

REPORT
OF THE
JOINT COMMITTEE
OF THE
TWENTY-SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE
STATE OF IOWA,
APPOINTED TO VISIT THE
STATE FISH HATCHERY,
LOCATED AT
SPIRIT LAKE.

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REPORT.

To the Members of the Twenty-sixth General Assembly:

In accordance with a concurrent resolution of the Twenty-sixth General Assembly, your committee appointed to visit the State Fish Hatchery located at Spirit Lake, beg to submit the following report:

This property consists of 3.47 acres of land, located on the isthmus between the waters of Spirit and Okoboji lakes, in Dickinson county, Iowa, and lies near the Burlington, Cedar Rapids & Northern railroad, and seems to have been designed by nature for the very purpose for which it is now being used.

The most important feature is that when the waters of these lakes are in their usual or normal condition, Spirit lake is from five to six feet above Lake Okoboji, thereby giving a natural flow of water from one to the other, so essential in operating and maintaining the works of the hatchery.

Of late the waters of the lakes have so receded as to necessitate the use of a conduit pipe, extending far out into the lake, to supply a sufficient quantity of water for all purposes. Its size, construction and operation were fully explained in a former report.

The property herein referred to has a level surface, gently sloping toward Okoboji lake. It is enclosed in front, facing the railroad, with a neat picket fence, and on the other three sides with a substantial wire fence.

The buildings remain the same as described in former reports, and seem to be sufficient for present purposes, except with the addition to the barn, which was built and constructed in accordance with the instructions and appropriations of the last general assembly. It is neatly painted same as the residence occupied by the genial and efficient assistant, Mr. Ole Bjornson.

There are seven fish ponds, about 10x20 by 4 feet deep, properly walled with stone, so connected and divided by partitions and arranged so as to allow the passage of fresh water from one to the other continually, for the proper and healthy growth of the fish.

Many fish now belonging to the state are for the most part, in the winter season, kept in a hatchery—such as gold fish, carp, etc. Each of the ponds, as before mentioned, walled up, contains an abundance of small game fish, such as wall-eyed pike, bass, etc., in a thriving condition, and a quantity of carp for breeding purposes.

These ponds are covered with boards and straw as a protection from the weather, through which a supply of fresh air is admitted by means of vent holes through the thin ice.

The hatchery is supplied in the basement by means of troughs and trays, and all necessary appliances and devices for rearing and handling fish.

It is the opinion of your committee that the buildings, the hatchery and ponds are kept in good repair, and indicate that full measure of success resulting from the careful and efficient management of the present commissioner and his assistant.

We find upon careful examination of the commissioner's report that the people from all parts of the state have been quite generously supplied with the various kinds of fish for stocking the various streams.

We also find upon examination of the report and accounts filed with the state auditor, that during the last biennial period, beginning April 1, 1894, and ending November 1, 1895, the sum of \$3,939.59 was expended, leaving an unexpended balance of \$2,060.59 of the \$6,000 appropriation of the Twenty-fifth General Assembly. A portion of this has been used since November 1, 1895, for present and current expenses. We are further constrained to say that this expenditure has been wise and judicious, and in accordance with the purposes expressed in the provisions of the appropriation, and find no indebtedness incurred, and no perversion of funds in any manner whatever.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

We recommend that the assistant be allowed an increase of \$5 per month, making \$40 instead of \$35. His long experience and untiring fidelity in the discharge of his duties are indeed commendable, and this small increase of salary seems to us a just and worthy recognition of his worth.

Your committee would also recommend a sufficient appropriation for the purchase and equipment of a fish car for the successful transportation of fish at all seasons of the year to all parts of the state. The insufficient way in which this traffic is carried on at present is not commensurate with other features of the institution, and can only be successfully done during favorable seasons, and often then with much loss resulting from delays in transit.

We take occasion to urge the recommendation as made by a former committee, that the commissioner be constituted a game warden, and fully empowered to appoint deputies in each county, if necessary, to assist in the proper enforcement of the law; that the fines resulting from prosecutions should go to the commissioner and wardens to the end that they may eventually become self sustaining.

And further, it is our belief that the commission should be co-extensive with the criminal jurisdiction of the state, in order that some adequate protection may be afforded the fish at the mouth of the streams emptying into boundary rivers, and we recommend that the present law be so amended that the possession of any seine or spear in or upon any of the public waters of the state, or upon the ice of the same, or upon the shores within a limit of ten (10) rods, be *prima facie* evidence of guilt of the violation of the law.

We are constrained to say that the present commissioner has been a very efficient and energetic officer, keeping in view at all times the interest and respect of the state as contemplated in the creation of this institution, and in the discharge of his duties and the enforcement of law his chief aim has been equal justice to all.

In view, therefore, of the work thus briefly outlined, the progress the institution has made, and the maintenance of usefulness and respect to which it is entitled, we recommend an additional appropriation of \$4,000 for the purpose of a fish car as herein referred to, making an aggregate of \$10,000 for the ensuing biennial period.

Respectfully submitted,

J. E. ROWEN,

For the Senate.

W. G. LADD,

L. S. HUNTLEY,

For the House.