

REPORT

OF THE

JOINT COMMITTEE

OF THE

FIFTEENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

APPOINTED TO VISIT THE

STATE REFORM SCHOOLS

AT

ELDORA AND SALEM.

REPORT.

To the General Assembly of the State of Iowa:

Your Committee to visit the Reform School, have performed that duty, and respectfully submit the following report :

We found the new school for boys finely located, on beautifully rolling prairie, situated one mile west of the town of Eldora, in Hardin county. Said tract of land contains half a section ; there is also eighty acres, located one-half mile north of this tract, belonging to the school farm, and both are enclosed by a good substantial fence.

In the opinion of your Committee, the location has been wisely selected, and the donation of the grounds by the people of Eldora, furnishes a commendable example of enlightened liberality.

The money appropriated by the Fourteenth General Assembly for the erection of suitable buildings for the institution, seems to have been judiciously expended. A full description and cost of said buildings are found in the biennial report of the Trustees and Superintendent of the School.

The two family buildings, your Committee consider as models of compactness, elegance and convenience. The workmanship upon them we consider to be of a first class quality. The main building is plain and substantial, and being intended for work-shops, when the permanent main building shall have been erected, much of the work on the inside is temporary and cheap, but the building is quite comfortable and convenient, for the present wants of the school.

We found by examination of the records, that the Trustees had appropriated \$5,000.00 for the erection of a workshop and barn.

The shop is erected and occupied, and the basement of the barn is completed in first class style, and is being used for the shelter of the stock belonging to the farm.

The larger part of the material for finishing the barn is now upon the ground. The timbers are large and strong, and the basement is built in a very firm, substantial manner, and the building when completed, we think, will be a model barn. Your Committee estimate the cost of the barn when finished, at about \$8,000.00.

We desire to state that in our opinion, the amount of land occupied by the school is insufficient for the growing wants of the institution. That there is now lying between the farm and the disconnected eighty, of which mention has before been made, one half section of fine rolling land, and we are informed that it can be had on reasonable terms, and your Committee are of the opinion that the possession of said half section of land, would further the interest of the school and be a good investment for the State, or at least three eighties of it, believing that the disconnected eighty belonging to the school could be exchanged for the other eighty, thereby giving to the school a square section of choice, well watered land.

We are further of the opinion that with this additional amount of land, the school might in time be nearly self supporting.

The probable cost of this land would be for the three-eighties about \$11,000, or for the half section, including fencing, \$15,000.

The general management of the school seems to be of a high order of excellence. The present number of boys is one hundred and sixty-five. They are plainly but comfortably clad, and their general good health clearly denotes care and attention to their physical wants, while great pains are evidently taken with their mental and moral training. The boys are taught habits of order and industry, and in the main seem contented and endeavoring to make the best of their opportunities.

We proceeded to the Girls' Department of the Reform School, located in Lee county. The facts in relation to the farm and buildings are sufficiently set forth in the report of the Trustees.

We here found thirteen girls, and the management seems to be excellent. The same system of moral training prevails here as with the boys, and we have no doubt is productive of much good. The expense of carrying on this department is much greater, of course, than it would be were it nearer the other where both could be under the same supervision, and it is evident that the same number of employees could govern a much larger number of girls. This increased expense, no doubt, nearly consumes the sum received from the rents of the farm. If the State therefore had suitable buildings for the reception of these girls at Eldora it would be about as well to abandon its claim on the farm in Lee county.

The building would accommodate about seventy-five girls, and we have no doubt will be filled before the expiration of the present lease.

The apparent contentment and good conduct among the inmates of these schools were noticeable features.

We conversed privately with the boys and they seemed to feel a determination to become useful men.

The moral influence is so good that very little physical restraint is needed.

We feel that this institution is one of great importance to the State, will be productive of an incalculable amount of good, and respectfully recommend that it be liberally supported.

For permanent improvement the institution will need in the next two years, and your committee recommend, the following appropriations to-wit:

For erecting and furnishing two family buildings.....	\$25,000.00
For finishing barn	5,000.00
For coal, wood, meat, and ice house.....	2,000.00
For libraries, and two cabinet organs.....	1,000.00

J. D. MILES,
On part of Senate.

J. C. CLARKE,
HENRY DAYTON,
On part of House.