

SIXTH BIENNIAL REPORT

OF THE

VISITING COMMITTEE

TO VISIT THE

HOSPITALS FOR THE INSANE.

1885.

PRINTED BY ORDER OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

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REPORT.

HON. BUREN R. SHERMAN, *Governor of Iowa:*

ANOTHER biennial period having passed, the Visiting Committee beg leave to submit this, their sixth biennial report, for the period ending June 30, 1885.

Your committee have made their usual monthly visitations, as prescribed by law, at each hospital, and have made thorough inspections of all the wards, and every part of said hospitals, both at the regular committee meetings and at the visits of single members of the committee, and have closely observed the conditions of wards and patients, clothing, bedding, etc. We have found the wards, as a rule, always clean and comfortable, and the patients clean and neat. The dining-rooms we found in the best of order, and the food of good quality and an abundance of it; and your committee have heard scarcely a complaint about food during this biennial period. Most of the patients are seen at their meals during these visits of inspection. At the meals served we observe a good variety of food.

As far as practicable a personal acquaintance has been cultivated with all patients, and we talk freely with them as to their condition and future prospects. Many are contented and satisfied with their treatment and situation. Others are persistently dissatisfied, and are of the opinion that they ought never to have been brought there; that they are not now, nor ever have been, insane; and regard their detention as an imprisonment, or for the profit of doctors or attendants, or others who committed them; and regard the whole business as a piece of injustice done them. We find all grades of feeling and opinion among them as there are among sane people.

No general charge of bad management in either hospital, from without, has been made to your committee within the biennial period past, and no essential dissatisfaction expressed.

The per cent of insane persons to the whole population does not

essentially vary from one period to another, and we have nothing new to offer, differing from the last biennial report. Our opinion is that the whole number of this class of our population has increased faster than our facilities for their accommodation has increased. The increase of room for patients that has been made is in the completion of the cottage at Independence, and of the addition of the east wing of the Mt. Pleasant Hospital; the former having a capacity of one hundred harmless chronic cases, thus making room in the hospital for that number of recent cases.

RECOMMENDATION AS TO THE CONTINUANCE OF THE POLICY OF THE
LAST GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

The number of insane persons now in the State, judging from the United States census of 1880, is about 3,000; of these nearly 1,400 will be accommodated and cared for in the State hospitals by the end of the present year. In this estimate, no account is taken of the new hospital in the southwest part of the State; this will leave at least 1,600 insane without State care, and practically without any proper care. This condition should not continue; and the next or Twenty-first General Assembly should continue appropriations for the hospital in the southwest so that it may receive patients at the earliest possible period; also, there should be an appropriation to locate another hospital in the northwestern quarter of the State. The location should be made centrally between the N. W. R. R. on the south, and the north line of the State; and the east line of Hamilton county on the east and the State line on the west. This hospital room in the southwest and the northwest will be all needed before it can possibly be completed.

Needs of the present hospital, asked for by the officers in charge, will be given in detail in their reports; and after scanning them closely, we think they should have every item in full allowed; among which we note as especially needed at Independence is the first, to enlarge the rear center, increasing size of kitchen and make room for a new bakery, and supply more sleeping room for domestics, with a supply of machinery and furniture, etc., is \$20,000, and is absolutely indispensable, the hospital having outgrown the old quarters.

The Twentieth General Assembly appropriated money to raise the roof of the laundry, to increase its capacity, and finding it would be insufficient they have not used it, and now ask for \$3,000 additional

to make the improvement; and we think it should be allowed, as it is very much needed.

We see that Independence Hospital asks an appropriation for 200 acres more farm land, and we think it ought to be bought now, while the land is cheap. It would be good economy to have it, too. It could be worked without additional hired help, and the work will be a great benefit to many patients. By this addition to the farm, all the hay, grain and vegetables needed for hospital use, of all kinds, might be raised in abundance, also small fruits and berries, and become a great saving to the State. This appropriation would be a good investment in the rise in value of the land. In fact, there is not one of the appropriations asked for by the officers and trustees of Independence Hospital that can be withheld without damage to its usefulness in caring for its inmates.

The appropriations asked for at the Mt. Pleasant Hospital are as follows:

First, \$100,000 for additional wing to accommodate 200 female patients, to correspond with the one constructed on the east, or male wing, which is now nearly completed and receiving patients. This is very important for the success of this hospital, in the better classification of the patients, and the increase of numbers accommodated. When completed this hospital will accommodate nicely about 850 patients. The fact that the other wing has been *built and furnished*, heating, ventilation and sewer pipes all in, is a guarantee that the money for the other wing will be judiciously expended. Three thousand dollars is asked for to build an ice house, to store 600 tons of ice, the present annual supply needed, is very much needed, and the hospital cannot without great inconvenience, and additional expense, get along without it.

This hospital also needs a building for cold storage or refrigerator for which they ask an appropriation of \$7,000. This building should be sufficiently large to contain an annual supply of butter, eggs, apples and other fruits, and beef and mutton killed for daily use, until used.

Also, they ask for \$3,000 to construct a building for an ironing room, for sewing, mending and general work, and distributing room for female patients, so that they can pass directly from their wards into this room. They have now to go through the central building, thus preventing many from being employed who would be benefited by it; and also doing away with the nuisance of a great number of

men carrying baskets of clothing through the rotunda, throwing open doors in winter time, cooling the house, and creating constant confusion. Also the rooms now occupied for the purpose that this building is intended for, are needed for sleeping apartments for female domestics who are employed in the several domestic departments.

We desire to speak in this report of the improvements being made in the wards of this hospital by the present superintendent. The hospital was originally very poorly built; heating and ventilation insufficient, and the latter especially bad. The plastering had become dingy and dirty, and the wards having been finished with hard dark woods mostly had produced a dark, dirty, gloomy appearance of the wards; and especially so of what is called the back wards. The floors and stools were also in bad condition, having become filthy in these back wards from having in them all the most filthy and worst class of patients. All the wards in the house have been overhauled, and the brick work, much of it, has been taken down, new heating and ventilating, water and soil pipes put in, and the whole system of piping for all purposes changed and rearranged so as to make it effective for its purposes. The wards have all been replastered, much of the wood-work made new, such as casings, base boards and doors, and all newly painted, so that the whole has been thoroughly renovated and thoroughly cleansed throughout, and is finished with the exception of the floors in seven or eight wards yet to be changed; and this work has all been done with the patients all in the wards while the work was being done, without a single accident, and no patient has been hurt; and the back wards instead of being the darkest and most forbidding in the house are light and airy, clean and cheerful as any in the house; and we can see the effect for good upon that class of patients. To carry this work to perfect completion, and for improvements and repairs, will include laying new floors in seven wards, removing the plastering, repainting and other repairs in the rear center, relaying the entire length of the main sewer of the hospital, \$6,000 will be required annually, or \$12,000 for two years.

They desire to remove and rearrange the front fences of the airing courts so as to give patients more liberty and a better view from the wards, and lay out walks for female patients in the grounds, and construct summer houses so that they can walk about in damp weather at all times, and to grade about the new wing in a proper manner.

For these purposes \$2,000 will be required. This is a necessity and should be granted.

We desire to call the attention of your excellency to the so-called State patients in each hospital. They are persons that have no actual residence in any county in the State, and are really residents of other States, which cannot in all cases be found out; but if the residence can be found out there is no appropriation for the purpose of sending these parties to their homes when found. They are filling up our hospitals so that it is becoming a serious matter, and they exclude our own citizens by taking up room that they are, in justice, not entitled to. Many of them are simply tramps.

We advise that a small appropriation be made for each hospital to pay transportation for these people to their own States when their residence is known.

The hospitals have not as yet been relieved of the criminal insane, the building for that purpose at the new penitentiary not having as yet been completed; it should be pushed to completion as soon as practicable.

The water supply of the Mt. Pleasant Hospital seems assured by contract with the city of Mt. Pleasant, being furnished by the city water works, and when the filter is completed, now being constructed under the direction of the superintendent, will be of good quality.

The water supply at Independence Hospital seems now to be abundant; the amount being used daily is about 2,000 barrels, and the quality is excellent; the source at present seems to be inexhaustible.

In conclusion we desire to say, that in our judgment our hospitals are well managed, and that the officers in charge and their assistants are faithful to the trust reposed in them; that the attendants are, as a rule, well selected and efficient; the law of kindness in managing and caring for patients by attendants is the rule, and is very seldom violated, and if it is, it is at the risk of the attendant losing a position.

The supervision kept up over our State hospitals for insane, has, in our estimation, a good effect upon all concerned in the management, and working forces of said institution. First, the board of trustees have their quarterly meetings at the hospitals; then a monthly visit from some member of the Board. Then come the visiting committee, who have their annual and semi-annual meetings and monthly visitations, to whom all patients have a right to appeal if dissatisfied: and during the sessions of the Legislature committees of members of both houses visit them; with this constant and watchful supervision it is

very difficult to go very far wrong without discovery, and it all has a tendency to keep everybody on their good behavior, and we regard our State hospitals at present as very safe institutions in which to trust our friends of this unfortunate class.

Respectfully submitted for the committee.

S. B. OLNEY, *President.*

FIFTH BIENNIAL REPORT

OF THE

Trustees, Superintendent and Treasurer

OF THE

Iowa Institution for Feeble-Minded Children

AT GLENWOOD.

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