectly alluded, as the most approved among all which have been hitherto adopted, for warmth and ventilation. It is, in fact, the only means known to us, whereby a quantity of pure air, sufficient for all the purposes, can be thrown into the building, and the foul air driven out, with sufficient rapidity, to preserve at all times a pleasant and healthful atmosphere. Currents of pure air of any desirable temperature, are thus constantly circulating through the entire building, supplying one of the chief necessities of an asylum for the insane.

Your Committee submit the accompanying resolve.

JOHN BENSON, *Chairman.*

## STATE OF MAINE.

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RESOLVE making an appropriation for the insane  
hospital.

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*Resolved,* That the sum of ten thousand dollars be  
2 appropriated and paid out of the treasury of this state,  
3 out of any money not otherwise appropriated, to be  
4 expended under the direction of the governor and  
5 council, in the purchase of necessary materials, and  
6 the labor, for warming and ventilating the insane  
7 hospital.

## A.

A building to contain steam boilers, coal bin, engine and fan, . . . . .	\$1,500 00
Steam engine, . . . . .	600 00
20,000 feet steam pipe, . . . . .	4,000 00
Construction of air ducts, . . . . .	800 00
Remodeling hot air chambers and small ducts, . . . . .	200 00
2 steam boilers, . . . . .	1,200 00
Fan and its appendages, . . . . .	250 00
Labor in putting up works, . . . . .	1,000 00
Masonry and materials, . . . . .	450 00
	<hr/>
	\$10,000 00



## STATE OF MAINE.

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IN SENATE, Feb. 5, 1861.

On motion of Mr. Benson of Penobscot, 500 copies of the Report of the Committee on Insane Hospital, with accompanying Resolve, was ordered to be printed for the use of the Legislature.

JAMES M. LINCOLN, *Secretary.*