

REPORT  
OF THE  
JOINT COMMITTEE

OF THE  
TWENTY-THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OF THE  
STATE OF IOWA,

APPOINTED TO VISIT THE  
STATE FISH HATCHING HOUSE

LOCATED AT  
SPIRIT LAKE.

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PRINTED BY ORDER OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

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## REPORT.

In pursuance of the concurrent resolution of the Twenty-third General Assembly, the committee visited the State Fish Hatching House at Spirit Lake, and beg leave to submit the following report:

The property consists of 3.47 acres of land situated on the isthmus dividing the waters of Spirit Lake and Lake Okoboji, in Dickinson county, Iowa, and is near the tracks of the Burlington, Cedar Rapids & Northern Railroad. This property was deeded to the State by the Spirit Lake Hotel and Transportation Company and the Cedar Rapids and Iowa Falls Land and Town Lot Company.

The first deed from said Hotel and Transportation Company, which conveys three acres of said land, however, provides that in case the use of said property, as a fish hatchery, is discontinued by the State, then the land so conveyed shall revert to the Hotel and Transportation Company.

Your committee was informed that at the time of the selection of the location and erection of improvements the waters in the lakes on both sides of the isthmus were in such a condition as to afford an ample supply of water, for the purpose of the hatching house, in fact making the locations very highly favored ones for the purpose. The continued drought in that locality for the past three seasons has changed this, and the ground, ponds and hatching house proper, since last November, have been devoid of running water, and recourse has been had to the use of pumps for the necessary supply. This condition of affairs cannot be remedied, except by an additional expenditure of money for a pumping station, till the water in Spirit Lake shall rise to its normal stage. This lake is now four to five feet lower than it was when the hatchery was established.

The grounds of the plant are surrounded by a wire fence and the improvements thereon consist of a frame building 20x40 feet, with stone foundation, with cemented floor, and a barn worth about one hundred dollars (\$100.00). At the best they are cheap structures,

but as good, perhaps, as the limited appropriation would warrant and fairly suitable for present demands.

The apparatus consists of hatching troughs and screens sufficient to handle a half-million trout eggs, and chase jars sufficient to handle from four to five million pike eggs. There are quite a number of shipping cans and a variety of smaller necessary articles such as tools, nets, etc; one good horse; one light wagon; office chairs and table constituting the balance of the property.

There are six small winter ponds properly walled, with suitable partitions for preserving the breeding fish during the winter. Five large ponds not walled, are used in the summer for breeding purposes. These ponds are all connected with a supply pipe about seven hundred feet long, and extending out into Spirit Lake about two hundred feet. Owing to the low stage of water at present, water does not flow through this pipe, in consequence of which no hatching is being carried on this winter. The Commissioner informs your committee that the winter ponds, now covered with ice, contain a sufficient number of carp, black bass, crappies and gold fish breeders to fully stock the breeding ponds. All small fry were distributed throughout the State last fall, except a few gold fish, which are kept in a tank in the hatching house proper.

The property is in charge of an employe of the Fish Commissioner, at a salary of \$35 per month. Mr. Carlton, the gentlemanly Commissioner, himself resides in the town of Spirit Lake, within one and one-half miles of the hatching house, and evinces a spirit of earnestness in his duties, but readily admits that his surroundings and opportunities have not met that measure of success which he had hoped for when assuming the office.

At this time the entire water supply is obtained by pumping.

In compliance with the instructions of your honorable body, inquiry and examinations, so far as applicable to this institution, were made by the committee concerning the expenditures of last appropriation, and the following is submitted:

Expenditures from April 1, 1888, to June 30, 1889, out of last appropriation, as shown by expense account in last biennial report of the Commissioner, amount to one thousand six hundred and ninety-two 81-100 (\$1,692.81) dollars. Expenditures from July 1, 1889, to February 1, 1890, four hundred and seventy-eight 65-100 (\$478.65) dollars; making a total amount expended of last appropriation of two thousand one hundred seventy-one 46-100 (\$2,171.46) dollars, leaving an unexpended balance in the treasury of eight

hundred twenty-eight 54-100 (\$828.54) dollars, from last appropriation of three thousand (\$3,000.00) dollars.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS.

Your committee does not feel authorized or warranted to recommend, either the abolishment of this institution or a cessation of a reasonable appropriation for its maintenance.

We do, however, agree that if any appropriation is made, that it shall be large enough in amount to establish and maintain a plant, which in efficiency shall at least entitle it to respect, and prove a credit to the State.

The duties of Fish Commissioner, as defined by our law, embrace other important duties, aside from the mere propagation of fish. In fact, we are constrained to say that the function of fish propagation, is, probably the least of its duties, or responsibilities. By reason of the liberality of the general government, provision is made through the United States Fish Commissioner to secure for our State, free of cost, save transportation and distribution, large quantities of the different varieties of fish, to stock the waters of our State.

From correspondence on file with our State Fish Commissioner, it is evident that the United States Fish Commissioner is not only willing, but anxious, to serve our State. And it is safe to say, that reliance may be placed upon this and other sources for fair supplies for years to come.

Your committee would recommend a careful revision of the fish laws of the State, and for the purpose of securing more efficient enforcement of the laws relating to the wanton and criminal destruction of fish by means of drag nets, seines, spearing, dynamite, and other devices, and that the governor appoint a game and fish warden for each congressional district; when so appointed it shall be their duty to see that all laws for the preservation of fish and game are enforced; said wardens to act in connection with State and United States Fish Commissioners in stocking all waters in their districts. And above *all*, that they expend—after receiving a reasonable appropriation for this purpose—such money as may be required to erect and maintain at State expense, approved fishways at all dams and obstructions, to give free access to fish from the waters of the Mississippi and Missouri rivers to the headwaters of streams and lakes in Iowa.

In doing this the supply of native fish will be restored, and our people will be amply repaid for the outlay by an increased supply

of fish food, to say nothing of the pleasure to be derived by the lovers of piscatorial sports. Nearly every stream of Iowa is now obstructed. We are also informed that the condition of the law regarding these obstructions is so imperfect as to be entirely insufficient for the purposes sought to be accomplished by the law. Attention is also called to the fact that our visit to Spirit Lake develops the fact that the great lakes of that section are being drained of fish supply by reason of a natural outlet by the Sioux river, along which mill-dams are erected, preventing the return of such fish as may escape over the dams during high water.

J. H. BARNETT,

*Committee on the part of the Senate.*

W. M. McFARLAND,

ED. C. RUSSELL,

*Committee on part of the House.*