

REPORT
OF THE
JOINT COMMITTEE
OF THE
TWENTY-FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY
APPOINTED TO VISIT THE
GIRLS' DEPARTMENT OF THE STATE INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL
AT
MITCHELLVILLE.

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REPORT.

To the President of the Senate and Speaker of the House of the Representatives of the Twenty-first General Assembly:

Your joint committee to visit the Girls' Department of the State Industrial School at Mitchellville have performed that duty, and beg leave to report as follows:

We were kindly received by L. D. Lewelling, Superintendent, and Miss Mary Marshall, Matron, who have charge of and conduct the affairs of the Institution, and by them shown over the buildings and grounds, and accorded free access to their books and accounts, and to the various departments of the Institution.

By an act of the Eighteenth General Assembly this property, known as the Mitchell Seminary, was purchased by the State of Iowa for the purposes for which it is now used.

The school building is a two-story brick, forty by eighty feet, with basement story, which is used as a cooking-room, dining-room and general household purposes.

The new administration office building is a two-story frame building, thirty-six by forty feet, well divided up and finished off, and is a very good building for the sum of \$3,500.

The laundry building is a one-story, twenty by thirty feet, with an addition of twenty by twenty feet, all with basement story, and cost the sum of \$1,500.

A new vegetable cellar, built in 1883, is a good structure, and very much needed.

The new house, for which funds were appropriated at the last session of the General Assembly, is a frame building veneered with brick, seventy-five by forty-seven feet, three stories high; the second and third stories being divided into rooms and closets sufficient to accommodate twenty girls on each floor with a nice, well-ventilated bed-room,

with also a room on each floor for teacher or manager; the first story being used for cooking, dining and sitting rooms, and for general household work. The building is well finished, and we believe as complete as can be for the amount of money expended thereon. The building is heated by steam, furnished by the central boiler-house on the premises.

The boiler house for steam heating purposes is thirty by forty, twelve feet basement foundation, laid with rubble stone walls twelve inches thick, with brick smoke stack. From this boiler house the steam is furnished to heat main school building, officers' building and the new cottage building built the last year.

The money appropriated by the last General Assembly for building cow stable has been used in building two wings to the barn, then on the premises. The wings are twenty-four by twenty-four each with stone foundation under sills. One wing being used for cow stable and the other for carriage house, with room on the left for hay for stock. In our opinion the money has been judiciously expended.

The number of persons employed in the institution and the salaries paid are as follows:

L. D. Lewelling, Superintendent, per annum	\$ 1,000
Miss Mary Marshall, Matron, per annum	600
Miss Ida S. Robbins, manager family No. 1, per month	20
Miss Ida J. Platt, manager family No. 2, per month	20
Mrs. Cena Ellis, sewing teacher	20
S. J. Deacon, service in kitchen family No. 1, per month	20
Margaret J. Erwin, laundry, per month	20
Mrs. Ida Bishop, relief officer, per month	20
Arch Williams, fireman, per month	20
Thos. Hazen, farmer, per month	20

All employes receive board, rooms, fuel and light in addition to above salaries. This is the custom, and they have been employed with that understanding.

BILL OF FARE.

SUNDAY.

Breakfast—Bread, fried bacon, gravy, potatoes and coffee.
Dinner—Bread, bean soup, stewed onions and pudding.
Supper—Sandwiches, with cake or pie.

MONDAY.

Breakfast—Hot cakes, butter and syrup, potatoes and coffee.
Dinner—Bread, pork and baked beans, gravy and potatoes.
Supper—Bread and milk, tomatoes and ginger bread.

TUESDAY.

Breakfast—Bread and molasses, fried mush and coffee.
Dinner—Bread, beef soup, stewed onions, rice pudding.
Supper—Bread and milk, sauce.

WEDNESDAY.

Breakfast—Bread and butter, coffee, hominy, hash from previous days' dinner.
Dinner—Bread, pork and beans, steamed apple dumplings with dressing.
Supper—Bread, baked potatoes and gravy.

THURSDAY.

Breakfast—Bread, coffee, fried bacon, apple sauce.
Dinner—Soup, corn bread, butter, pickles, fried onions.
Supper—Bread and milk, fruit.

FRIDAY.

Breakfast—Bread, coffee, rice with sugar, salt fish.
Dinner—Vegetable soup, meat stew with dumplings, corn bread.
Supper—Bread and molasses, baked potatoes and gravy.

SATURDAY.

Breakfast—Bread, coffee, fried potatoes and sauce.
Dinner—Biscuit and butter, mashed turnips, apple roll.
Supper—Bread and butter, fish, dried apple sauce, and milk.

The Board of Trustees have urged the necessity of purchasing an adjoining eighty acres of land, and your committee after having thoroughly examining the land, believe that it would be an advantage to the Institution and would probably settle a question with the adjoining owners in reference to the sewerage of the Institution, as great complaint is made by reason of the sewerage flowing over this adjoining land, but owing to the condition of the finances of the State at present, your committee do not feel warranted in making any recommendation of purchase.

The trustees also urge the necessity of a new building similar to the one just built. Your committee believe the same is needed for the purpose of securing the best results from the Institution. At present there are one hundred and twelve inmates, and with the present

provision as many as twenty-five girls are compelled to sleep in one room, thus placing the comparatively good with the vicious, so as to make it impossible to secure such results as are desirable.

Thus far your committee think the appropriations made by last General Assembly have been wisely and economically expended, and they have been expended for the objects for which appropriated. And that the acts of the Seventeenth General Assembly have been complied with, and no contracted indebtedness in excess of appropriation. Your committee would, however, say that in the appropriation for new building, no provision has been made for heating. The trustees have placed in the said new building new steam heating apparatus to cost one thousand dollars, with the understanding that if the General Assembly fails to make appropriation for the same, that same can be removed without expense to the State. Your committee would recommend an appropriation to pay for the same.

We believe there has been no diversion of any money from the specific purposes for which appropriated.

The buildings are all so constructed that in case of fire it would be very easy to escape from them, and the inmates are in no greater danger than are persons who live in ordinary farm or dwelling-houses, and no extra means of escape are required.

No sufficient means have yet been provided for furnishing water supply. An appropriation made by last General Assembly is all expended, and it will require an amount equal to fifteen hundred dollars to finish the reservoir in process of construction, and your committee recommend an appropriation for that purpose.

The health of the inmates is good, and the sanitary condition of the Institution is excellent.

In addition to the foregoing your committee desire to quote the closing remarks of a former visiting committee and would hereby renew the same suggestions:

Whether the suggestions made are in the direct line of our duty may be doubted by some, but we will venture just one move, which is not done in the spirit of criticism of the officers or manager; their field of labor is a hard one indeed and we believe they are doing faithful and efficient work, and work that they might well shrink from if no higher motives actuated them than the mere desire to earn their salaries. Nor do we believe that the State is paying more than the worthy Superintendent, Matron and other employes earn. But we think that these salaries, amount paid for books and stationery,

fuel and lights and other current expenses should be provided for by appropriations for these specific purposes. And that the support of the inmates be they many or few, should be by such allowance per month to each as will surely furnish her with all necessary food, clothing and other matters required for her comfort and support, after contributing her own labor thereto when not engaged in her school work.

The thickness of the slices of bread they eat should not be conditioned or made to depend upon the price paid for coal to keep them warm, or upon the general running expenses of the Institution, or the number of bad girls in Iowa that may find their way into this school.

Under the present system there is paid for each inmate ten dollars per month, and out of this fund salaries, current expenses as above, and support of inmates are all paid. Salaries and expenses will not grow less, so it is easy to see that there is a minimum number of inmates, whose presence in the school is absolutely necessary to preserve its very life. And should the number be lessened at any time by death, or escape of very bad girls, or by the discharge or release of reformed ones, just to the extent that this vital number is so lessened will the condition of those remaining tend toward absolute want or starvation.

Again, we believe girls, when reformed, should graduate out of this school, and there should be no obstacle in the way, however slight.

But if the life of the Institution and the support of the other inmates at that very time should depend upon their longer stay, may it not happen that the reformatory period of the life of some poor Iowa girl, committed to the school, may extend far beyond the reformatory period and assume the form of involuntary servitude, or indeed imprisonment? If so, the system of support is wrong. And while there may never have been any abuse of this kind (and we distinctly aver that we know of none), yet your committee feel that this Institution to which our girls may be sent for a period of eleven years of their young lives, should in its system of support be at once put upon the most humane and liberal basis.

P. M. SUTTON,
Committee on part of Senate,

OLEY NELSON,
W. W. KLINE,
Committee on part of House.