

REPORT
OF THE
JOINT COMMITTEE

OF THE
TWENTY-FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OF THE
STATE OF IOWA,

APPOINTED TO VISIT THE

BENEDICT HOME

LOCATED AT

DES MOINES.

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DES MOINES:
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REPORT.

To the Twenty-first General Assembly of the State of Iowa:

Your committee to visit Benedict Home and inquire as to the expenditure of an appropriation of \$5,000 made that institution by the Twentieth General Assembly, beg leave to report they have visited said Home, situated just north of the limits of the city of Des Moines, and find it an institution established by the Women's Christian Temperance Union of Iowa, for the reclamation and reformation of erring girls. The care of the property, nearly three acres of ground and a house of twenty-five rooms, closets, halls and stairways, is in the hands of a Board of Trustees, three in number.

The management of the Home is in the care of a Board of Managers of seven, a Matron and Assistant Matron; all these amenable to the executive committee of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union.

In our judgment, the money appropriated by the last Legislature could not have been more wisely and economically expended than it has been in the hands of the ladies having in charge the institution.

The \$5,000 appropriated by the Twentieth General Assembly was to be used for the "enlargement and support" of the Home. We find \$4,200 of this money has been expended in enlarging and repairing the building, the major part of this sum being used in the erection of an addition 40x36 feet, two stories, basement and attic, to the east of the building already on the premises.

Eight hundred dollars of the appropriation has been used for support of inmates. It is thus seen the money appropriated has been expended for the objects designated, and that there has been no diversion of money from the specified purposes for which it was appropriated.

The expenditure for enlargement was necessary for the comfort of inmates and for the care of the sick. The money used for support

has but supplemented that raised by charitable contributions for this purpose during the past two years. The cost of support for the institution, under most careful management during that period, has been about \$4,163, which has been contributed in money, clothing and provisions.

We find there is no indebtedness against the institution. The only paid employes in the institution are a Matron and Assistant, Mrs. A. C. Rogers and her daughter, who receive for their joint services \$35 per month, board, rooms and lights.

The house is a comfortable one, well lighted, well ventilated, cleanly and neat, heated by furnace, approved by Mr. Finkbine, who was appointed by the Executive Council to inspect the building for their approval. Provision for escape from danger by fire is good, and the sanitary condition of the premises is excellent.

The number cared for in this Home, coming from all parts of the State, during the biennial period ending September 1, 1885, was 118. The majority of the girls entering the Home are without parents or friends, and being early thrown upon their own resources for a livelihood, found employment at service in hotels and boarding-houses, where they were without protection. When misfortune overtook them, and all doors save those of disreputable houses were closed against them, that of this Home stood open to receive them.

We find upon investigation that results of the work of the institution in bettering the lives and condition of those enjoying its benefits have been most satisfactory. Homes have been secured for the girls in leaving the institution, and they are in nearly all cases earning an honest livelihood and living correct lives. Good homes have also been found for the children whose mothers could not provide for them, thereby making it possible that they become good citizens.

We deem the institution one of the most commendable charities in the State. It provides a home for a class homeless, friendless, penniless and unprotected, who would inevitably drift into lives of crime and degradation, and swell the ranks of criminals, not only by their own presence, but by that of their progeny, save for the interposition of this Home. For here they are taught to do well house work, laundry work, dressmaking, plain sewing, and nursing. They are brought under christian influences, their moral nature strengthened, and their spiritual welfare looked to; so that they go out better fitted to meet life's responsibilities. The institution undoubtedly saves to the State much that would most surely be expended in caring for these girls as

criminals, were they left to drift further into sin's dark ways. Their helplessness in misfortune appeals to all. The expense of their support while being fitted to become self-supporting should be equally borne by all. They can be cared for in this Home at less cost to the public than in any other place, and it is proper and right that the State supplement the money contributed by its citizens with an appropriation. The enlargement of the building makes it possible to care for more in the future than in the past, if only the means of support can be had. Therefore, we most earnestly recommend that an appropriation of \$3,000 be made the Benedict Home by this General Assembly, though this is a much smaller sum than was recommended by Governor Sherman in his message; that its inmates may be cared for, and that its doors may be opened to more of those who are knocking for admission.

Respectfully submitted.

P. M. SUTTON,

Committee on part of Senate,

GEO. L. FINN,

JNO. H. KEATLEY,

Committee on part of House.