

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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SIXTIETH LEGISLATURE.

SENATE.

No. 112.

The Minority of the Committee on Insane Hospital, which has had under consideration certain charges against the management of the Maine Insane Hospital, ask leave to make the following report, and recommend its adoption.

Per order.

H. B. EATON.

The Committee on Insane Hospital has sat long and patiently. They have listened to many witnesses for and against the hospital, and whatever conclusions we have arrived at, we have discharged our duties faithfully and well, according to the confidence or belief we have had in witnesses. It is a source of satisfaction to know that many of the members of the Legislature were present at those meetings, and heard the evidence for and against the institution, so that they had an opportunity for forming their own judgment from the same source of information as had the Committee.

In dissenting from the majority report we desire, in so far as our recommendations can be adopted and carried out, to place the Maine Insane Hospital in the front rank of similar institutions. The general condition of the hospital is favorable. Various improvements have been made during the past few years. Among these improvements may be mentioned the manner of heating and lighting the hospital, sewerage, ventilation, laundry, etc. The supply of water has undoubtedly been doubled since last fall. The Committee visited two ponds and two reservoirs. These ponds are fed by a water-shed and possibly by some springs. The Committee found at the time of its visit plenty of water for the wants of the institution. How these ponds may be effected in warm weather by absorption and evaporation we don't know. It is said that those shallow ponds are full of frog spawn and polloywogs, and the question arises, is such water fit for the uses of the hospital? The Kennebec river rolls at the feet of the institution, an inexhaustible supply of pure water. Wisdom would seem to dictate that the hospital be supplied from that source; then there would be no question as to the pure quality and supply in abundance of so necessary an article. The farm, under the management of Mr. Lakin, we believe to be everything that it should be. The

stock and products of this department are excellent, and we have no hesitancy in expressing great confidence in Mr. Lakin's ability to manage successfully the agricultural and financial departments of the institution; and why should the farm not be up in all the modern improvements when capital in almost unlimited amounts from the resources of the hospital has been at the Steward's command?

Two trustees, visiting committees, officers of the institution, together with the attendants on the part of the hospital, have found it a Mahometan Mecca; some who have made pilgrimages to the hospital very regularly, seem to have been as delighted as were the pilgrims of old when they arrived at the Delectable mountains. Everything was perfect; hardly the chance for the suggestion of an improvement, and all knowledge of ancient and modern science, in their estimation, was centered in its officers. The similarity of the testimony on this side of the case reminds one of the scene in "Hamlet" respecting the shape of the cloud:

HAMLET—Do you see yonder cloud that's almost in the shape of a camel?

POLONIOUS—By the mass, and 'tis like a camel indeed.

HAMLET—Methinks it is like a weasel.

POLONIOUS—It is backed like a weasel.

HAMLET—Or like a whale.

POLONIOUS—Very like a whale.

We may note one exception. A member of the Board of Visiting Committee did have the boldness to state that on his first visits to the hospital the odor was such throughout the halls that it was almost unendurable. He suggested ventilation. It was adopted at an expense of some \$40,000, including many improvements of the hospital, since which time he thought it had been as sweet as a rose. Once, however, his attention was called to some tainted meat, and asked to smell of it. He did so, and said he was sorry his attention was called to it, as he was sick himself and could not well judge. The two systems of hospital buildings, viz:

the massive, expensive, castle-like and prison-like structures, and what is known as the "cottage system" deserve careful consideration. The best asylums of Europe are not now enormous or imposing buildings, but a series or collection of small or moderate-sized, unimposing cottages or houses. In Europe, as in America, alienists began by placing the insane in gigantic palaces, and there, as here, they are finding out that with the increase of insanity, which could not have been anticipated here nor there, there must also be a change in the method of the construction and arrangement of asylums. The Royal Edinburgh Asylum is composed of five houses, separated by a considerable distance. It is believed and asserted that this splitting up of large buildings into a number of small ones, and this scattering the insane over a wider area than has been the custom formerly, is an immense practical advantage to all classes of lunatics; it allows seclusion for those who wish to be secluded; it allows variety of employment; it gives change of scene and environment so needful for sane and insane. It is now proposed by the trustees to appropriate accrued funds of the asylum to the erection of an additional building at an expense of \$24,000, without furniture, light or heating, that will accommodate only forty-five patients. There can be no doubt, under the cottage system, that buildings can be erected, costing some \$12,000, accommodating equally well over 150 patients. Legislators will at one see the economy, superiority and profitable advantages of the cottage system. That the grievous, irredeemable errors in needless extravagance and unsuitable "palace prisons" of other States need not be in danger of repetition in the Pine Tree State, the Association of Insane Asylums Superintendents has passed a resolution denouncing large hospitals, and asserting that only 200 or at most 250 patients could be properly cared for in one hospital.

In this connection we desire to call the attention of legislators to the writings of Dr. Pliny Earle, Dr. Clouston, in Massachusetts Board of Health, report of 1879, Dr. Willus,

Dr. Vonden Steinn and others upon construction of hospitals for the insane. Therefore, we say, let the proposed building be constructed on the "cottage plan"; that it be devoted to females, over whom should be a female superintendent, as at the famous State hospital at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. That the same Board of Trustees have charge of both male and female hospital; that a board of consulting physicians (unpaid), appointed half by the executive and half by the trustees, be established by legislation. By such a wise act on the part of the legislation, the Maine Insane Hospital may not only cease to be the subject of unfavorable criticism, but will become everywhere recognized as taking a foremost position in this important matter of lunacy reform, just as our State takes a leading part in all national questions of importance. With regard to the damaging reports concerning the Maine Insane Hospital, the charges of inefficiency and want of medical knowledge on the part of its officers, the laxity of the attendants, its rules being constantly violated or neglected, the want of sympathy on the part of attendants with patients, and their abuse of and cruelty to the insane, demand the removal of such officers and subordinates guilty of such offences, as unworthy of confidence and public trust. In proof of which we refer the legislators to the columns of the Daily Kennebec Journal, the Boston Globe and the Boston Herald, which have given faithful reports of the testimony of the witnesses before the Committee. The facts were brought out by witnesses on the stand, of which, on account of those having friends there as patients, we will only name a few, such as what was termed "churning," viz: throwing patients violently on the floor, kicking them, sometimes in the face and mouth till they bled; pressing the knees into the stomach until they were winded; seizing them by the throat and choking them till their faces were purple and their eyes stuck out; tying them in sheets and sticking pins in them; wringing their wrists; filling their mouths with soap in the bath-tubs; sweeping the floor with

others and kicking them into the coal-bin; cuffing, slapping, and pinching them with tongs; working others in the hot summer sun and on the Sabbath, and many other cruel things which your Committee forbear to mention, such as being placed in lodges in a nude state and chilled until attendants had mercy on them and clothed them.

To obviate these abuses we recommend the following improvements, all of which we regard as highly essential to the better management of the institution: 1. The employment of a larger number of attendants, and of more experienced attendants. 2. The employment of two head nurses, one on the male and one on the female side of the hospital. 3. The employment of a night engineer, by whom the halls and sleeping rooms could be kept at a healthful and even temperature during the night. 4. A board of visiting physicians, consisting of from three to seven experienced and successful practitioners, one of whom shall be a female physician. These physicians should frequently visit the hospital and thoroughly inspect the condition of the inmates, employes, etc. 5. Better discipline among the attendants to prevent the danger of abuse. 6. The employment of a female physician for the female wards. 7. That some plan may be devised by which violent patients may be kept covered, and not thrust into the "lodge" in a nude state. 8. More individual treatment of cases. 9. An additional female trustee. In reference to the employment of female physicians in our hospitals, we call attention to the following extract from the transactions of the Medical Society of the State of Pennsylvania in 1878. This society is composed of the most eminent physicians and surgeons on this continent. Hear what they say about female physicians on this subject, all in harmony with the best medical minds of this nation and Europe, so far as female physicians have been employed:

“What have been the results of woman’s labor in this comparatively short period of time? A woman’s medical college and hospital in Philadelphia, rivalling the University

of Pennsylvania and Jefferson Medical College in the capacity of their teachers, in the requirements for graduation, and in clinical instruction to students.

“ In New York, Boston, Chicago and Cincinnati, colleges and hospitals for the education and treatment of the sex, controlled and carried forward by women, are in successful operation; and, as if in anticipation of and preparation for the great duties to which we believe they should be called, the management of the insane of their sex, they are found in all the homes, reformatories, retreats, and other charitable institutions, which so greatly abound in our great cities, bestowing their skill, science and benevolence on the suffering inmates of those great charities. Wherever the sick, the suffering, the feeble and helpless are gathered, woman is the dominant power in management, the chief dispenser of relief and consolation. From among these earnest workers and physicians could be selected many women richly endowed with the natural qualities, the medical knowledge and the practical experience which would eminently qualify them for the medical superintendency of the insane of their sex. We do not disparage the qualifications of male superintendents, or call in question their humanity; but we claim that the heart of woman responds more warmly to the pleadings of those who suffer, and that her devotion and self-sacrifice are instincts strong as the love of life itself; that her gentleness and care, her pleading that the troubled soul and mind may be at rest, are more than medicine to the unfortunate insane. Let us not forget the successful labors of Miss Dix, how from one end of the country to the other she moved individuals, communities, legislatures and governors to the consideration of the suffering inmates of our hospitals, jails and almshouses; how, at her bidding, hospitals and asylums sprang up in almost every State in the Union, until now the care and treatment of the insane are earnest questions of the day. No one denies woman's sympathy with the afflicted, nor her capacity to pour consolation into the heart and light again

the soul from which hope has fled, or questions her ability to cope with man in the acquisition of a knowledge of the science and art of medicine; for has she not this very year, in a fair contest with the male aspirants for medical fame, borne the Boylston prize away from Boston, that boasted centre of science and literature?

Let no false professional pride keep women physicians from an insane hospital.

Finally, and in conclusion, we believe every recommendation contained in this report a necessity, if we wish to bring our insane hospital up to the standard of excellence where the insane can have the benefit of the latest discoveries in medical science, physiology and pathology. Special diseases like insanity, requiring a special and specific treatment in order to cure; that the brain itself is as much under the control of remedial agents as any organ of the system. Let them have the benefit of every law of hygiene. The diet of the insane, as elicited on the witness stand, is not conducive to the restoration of the diseased mind. People in disposition are very much like the food which they consume. The flesh of swine has long been discarded as a suitable diet for the sick. A diet of pork, fried pork, ham, pork and beans, peas and pork, baked pork, boiled pork, is a forbidden food in the law of Moses, and, though a "Buckeye" hog may be brought from Ohio, or a "Keystone" pig from Pennsylvania, we do not believe it so improves the blood that God can bless as a diet under the gospel dispensation what he cursed and forbid under the law.

When we read in the last annual report of the Superintendent of the hospital that: "In the animal economy, alcohol is a monster hydra-headed evil, spending its chief force upon the nerve centres, and deranging every part of the vast neurotic system. It should never be used in health, and I am persuaded after many years of observation, that it seldom does any permanent good even in sickness. Where one life is saved by it, thousands are destroyed by its use." We were

pleased, but when we read in the "Statement of Medical Supplies purchased for the Maine Insane Hospital for the year 1880," that \$181 had been expended for liquors during that year, we wondered what animal economy Dr. Harlow had reference to. We forbear further criticism. We believe this investigation will result in untold benefits to the Maine Insane Hospital.

The case is open to the public. It is not Dr. Butler against the hospital; it is not the State against the hospital, not the public press against the hospital; it is not the United States Association for the relief of the insane against the hospital. No, no, no; the prayers, the wails and the woes of these maniacs and their ill treatment have come to the ears and the eye of God, and His spirit has prompted this investigation, and the light and the truth have penetrated its granite walls and its cold and dreary lodges. If we would, we cannot forget the condition of these lunatics. When we close our eyes in sleep, the misty shapes of these maniacs come before the eyes of our soul and say to us, "Be true," and they are entitled to our sympathies and must have the benefit of advanced medical knowledge for their cure or relief. We have faith in God. We never will believe in a blind fatality, which plays at hazard with the destinies of men. We have never lost our trust in the Father of all. We, therefore, do not despair of the usefulness of this hospital in the future, and that the percentage of cures will be largely increased. We may not fully know the reason why the insane in every form are left to us, but in Heaven's name let us be merciful to them in all things as we hope for mercy. In a little from this, when they are made immortal from the grave, their minds will be as resplendent and glorious as any who have lived.

STATEMENT BY SENATOR DUDLEY.

The undersigned, a member of the Legislative Committee on Insane Hospital affairs, whilst not fully concurring with all statements of the majority report, still wishes to say that in his opinion the general and specific charges against the officers and managers of that institution, have not been sustained by the evidence before the Committee, or by any information that we could obtain. But that on the contrary, nearly all the evidence conclusively shows Dr. Harlow to have been a kind-hearted, patient, vigilant, competent and strictly honest officer; and also that Dr. Sanborn, his medical assistant, is in every respect most admirably fitted for his position; also that in the Steward, Mr. Lakin, the hospital has a man most admirably fitted for his position, not only in the management of the farm, but also in the finances, and all else pertaining to the duties of his office.

That in relation to the water supply, for the present at least, I concur with the majority report; also in relation to the food, heating and ventilation, as now applied. The evidence before the Committee, also shows the general kind treatment of patients by those having charge of them. But that by a sort of tacit understanding among attendants, that they should not inform against each other, some abuses of patients have been so concealed as to escape the knowledge and vigilance of the Superintendent; but that on the whole, there has been as few of such abuses as could be reasonably expected, and that the hospital compares favorably with similar institutions in other States, as indicated in the majority report; but that as no perfection as yet is the result of any human invention, as an institution we hope and trust every needed improvement which the logic of events may require,

as suggested, may be adopted and promptly acted upon ; and fully concurring with the majority in commending the institution to the liberality and fostering care of the State, I would submit the above suggestions additional to the report.

I concur in the minority report, so far as it recommends the employment of a competent female physician, and also in recommending that the money proposed to be expended in the proposed large additional hospital building, or such part thereof as may be necessary for the wants of the hospital, should be expended in what is termed the cottage system, and also in recommending in addition to the Board of Trustees, another competent female. And I cannot too strongly recommend, without reflection on the management, that the strictest vigilance be exercised over the attendants or employes of the hospital, and every possible improvement that may be needful thereto.

DAVID DUDLEY.

STATE OF MAINE.

IN SENATE, March 16, 1881.

Minority report of the Committee on the Insane Hospital, laid
on the table to be printed.

C. W. TILDEN, *Secretary.*