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DES MOINES, IOWA, Feb. 1st, 1882.

To the Committee appointed to Visit the Girls' Department of the of the State Reform School at Mitchellville:

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The bedrooms were eight feet ten inches in width by sixteen feet in length, lighted by one window, with a door with transom over it opening into the hall opposite the window; rooms about ten feet in height. Mrs. Lewelling, the Matron, informed us that it was necessary to keep the doors closed at night. Ventilation, therefore, was maintained through the transom, and by lowering the upper sash of the window. These eight inmates of each room had about 1,300 cubic feet of air—a quantity much less than is demanded for a due preservation of health—2,400 feet being considered the minimum for that number. I attribute the cause of typhoid fever, in a large measure, to the

REPORT

OF THE

JOINT COMMITTEE

OF THE

NINETEENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

APPOINTED TO VISIT THE

GIRLS' DEPARTMENT OF THE STATE REFORM SCHOOL

AT

MITCHELLVILLE.

PRINTED BY ORDER THE OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

DES MOINES:
F. M. MILLS, STATE PRINTER.
1882.

REPORT.

To the Nineteenth General Assembly of the State of Iowa:

IN compliance with the instructions under the joint resolution for the appointment of committees to visit the different State institutions, your committee appointed to visit the Girls' Department of the State Reform School, would respectfully submit the following as their report, after a careful examination of said institution:

This institution was removed from its wheels, and permanently located at Mitchellville, Polk county, by an act of the Eighteenth General Assembly. The property purchased by the State was that familiarly known as "Mitchell Seminary"—same being a two-story brick building 40 by 80 feet, with basement story, situated on a beautiful forty-acre tract of moderately high and gently rolling prairie. The building having been built especially for school purposes, is quite well adapted to this institution, except so far as the sleeping apartments are concerned, to which we shall refer more specifically hereafter. The School was removed to this new and permanent home on the 25th of May, 1880.

The Eighteenth General Assembly made an appropriation of \$1,000 as a general repair and improvement fund, and \$500 for removing the School from Mt. Pleasant, Henry county, to its present location; \$500 of the repair and improvement fund was used in building a good frame barn, 30 by 40 feet, with 16-ft. posts, which was very much needed on the farm. Your committee, after having carefully looked it over, unanimously agree that strict economy and good management must have been rigidly adhered to in the erection of so convenient and commodious a building. The remainder of the \$1,000 was expended in repairing flues, painting the tower, roof, cornice, and finishing some of the interior rooms, and also in the purchase and removal of a building for temporary laundry.

Your committee believe that the appropriations made by the last General Assembly have been wisely and economically expended, and that they have been expended for the objects appropriated, and that chapter 67 of the acts of the Seventeenth General Assembly have been complied with in not contracting indebtedness in excess of appro-

priations, without authority, and that there has been no diversion of any money from the specific purpose for which it was drawn from the State treasury.

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

Mrs. L. D. Lewelling, Matron.....	\$700.00	per annum.
Miss Ida Platt, Teacher.....	20.00	per month.
Miss Mary Marshall, in charge of cooking.....	18.00	" "
Mrs. Sada Stevenson, in charge of sewing-room..	15.00	" "
Miss Ida Bishop, in charge of laundry.....	15.00	" "
Arch. Williams, farm hand.....	18.00	" "

All of the employes receive, in addition to salary, board, rooms, lights, and fuel. We understand this has always been the custom, and they are employed with that understanding.

In regard to means of fire-escape in case of fire, and also as to the protection against fire, your committee find no escape except down the main hall stairs from the dormitories. We would therefore recommend that four iron ladders be purchased and kept on the sides of the building constantly, in such a manner that they can be readily adjusted to the windows of the dormitories.

We found one Babcock Extinguisher ready for use in case of fire.

Everything in and about the premises, from basement to dormitories, presented an air of neatness, showing conclusively to the minds of your committee that the sanitary condition of the institution was thoroughly looked after.

The kind, motherly, and sympathetic influence of the Matron, Mrs. L. D. Lewelling, supported by an excellent corps of teachers and employes, seems to win the respect and confidence of those unfortunate girls under her charge. Nowhere could we discover a spirit of insubordination, but on the contrary order and universal harmony prevailed.

The singing, marching, gymnastics, rhetorical and other exercises in the school-room were of a high order and well calculated to lead their youthful minds on to higher aspirations. All the girls are required to attend school four hours each day and five days in each week; and your committee, after having witnessed these exercises, were unanimous in their conclusion that the work being done and performed was second to none in our public schools of the same grade in any of our towns and cities.

Considerable work has been done without expense to the State, as we were informed, in ornamenting the grounds about the buildings, which was apparent to your committee, by the laying out of walks and drives, setting out trees and shrubbery for shade and ornament, and in planting apple-trees, grape-vines, raspberries, blackberries, and other small fruit—showing to us that the Superintendent and employes were not only willing to do what they could for the present comfort and necessities, but were anxious to lay the foundations for the future welfare of the institution.

The Trustees, in their report, ask that the support fund be raised from \$8 to \$10 per month for each girl; and your committee believe that this should be done. This support fund pays the entire amount of salaries of officers, teachers, and employes of the institution, and includes fuel, lights, clothing, school books, bedding, medical attendance, medicines, provisions, etc.; and when we take into consideration that the present amount allowed by law is only \$1.85 per week for each girl, and all the girls required to attend school one-half the time, we can hardly understand how they are able to subsist, and in fact they cannot without suffering. In November last the Trustees were compelled to call on the Executive Council for permission to incur an indebtedness; and as you will see in the Governor's message, they were authorized to incur a debt to the amount of \$500 (incorrectly printed \$5,000). Your committee would recommend that the law be changed so as to give them \$10 per month for each girl, from and after the commencement of this fiscal year; to-wit, October 1st, 1881 and that the \$500 debt allowed to be contracted be paid out of this support fund so increased.

The warming of the dormitories was a matter which attracted the attention of your committee, especially, for the reason that the rooms seemed cold and apparently without any means of warming except by the surplus heat escaping up the hall-way. We could hardly understand how they were able to get along during the cold winter of 1880-81; but on inquiring of the Matron, Mrs. Lewelling, she informed us that she had the smaller girls go into her own private room to dress during the cold mornings. Your committee would recommend an immediate appropriation sufficient to put in a furnace with hot-air pipes and registers to conduct the warm air to the dormitories. There are now two small furnaces in the basement designed to warm the basement by radiation, and first story by means of pipes and registers; but they have been in constant use for nearly ten years, and they are

nearly worn out. The building was originally intended to be warmed by hot-air furnaces, and while the outlay will be a little more at first, we feel warranted in saying that the rooms can be more economically and satisfactorily heated than by any other method.

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insufficient sleeping accommodations, and think it highly necessary that more and better ventilated dormitories be provided.

W. H. DICKINSON, M. D.,
Of the Iowa State Board of Health.

In view of the overcrowded condition of the dormitories, as set forth in the foregoing report of W. H. Dickinson, M. D., and from our own observation, your committee would recommend that the entire building be given up to the girls and perhaps one or two employes, and that a new building be erected for the Superintendent and family, offices and rooms for the employes and teachers who will not be required to stay in the building with the girls; by so doing, the girls can be provided with a sitting and reading-room outside of the regular school-room, which they now have to use for that purpose.

A building for laundry, with bath-rooms and privy, under one roof, and all drained by one sewer, is very much needed. The present temporary building used for a wash-room is only fit for a wood and coal house, and is really wanted for that purpose now.

We would recommend the appropriations asked for these necessary and much needed improvements.

C. W. TERRILL,
On the part of the Senate.
F. W. HART,
W. H. HALL,
On the part of the House.