

REPORT.

To the General Assembly of the State of Iowa:

Your committee appointed to visit the Soldiers' Orphans' Homes at Cedar Falls and Davenport have performed that duty and beg leave to submit the following report :

Your committee first visited the Home at Cedar Falls where we were kindly received by the Superintendent and given free access to all parts of the institution. There are one hundred and ninety-one children at this Home, who are neatly and comfortably clad, their countenances belooking happiness and contentment. Of this number we found that eighteen were inmates whose parents were both living, being admitted by reason of the insanity of one of the parents, by desertion of their families, or other causes, which upon investigation was satisfactory to your committee. Of this number of children there will be (by reason of age and other causes) discharged in the spring or rather after the spring term, between fifty and sixty, thus reducing the number to about one hundred and thirty children. Your committee were well pleased with the interest manifested by both teachers and pupils in the school-room, the children evincing an eagerness to learn equal to children in other schools. They seemed to be tractable, obedient, and kind to one another as well as to the teachers. Their course of study is about the same as in our common schools—with the exception of one class in higher mathematics. We find a great many of the larger girls who were desirous of learning music, but with the facilities at the institution were unable to do so. Your committee would recommend that music, both vocal and instrumental be made one of the branches of study, believing that there is nothing that tends more to developing the moral nature, and creating a taste of refinement than music.

We found the buildings in good repair with but few exceptions. The ceilings in eight of the main rooms were badly broken and fallen

off by reason of the tramping of the children above. We would recommend that this be replaced with lumber, for which purpose your committee would recommend that there be appropriated the sum of \$400.00.

The kitchen floor is also worn out and must be replaced by a new one, for which we recommend the sum of one hundred dollars.

The water-closet is detached from the main building at some distance, and so constructed that it is impossible to keep it clean, besides causing the children to go too far from the building in all kinds of weather. Your committee would recommend that (should said building be retained as a Home) water-closets be erected adjacent to the main building, with a sewer to a cess pool at some distance from the building, the estimated cost of which your committee would fix at \$1,500, for which sum they would recommend an appropriation.

Your committee would further recommend that there be an addition made to the laundry, the present one being inadequate to the demands of the institution, and for this purpose, and putting in one or two steam washing machines, your committee would recommend an appropriation of \$800.

Your committee further found the kitchen furniture, stoves, range, and cooking apparatus badly broken and worn out, by long use, and unfit for service; to repair and replace which, your committee would recommend an appropriation of \$500.

We also found that (should said Home be continued) it would be necessary to replace a great deal of the household furniture, such as chairs, tables, bedsteads, etc. Those now on hand being badly broken and worn out, for which purpose we would recommend the sum of \$700.

The State is possessed of a valuable property at this place, which we understand is wholly uninsured, and it is the opinion of your committee that the best interests of the State demand that so valuable a property should not be left uninsured, and for the purpose of insuring the same, your committee would recommend that there be appropriated the sum of \$500.

After spending the most of one day at this institution, and mingling with the children, asking them for any complaints they had to make, and hearing nothing but commendation and praise for the Superintendent, Matron and teachers, we were led to believe that they were doing all in their power, with the means at their command, to carry out the design of the State in looking after, educating, and protecting the children of our fallen soldiers.

From here your committee went to Davenport and paid a visit to the Home at that place, where we were kindly received by Superintendent Pierce and lady. Not expecting us until a day or two later, we found them just as they live all the time.

This Home consists of forty acres of land, on which is situated a large number of cottages, a large dining-hall, cottage school rooms, with a large and pleasant chapel. There are, at this Home, one hundred and nine children who appear to be healthy, well-behaved, contented and happy. They are divided into families of from fifteen to twenty-five, of like age and sex, under the immediate care of a matron, each family occupying a cottage which consists of a room for the matron, living-room and bed-rooms for the children, with closets and bathroom. Upon entering one of these cottages we would find the children (when not at school) playing and enjoying themselves in their childish sports, as if at home. The children at this Home were warmly clad, and clean and tidy in appearance. The Home is well supplied with bedding and furniture—in fact a great deal stored away and carefully preserved. The cooking furniture, range, stoves, etc., were in good repair and condition. The buildings are in good repair and kept in good condition, and should last a number of years with but light repairs and small expense. The land, except what is used for pasture, is under a high state of cultivation, so that a large part of the vegetables used at the Home, is of their own raising. There is room sufficient here for five hundred children.

Your committee was particularly impressed with the advancement and thoroughness of the schools at this Home; from our observation they are in advance of our common schools in school government and thoroughness in the common branches, while the advanced classes showed a thoroughness in the studies that was really surprising.

There will be discharged from this school and Home after the spring term, by reason of age and other causes, from ten to twenty children, which will reduce their number to about ninety, which will make the Home too small to justify retaining it longer in its present condition.

Your committee cannot allow this opportunity to pass without urging upon you the necessity of providing some means by which some industrial pursuits may be introduced in these Homes. While the State is nobly providing them with homes, and giving them an education, yet we certainly are not doing our duty by them unless we give them an opportunity to learn some trade or pursuit that they may support themselves on after they leave the home. It seems to us that

money spent in introducing into these institutions these industrial pursuits would be economy in its true sense, and be the means of furnishing to the State skilled workmen and good and true citizens.

After carefully observing the workings of the two systems, your committee are unanimous in the endorsement of the cottage plan over the dormitory. There is not necessarily that restraint brought to bear upon the child where they live in families, as where there are so many together. There seems to be a more home-like feeling existing between children and Matron. Here, as at Cedar Falls, there was nothing but the kindest of feeling manifested toward Superintendent, Matron and teachers. All seemed thoroughly awake to the necessity of doing nothing that would mar the pleasure of the other. Here, as at Cedar Falls, the management seemed to be excellent, and every precaution taken to guard the institution from imposition and to protect the interest of the State.

It is calculated that these institutions as Soldiers' Orphans' Homes will by 1878, have fulfilled their mission—There numbers by reason of age decreasing very rapidly, so that by that time there will be comparatively few children that could have the benefits of such an institution as now organized and governed. Consequently as looking towards a final closing up of said Homes as now organized, your committee would recommend that the Home at Cedar Falls and Davenport, be consolidated and put under one management.

Your committee would suggest that, as the building at Cedar Falls could be better transferred into some other Institution, (provided the State does not dispose of the same), it would be to the State's advantage to remove the children from Cedar Falls to Davenport. As we know of no use to which the buildings at Davenport could be put except that for which they are now used.

Your Committee would first recommend that should a change be made and these schools consolidated, that the children be not moved until about the first of June, or until after the spring term.

We have mentioned but few of the items of appropriations asked for, but for full information on that subject, will refer you to the report of the Trustees of said Homes. All of which is respectfully submitted.

J. N. W. RUMPLE,
On part of the Senate.

CHAS. HORTON,
JAMES UNDERWOOD,
On part of the House.

REPORT

OF COMMITTEE FROM THE SIXTEENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO
VISIT THE SOLDIERS' ORPHANS' HOME AT GLENWOOD.

To the Sixteenth General Assembly of the State of Iowa:

Your committee to whom was referred the duty of visiting the Soldiers' Orphan's Home at Glenwood, beg leave to report that they have performed that duty, and submit the following as the result of their investigations.

That previous to the visit of the committee the home had been closed by order of the trustees, and that in the month of January, A. D. 1875, a portion of the inmates, thirteen in number, had been removed to the home at Davenport, and the remainder returned to their homes; that the furniture, library, live stock, and other personal property belonging to the institution, had been sold to pay debts incurred by the management; that the grounds had been leased, and the lessee permitted to occupy the buildings for the purpose of preserving them from injury.

Owing to the recent death of Mr. Otis, late resident trustee, your committee found themselves unable to obtain accurate information as to the causes which led to the closing of the home and the dispersion of the inmates, and not feeling ourselves invested with the powers of an investigating committee, we refrain from expressing any opinion as to the advisability or legality of the action of the trustees in incurring the debt, or in subsequently closing the home and selling the property of the state.

Your committee examined into the title of the real estate belonging to the state, consisting of lots two and four, block forty-six, in the town of Glenwood, and fifteen acres of land contiguous, and do not find that the state has a perfect title of record to the property, but believe that a perfect title to the same can be procured without material

expense, and recommend that the attorney-general be instructed to take the necessary steps to perfect the title in the state at an early day.

Your committee carefully examined the buildings, but being unable to find any plans or specifications, or to obtain accurate measurements, can only report that they consist of a main building about 40 by 55 feet, a south wing about 20 by 40 feet, and the new east wing about 33 by 46 feet, all of which are two stories in height, with a basement under the main building and east wing, all capable of accommodating about one hundred persons. Our examination of the buildings shows, that owing to the fact that the original design of the Home, being intended to be temporary in its nature, it not being expected that the buildings would be occupied for a longer period than during the minority of the orphans of soldiers deceased in the late war; they were not of the substantial character usual in buildings erected for the purpose of State institutions. We found the foundations defected, in consequence of which the walls are cracked in numerous places; principally in the main building and south wing. In the south wing these defects extend to the chimneys, which render the building liable to loss by fire whenever that portion of the building shall be occupied. The tin covering of the roof and gutters having never been painted, has rusted from exposure to the weather, so that it must be renewed at an early day to prevent injury to the building, from leakage; the woodwork having been badly constructed and of inferior material, insufficiently painted, already requires extensive repairs, and the plastering has been broken in many places, showing that it was insufficiently done—only one coat of mortar having been put on. The sewer is a temporary affair, made of boards, and will need repair whenever the building is occupied.

We find no fences or out-buildings of any consequence about the main building; but the fifteen-acre tract is enclosed by a common post and board fence in bad repair, many of the posts having rotted down. About nine acres of this tract are in cultivation.

Your committee make no recommendation as to the proper manner of utilizing the property, nor as to the advisability of establishing any State institution thereon.

FRED. TEALE,
Com. on part of the Senate.

J. W. DEWEESE,
G. A. MADSON,
Com. on part of House.