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REPORT OF JOINT COMMITTEE.

To the Members of the Sixteenth General Assembly:

GENTLEMEN:—Your committee appointed to visit the Hospital for the Insane located at Mount Pleasant, would say that they have discharged that duty and respectfully submit the following report:

We found the building situated upon a farm said to contain about three hundred acres. It is built of stone, with good architectural appearance. Is four stories high, and around the different wings as they project from the main building, including the main building itself, is nearly half a mile. In the lower story we found the fire-proof safe unfinished, and the fire-proof walls commenced between the main building and the different wings of said building, to protect from fire in case of conflagration—all of which we think should be completed. As we passed through the different wards in which the patients of the hospital were confined, a difference in the condition of the atmosphere was plainly discernible, in the same sized rooms, containing the same number of persons, and same cleanliness observed. Upon inquiry and observation, we found the difference was in ventilation. The apartments or wards where the atmosphere was the most unpleasant, were those in which the registers to admit heat and air are near the floor, and the apertures to carry off the accumulating poisonous air near the ceiling. We were informed that the rooms were heated and ventilated on the above plan at the first all erection. Where the heating and ventilating registers were the reverse of the above, there was a more perceptible current from above downward—sufficient to retain a common handkerchief spread over the lower ventilators. The difference in the smell of the air in those rooms was so great, that your committee thought they could have detected the difference if their eyes had been closed.

In the water closets the same kind of a current of air existed, to keep them free from noxious impurities.

We estimated the number of patients to be about five hundred and sixty. They are from about seven to seventy years old.

Those that are convalescent are in rooms together. Those of a mild

grade of insanity and disposition, and not evil inclined, are warded together. The noisy and boisterous are classed, and destructive ones have their apartments, and all have their attendants. Your committee are of the opinion that the rooms are too much crowded—the dining-rooms are too small for the number now in attendance. The bathing-rooms need repairs, and the numbers increased, as bathing, in those chronic nervous diseases, is the great auxiliary health-restorer. In the upper rooms are confined the most pitiable objects that it is possible for our minds to conceive. In those wards are the demented, imbecile, melancholia monomaniac and boisterous maniac. Your committee thought if anything would arouse the sympathies and charitable feelings of any people, it would be to visit an institution of this kind. From the upper rooms or wards we descended to the basement through the washing, drying and ironing rooms, where some of the convalescents were at work, and if the superintendent had not informed us who the patients were, we would have passed without knowing.

In the basement we found four large-sized furnaces, by which the whole building was heated—cooking, baking, washing, making soap, and heating all the water that was necessary for the use of the patients and building generally. All the steam that is generated and necessary to run the machinery, is conducted through pipes and condensed and returned again to reservoirs, by which they have distilled water to use for bathing and washing purposes.

Among our observations we saw a large fan, about fifteen feet in diameter, revolving with rapid velocity. We were informed that it was forcing air into a heated air chamber from which there were apertures to admit this condensed air to the pipe-chambers, by which all the rooms are heated and pure air admitted.

On the south side of the building we found a large chimney built of stone and brick, about one hundred and forty feet high. From this chimney, we were told, ran conducting pipes that communicated with all the ventilating flues, water-closets and sewers throughout the entire building, and all the poisonous and noxious gases that are generated and exhaled in all the apartments are carried off through this chimney to a strata of atmosphere above where it will be offensive.

All the effete fluid matter is conducted through pipes to one main channel and discharged into a ravine about a quarter of a mile distant.

We found the sub-basement walls of the building looking rough and scaly, by percussion; in many places we were convinced of its unsoundness.

Every department in the building was clean and neat; the clothing upon the patients, and bedding, were in the same condition. Each employe had his work to do, and all was done with system and order.

The people of the State of Iowa should feel thankful that they have a hospital for the insane that is conducted with the care and wise management as the one at Mount Pleasant seems to your committee to be.

They also examined the report of the medical superintendent and agree that the appropriations asked for under the different specifications, are needed, and, in their opinion, should be granted.

See report.

JOHN CONAWAY,

On part of Senate.

H. T. REED,

G. T. AULD,

On part of House.

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