

REPORT
OF THE
VISITING COMMITTEE
TO THE
BLIND ASYLUM.

To the General Assembly of the State of Iowa :

Your Committee appointed by a joint resolution of the General Assembly to visit the Iowa Institution for the Education of the Blind, "with a view to ascertain and report the present needs of the Institution, and also the adequacy of the buildings to accommodate the blind of the State," have performed that duty, and beg leave to submit the following report :

WANTS OF THE INSTITUTION.

We find, after careful investigation, that, to meet the wants of this unfortunate class of our fellow-citizens in the spirit of a just philanthropy which has always been the pride of the State, it will be necessary to replace much of the worn and dilapidated furniture of the building with new material, and also adding considerably to the quantity in use. In the articles of bedsteads and bedding, furniture, carpeting, library, philosophical, geographical apparatus and musical instruments, we find a want, amounting almost to destitution, and would recommend the present General Assembly to provide for these deficiencies in a spirit of liberality worthy of this great Commonwealth.

In accordance with the recommendation of the Committee

appointed by the Eleventh General Assembly to visit the Institution, the Legislature made an appropriation for heating the building with Lawson's hot-air furnace, which, upon trial, has proved entirely inadequate for the purpose of heating the building. Many apartments can not be warmed at all, and but a small portion rendered in any degree comfortable, with almost constant emissions of smoke, rendering it very unpleasant for the inmates. Believing that the same can not but prove a failure, we would recommend an appropriation for heating the entire building with steam.

The grounds belonging to the Institution are for the most part in good condition, but the fences need some repairs, and the grounds need considerable improvement by the setting out additional trees and shrubbery, and would recommend a small appropriation for the object.

ADEQUACY OF THE BUILDING.

By reference to the census report of 1867 there are found to be four hundred and twelve blind within the bounds of the State, which is believed to be far below the actual number. From statistics carefully gathered by Mr. Samuel Bacon, of Iowa City, himself a blind man and former Principal of the Institution, it is ascertained that there are at least two hundred who have lost their sight in the service of the country during the last war. But taking our own statistics as a correct basis, with the means of information now furnished our people in regard to the Institution, it is safe to estimate that before the meeting of the next General Assembly there will be needed more than twice the amount of room contained in the present building. When we consider the helpless condition of the blind, and that so large a portion of them made the great sacrifice in battling for the cause of liberty and human progress, we can not believe the State will neglect them.

Your Committee, therefore, recommend an enlargement of the building at the earliest practicable moment, by adding one of the wings, as designed in the original plan, and thus afford facilities for the instruction of those who may wish to avail themselves of its privileges and blessings.

THE PRESENT BUILDING,

Which was erected under the supervision of Hosea Gray, Dr. J. C. Traer and J. W. Jones, as commissioners, cost the State the very small sum of \$40,000, and is certainly a model for cheapness and economy of construction. It was finished one story short of the original design, owing to the inadequacy of the appropriation, and was covered with pine shingles, which is in constant danger of fire from the flies. We would recommend that it be covered with fire-proof material without delay.

That the General Assembly may more readily see the amount of appropriation believed to be absolutely necessary to meet present wants, we append a bill of items marked Schedule A.

We were highly pleased with the proficiency of the students in the several departments, there being a high degree of development in the literary department, and also in the work-shops of the institution. It was in the musical department, however, that your committee witnessed the greatest development of talent and the greatest source of enjoyment and pleasure to the pupils, and would recommend a liberal appropriation for the purchase of instruments for this department.

In conclusion, we would say that we found the officers and teachers attentive, tender and considerate in the discharge of their several duties, and the management of the institution is believed to be not only good, but highly successful, and under the efficient superintendence of General Geddes, and his worthy corps of teachers, many will be fitted, as in time past, to go forth prepared successfully for the great battle of life, and that the institution, under the fostering care of the Representatives of the people, and the blessing of Divine Providence, will be the means of accomplishing all that was intended by its founders.

JOEL BROWN,
J. W. TRAER,

Committee on part of the House.

GEO. E. GRIFFITH,

Committee on the part of the Senate.

SCHEDULE A.

ITEMS OF APPROPRIATION NEEDED.

Bedsteads, bedding, chairs, carpeting, &c.....	\$ 2,400
Relief maps and globes.....	200
Library (raised print).....	600
Astronomical and philosophical	500
Mineralogical and geological cabinet.....	200
One organ and two pianos.....	2,500
Painting, repairing, plastering, &c.....	1,000
Subdividing rooms, by partitions, &c.....	1,000
Repairing flues.....	200
Steam-heating apparatus.....	5,000
Probable expense of fire-proof roof and wing to to the building.....	30,000
	<u>\$43,600</u>

SEVENTH BIENNIAL REPORT

OF THE

IOWA INSTITUTION

FOR THE EDUCATION OF THE

DEAF AND DUMB,

LOCATED AT IOWA CITY,

TO THE

GOVERNOR AND TWELFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

FOR THE YEARS 1866 AND 1867.

DES MOINES: ①

F. W. PALMER, STATE PRINTER.
1868.