

REPORT
THE
COMMITTEE
ON
PUBLIC BUILDINGS,
TO THE
Seventeenth General Assembly.
OF THE
STATE OF IOWA.

DES MOINES:
E. P. CLARKSON, STATE PRINTER
1878.

REPORT.

Senator Dows, from the Committee on Public Buildings, submitted the following report :

MR. PRESIDENT:—Your Committee on Public Buildings, would respectfully submit the following report as the result of their visit to Council Bluffs, for the purpose of examining the buildings of the Asylum of the Deaf and Dumb.

We find the location a bad one, and that the foundation under the east wing had settled badly, thereby greatly impairing the building before its destruction by fire, and we would not recommend the rebuilding upon said foundation without the most careful investigation by competent persons.

Nor would we advise the rebuilding of the main building and wing destroyed by fire last summer under the plans, specifications, estimates, or superintendence of the architect employed for that purpose, in the past, who, we understand has made such plans, specifications and estimates for the rebuilding.

Notwithstanding the fact that the east wing had settled and the persons in charge thereof should have profited by that experience, they did not do so, but repeated the same mistake in the erection of the west wing last summer.

Your committee find, upon investigating in regard to the settling of the building, the facts to be as follows :

The foundation walls being completed about November 15, 1876, were found to have settled three inches at west end. The walls were leveled up and work suspended for the winter, and on March 12, 1877, another level was taken and a further settling of three inches was found. From April 14 to April 24, 1876, it was found that the settling was one-eighth of an inch more.

The contractors were allowed to proceed with their work. Upon August 18, 1877, the walls were completed and it was found that from April 24 to August 18, during construction, that the walls had settled two and a quarter inches more, and on February 4, 1878, another level was taken, which showed a further settling of one and three-

quarter inches. The entire sinking has been about ten inches, which has in part, been overcome by leveling up as the work progressed.

While we find the character of stone and brick work done on building erected last summer, to be fair, we also find that the carpenter work, especially the inside finishing, to be very bad; accounted for, partly by the settling of the building, but more particularly by incompetent superintendence and poor workmanship, and that the whole structure is a discredit to all parties in charge, and that some persons are and should be held responsible for so reckless a waste of the people's money.

While your committee did not consider it a part of their duty to look particularly into the manner in which the institution is conducted, its expenditures and otherwise; we did deem it right for us to look through all the buildings, examine their character and management; and we find that they are not of that substantial and permanent character which we think the public money should be invested in.

We find a large and expensive heating apparatus with two large boilers, sufficient for all the purposes of the institution, and in addition we find another large boiler with an attendant in charge, consuming a large amount of fuel, for the purpose of running a steam pump, to fill the reservoir located upon the hill above the institution, and heating the laundry and a building which we understand was erected for a work-shop, but is now used for sleeping apartments of the male inmates.

Your committee can see no reason why the steam pump should not be removed to the building containing the two large boilers, and run by steam from them, thereby saving the expense of engineer, fuel, wear and tear, which, under the present arrangement, we deem an unnecessary expense; and further, we do not consider it safe to place a high-pressure boiler under or near a building in which so large a number of the inmates live and sleep.

Notwithstanding the large amount of heating apparatus mentioned above, we find a frame building, used by the inmates as a carpenter, cabinet and shoe shop, and for the manufacture of husk mattresses, heated by coal stoves, which we consider an unnecessary expense and hazard, as at a very small cost the building can be heated by steam.

Your committee, owing to the present financial condition of the State, would not advise the removal of the institution, but, in the light of our visit and examination, most earnestly recommend an entire change in the financial and business management in the erection of the buildings of the institution.

Your committee have endeavored to make a candid and impartial statement of facts, in the hope that in the future there may be some means provided for the better management and more careful investment of the money appropriated for the erection and improvement of public buildings, which should be of such a character that every citizen can look upon them with pride, and that they will be a credit to the State, and the spirit and liberality of the generation in which they were erected.

S. L. DOWS, *Chairman.*