

REPORT

OF THE

JOINT COMMITTEE

OF THE

FOURTEENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

APPOINTED TO VISIT THE

HOSPITAL FOR THE INSANE AT MT. PLEASANT.



DES MOINES:

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REPORT.

We, the undersigned, Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Representatives of the General Assembly of the State of Iowa, appointed to visit the Insane Asylum at Mount Pleasant, have the honor to report that during the late recess we visited the said Asylum, and found the general management of the Institution in every respect satisfactory; indeed, we came away fully impressed with the feeling that under its present efficient management, its value to the numerous unfortunates for whom it was designed can hardly be estimated.

Your committee recommend that the laws be so changed as to require the appointment of a Steward, and that the salary be enough to engage a first-class business man. The duties of the Steward has heretofore devolved upon the Superintendent, and it is too much to ask of him, as the large number of patients now in the Hospital will consume all of his time and attention.

We desire to call the attention of the General Assembly to the following matters connected with the Institution :

- 1st. The propriety of placing insane criminals therein.
- 2d. Its crowded condition.
- 3d. Insufficient supply of water. Twenty thousand gallons of water needed daily, and not to exceed one half that amount provided for. Report, page 33.
4. Defective ventilating and heating arrangements. A new plan to obviate this defect has been devised and carried into effect in the east wing of the asylum, which has proved a perfect success, and we recommend that the same plan be carried into effect in the other parts of the asylum.
5. A fire wall in west wing, with iron doors in it, and the fire

wall in east wing, is needed for the better security of the building and its inmates against fire.

6. Admission of all patients free of charge. It seems a great hardship that a citizen of moderate means taxed for the support and care of those without means, should, when misfortune comes upon him or his family, be denied the benefits of that to which he has contributed, except at a cost, which, taken into connection with increased expenses at home is absolutely ruinous; under the present law a person possessed of property of the value of five hundred dollars over and above the amount of his debts and exempt property, is not entitled to admission for himself or those for whom he is responsible without payment.

Touching the appropriations relating to the foregoing and other improvements asked for by the trustees, (see report page 10), we made special examination and unhesitatingly recommend them to your consideration. In this connection, while we are of the opinion that the greatest caution should be exercised in starting new institutions, and thus imposing fresh burdens upon the industries of the State, and that the closest economy should be required in the management of all existing State institutions. we are also of the opinion that true economy dictates a wise liberality in perfecting and maintaining these institutions already in operation and commenced.

JNO. Q. TUFTS,
D. D. DAVIDSON.

On part of the House.

GEO. R. WILLETS,
On part of the Senate.