

REPORT

OF THE

JOINT COMMITTEE

TO THE

THIRTEENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

APPOINTED TO VISIT

THE SOLDIERS' ORPHANS' HOME, AT DAVENPORT.

DES MOINES:

F. M. MILLS, STATE PRINTER.

1870.

REPORT.

MR. PRESIDENT :

Your committee appointed to visit and report upon the condition of the Orphans' Home, at Davenport, having performed the duty assigned to them, respectfully ask leave to submit the following report :

This institution, under the management of Mr. Pierce, Superintendent, and Mrs. Pierce, Matron, whom your committee found fully worthy and competent to discharge the responsible duties of their respective positions, and found them diligently and faithfully employed in the active duties of the same, ably and efficiently assisted by a competent corps of teachers and employees.

Your committee take pleasure in saying that these officers, teachers, and employees, seemed considerate of the welfare of all under their care ; and were uniformly active, courteous, kind and judicious, in the performance of their several duties, and the result appears to be a thorough discipline of the many children and youths, and yet a kindness of tone and expression on the part of all, reminding one only of paternal and filial care and affection—of a home in fact.

This institution is conducted upon the cottage plan. From twenty to thirty children are assigned to a cottage, under the charge and care of a lady, whose duty it is to look after their welfare while in their respective cottages, and perform the duties of a mother as nearly as possible, and to attend their respective families to and from the dining-room, and upon all services at the chapel.

These cottages present a neat and cleanly appearance and are made as attractive and pleasant as possible with the means at the disposal of the Home.

We find they are supplied with comfortable beds and bedding, and

that the children's clothes are comfortable and are made by the girls of the Home. The food is plain, substantial, and undoubtedly a wholesome diet.

Their meals are taken regularly, and with the most excellent decorum while at the table, and without noise and confusion in going thereto and returning therefrom.

Their care of clothing, food and thorough cleanliness of person and apartments, has a double reward in the neat, tidy and cheerful appearance of the children themselves and in the preservation of their health.

Your committee found but eight in the hospital, out of the four hundred and thirty in the Home, and not one of these confined to bed; five of those being afflicted with mild type of sore eyes, and these presented a happy and cheerful appearance.

Within the preceding two years there has been erected a beautiful, comfortable, and commodious chapel, in which religious exercises are held on the Sabbath—Sabbath school in the morning; preaching in the afternoon by clergymen of the city of Davenport, and interesting prayer meetings on Sabbath and Wednesday evenings.

The educational system consists of a graded school divided into six departments. These schools are thoroughly graded, and presided over by competent teachers. The teachers are untiring in their efforts to instil into these youthful minds a correct knowledge of the different branches taught in the common schools of the State. Reading and spelling are made a specialty; geography, grammar, arithmetic and drawing are also taught in the higher departments.

These schools are kept in fine condition and will compare favorably with any of our common schools. The rooms are poorly furnished, nor are they such as should be provided for the institution. All the classes are taught vocal music, and those desiring are taught instrumental music.

Your committee are of the opinion that very fine progress is being made in the educational department of the Home, and that the opportunities here afforded to the orphans are such as will prepare them as men and women for the active duties of life in any intelligent community.

The females in the Home are taught the duties of house-keeping, such as cooking, sewing and ironing, as far as practicable. The boys, we regret to say, are not employed at any kind of work that will be beneficial to them when discharged from the institution.

Your committee are of the opinion that the erection of workshops at the Home would be very beneficial, by which many of the boys could be taught good and practicable trades; also, that a few acres of land purchased or leased for the purpose of cultivation, would give profitable and healthy employment to the boys, and would be a source of income to the Home.

Your committee would recommend the appropriation of the sum asked for by the trustees in their report to the General Assembly.

I. W. KELLER,

(On part of Senate.)

JOSHUA W. SATTERTHWAIT,

WILLIAM W. MERRITT,

(On part of House.)