

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

The following document is provided by the
LAW AND LEGISLATIVE DIGITAL LIBRARY
at the Maine State Law and Legislative Reference Library
<http://legislature.maine.gov/lawlib>



Reproduced from scanned originals with text recognition applied
(searchable text may contain some errors and/or omissions)

DOCUMENTS

PRINTED BY ORDER OF

THE LEGISLATURE

OF THE

STATE OF MAINE.

1861.



AUGUSTA:
STEVENS & SAYWARD, PRINTERS TO THE STATE.
1861.

FORTIETH LEGISLATURE.

SENATE.

No 18.

REPORT

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON STATE REFORM SCHOOL.

In obedience to the instruction of the Legislature, the Joint Standing Committee on the State Reform School have visited that Institution for the purposes indicated, and ask leave to present the following

R E P O R T :

The Joint Standing Committee on the Reform School, directed by your order of January 23d to visit that Institution, to inquire into its management and discipline, and investigate the condition of its finances, have attended to the duty assigned them, and submit the following Report :

The management and discipline of the Institution appeared to us highly satisfactory; worthy alike of the officers in charge and of an institution assuming the important responsibilities here involved.

Your Committee witnessed the exercises of boys in the workshops, at school, and at their plays. In the school-room their recitations and their deportment indicated good discipline, and instruction. They sustained a successful examination, as questioned by their regular teachers, and members of the visiting Committee. It was very gratifying to witness the attainments in useful knowledge, made by a class of boys, who but a few months since were contracting habits of vagrancy or vice, and surrounded by influences which

were fast leading them to darker crimes and deeper depths of infamy.

At their labors in the various work-shops, they were orderly and industrious, and at the same time seemed cheerful and happy. Their plays, in the intervals between study and labor, are of course engaged in with zeal and interest, and constitute an important element of healthful discipline. Perhaps even more time should be allowed them for suitable recreations.

Passing to the affairs of the establishment beyond the school proper, your Committee found the condition of the school building, barns and out-houses; of the stock and crops, in most respects satisfactory. The farm itself was covered with two or three feet of snow; but the fences reported themselves in *standing order*; and the testimony of reliable parties warrants us in believing that the farm has been constantly increasing in productiveness and permanent value, under the judicious management of the officers in charge, as represented in the Report of the Superintendent and Trustees.

Your Committee were charged with the further duty of investigating the condition of the finances. We refer to the Report of the Institution, for an account of the expenditures of the last year and estimates for the year to come. We endeavored to ascertain whether due economy has been used in conducting the operations of the establishment; whether unnecessary force has been employed in any department of superintendence, or any extravagant salaries paid.

A few items of expense seemed at first somewhat questionable, but the Committee become satisfied upon investigation, that everything is now being done, in accordance with the suggestions of a wise economy. That the officers and pupils are closely and faithfully occupied, will appear further from an examination of the following daily routine of employments.

The bell rings at half past five in the morning, which is the signal for rising. Boys dress, make their beds, and arrange their rooms, when at the sound of the whistle they pass in order to the bathing room, where some officer is present to see that each one pays due regard to cleanliness. They then pass into the yard and thence into the school-room. Each boy combs his hair, converses or reads, as permitted, until the hour of prayer, when a portion of Scripture is read and prayer is offered. Thence the boys pass to

the dining room and breakfast. Thence into the yard or play-hall, and amuse themselves in various ways until seven o'clock, when all go into the school-room and attend to their studies for two hours. A short recess is allowed them at the close of school, when each boy goes to his work for three hours, having in that time a recess of ten minutes in the yard. From twelve to one, they are allowed to play in the yard or play-hall, and take their dinner. They then go to their work till four, with a recess as in the forenoon. Then an hour is allowed for supper and play. At five they go into school and spend two hours. Then devotional exercises are attended in presence of officers and boys. A short recess is then given them, and the time to eight o'clock is spent in the school-room. Settlement of all cases of delinquencies are now attended to, and boys are allowed to read and converse.

About eight, the boys retire, and some officer watches in the hall till nine o'clock, or until all are quiet. Thus, four hours of the day are spent in study, six in work, and four and one-half hours in recreation, meals, settlement, reading, social intercourse, and devotional exercises.

Some officer is always in charge of the boys at their meals and plays; thus by their presence preventing improper treatment of each other and the use of improper language in conversation. The only variation from the above, is on Saturday afternoon, when there is no school, and the boys work four hours, and bathe.

Sabbath day the boys spend their time in reading, studying their Sabbath school lessons, attending religious services and Sabbath school in Chapel.

When the boys are in the dormitories at night, and when they are not in school or at work during the day, they are mostly in charge of the assistant Superintendent, aided by the male teacher.

It remains for us only to express our conviction of the wisdom of those who founded the institution, and of the inhumanity and folly of seeking its overthrow. While we advise the utmost economy in the management of its financial affairs, we also believe that the true interests of the State require that an institution which has already proved itself an agency of great good in sheltering and reforming juvenile offenders committed to its keeping, should be liberally sustained. We are sure that the lads now enjoying the kindly care

and humanizing influences of this school will in maturer life be grateful for the wisdom and christian liberality of the State which provided for them such a retreat and gave them such opportunities for instruction and reform, instead of shutting them up in county jails or State's prison, where scarcely an influence to improve or reform could ever reach them.

Your Committee believe that no more judicious plan could be adopted, in point of *economy* even, to provide for this class of offenders.

But above all considerations of this nature, is the higher obligation resting upon us as the fathers of the State, to win back these erring children to the paths of industry and usefulness, wisdom and peace.

NATHANIEL PEASE,
LEONARD ANDREWS,
H. C. WARREN,
N. A. FOSTER,
C. WHITNEY,
STEPHEN NOYES,
CHARLES S. EMERSON,
J. H. LOVEJOY.

STATE OF MAINE.

IN SENATE, February 27, 1861.

On motion of Mr. PEASE of Cumberland, the Report of the Committee on the State Reform School, was laid on the table, and ordered to be printed for the use of the Legislature.

JAMES M. LINCOLN, *Secretary.*