

REPORT  
OF THE  
JOINT COMMITTEE  
OF THE  
TWENTIETH GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
OF THE  
STATE OF IOWA,  
APPOINTED TO VISIT THE  
GIRLS' DEPARTMENT OF THE STATE REFORM SCHOOL,  
LOCATED AT  
MITCHELLVILLE.

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PRINTED BY ORDER OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

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DES MOINES:  
GEO. E. ROBERTS, STATE PRINTER.  
1884.

## REPORT.

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*To the President of the Senate and Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Twentieth General Assembly:*

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

We were kindly received by L. D. Lewelling, Superintendent, and Mrs. L. D. Lewelling, 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 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 purpose for which it is now used.

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

The new administration or office building is a two-story frame, thirty-six by forty feet, well divided up and finished off, and is a very good building for the sum (\$3,500) which was appropriated for its erection.

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

The new vegetable cellar, built in 1883 at a cost of \$300, is also a good structure, and we consider the money well expended therefor.

This Institution is situated in Polk county, on a beautiful forty acre tract of moderately high and gently rolling prairie, and having



been built expressly for school purposes is quite well adapted to its present use.

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

L. D. Lewelling, Superintendent	
Mrs. Angie Lewelling, Matron	
Miss Mary Marshall, assistant	300.00
Miss Mamie Weeks, teacher	240.00
Miss Lou Marshall, sewing room	180.00
Miss Ida Bishop, laundry	180.00
Miss Fannie Humeston, kitchen	180.00
General help	120.00
	\$ 1,300.00

All the employes received board, rooms, fuel and light in addition to above salaries.

This is the custom and they were employed with that understanding.

The Board of Trustees have urged the necessity of purchasing an adjoining forty acres of land, and your committee, after having thoroughly examined this land, would respectfully recommend that the sum of two thousand dollars be appropriated for the purchase thereof, and also that then the sum of five hundred dollars be appropriated for the purchase of an additional number of cows. This will aid the Superintendent in adding milk and butter to the present bill of fare, which we embody in this report:

#### GIRLS' DEPARTMENT IOWA STATE REFORM SCHOOL BILL OF FARE.

##### SUNDAY.

BREAKFAST—Bread, fried bacon, gravy and coffee.  
DINNER—Bread, pork, baked beans, codfish, gravy and potatoes.  
SUPPER—Sandwiches, with cake or pie.

##### MONDAY.

BREAKFAST—Bread, fried bacon, gravy, potatoes, and coffee.  
DINNER—Biscuit and butter, mashed turnips, apple roll with dressing.  
SUPPER—Bread, coffee or tea, tomatoes and ginger bread.

##### TUESDAY.

BREAKFAST—Bread and molasses, fried mush.  
DINNER—Bread, beef soup, stewed onions, and rice pudding.  
SUPPER—Bread and butter, or bread and milk, peach sauce.

##### WEDNESDAY.

BREAKFAST—Bread, coffee, fried hominy, hash from previous day's dinner.  
DINNER—Bread, pork and beans, steamed apple dumplings.  
SUPPER—Bread, baked potatoes and gravy.

##### THURSDAY.

BREAKFAST—Bread, coffee, fried bacon, apple sauce.  
DINNER—Beef soup, corn bread, butter, pickles, fried onions.  
SUPPER—Bread and molasses.

##### FRIDAY.

BREAKFAST—Bread and tea, rice with sugar, salt fish.  
DINNER—Vegetable soup, meat stew with dumplings, corn bread.  
SUPPER—Oatmeal mush with dressing.

##### SATURDAY.

BREAKFAST—Bread, fried potatoes and sauce.  
DINNER—Bread, bean soup, stewed onions and pudding.  
SUPPER—Bread, fish, dried apple sauce, kettle tea.  
To this, in the proper seasons, we were told, is added an additional vegetable diet—such vegetables as are grown on the place.

The Trustees also urge the necessity of a new building, and we recommend that the same be built. We found the school overcrowded. Twenty-five girls are now required to sleep in a room about twenty feet wide by thirty feet long, and all the sleeping and other apartments are greatly overcrowded. The young and comparatively innocent girls are now crowded together with the older and more depraved ones, some of whom have become common nuisances in outraged communities who will no longer tolerate their presence. We doubt the propriety of sending seven year old girls to this or any other reform school, and if this is to be the continued policy of the State, we earnestly hope and trust that there will be more ample pro-



visions made in the way of buildings for the better classification of the inmates. And, in the judgment of your committee, until this is done the best interest of what might properly be called the infant class will not be subserved, and the true reformation of these young girls will be greatly retarded, and the good influence of the school upon them is likely to be more than neutralized by the bad influence of the more depraved class with whom they are daily compelled to associate.

Your committee also recommend that the appropriation asked by the Trustees for the erection of a boiler-house and for steam heating apparatus be made. The necessity may be seen in part from the fact that the fuel and lights for the school during the last twenty-one months ending June 30, 1883, has cost \$1,228.43, or about \$58.50 per month, winter and summer. The total cost is \$121.11 more than the whole cost of books and stationery for the Institution, and clothing for all the inmates during the same period. Or if you add \$454.67 for furnishing goods you have a total of \$1,561.98 for books and stationery, clothing and furnishing goods during the same period for the whole Institution as against \$1,228.43 for heating and lighting it.

And it should be kept in mind that there is nothing in this bill for heating and lighting the new or administration building, as it has been built since the ending of said term.

The old furnace should go. The cooking apparatus is wholly insufficient, and unless it is thought best to provide for this in connection with the contemplated heating arrangements, the cooking range and bake oven asked for should be supplied.

In short, all the appropriations asked for are needed. However, unless the land is purchased, the cow stable will not be, or at least one not so expensive. The appropriation for fencing is based, in part, upon the idea of the purchase of said land. The appropriation for furniture is based upon the idea of a new family building, except \$500, which has already been paid out by the Superintendent in furnishing the administration building, for which no appropriation was made.

The appropriations made for the Institution by the Nineteenth General Assembly have been properly expended, and for the objects for which the same were made, and not in excess of the appropriations, except as above and \$66.50 on the administration building, which was paid for by hauling done by the Reform School team. There is a

small balance of \$9.51 on hands from water supply and fence fund, and \$9.72 from contingent fund. But the needs of the Institution are such in that direction that the same will necessarily be consumed.

No indebtedness has been contracted but which was provided for by appropriations, and the public money which has been provided for this department of the Reform School during the present term has not been diverted from its proper uses.

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

No sufficient means has been provided for furnishing the water supply. The wells were dry and water was being hauled from a neighbor's well. Something should be done at once in this direction. The health of the inmates is good and has been during the term, their general appearance was one of ordinary comfort and good health.

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; theirs 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 obstacles 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 abuses 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.

BEN. MCCOY,  
*Committee on part of Senate.*

C. W. FILLMORE,  
E. W. LUCAS,  
*Committee on part of House.*

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