

REPORT

OF THE

JOINT COMMITTEE

OF THE

FIFTEENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OF THE

STATE OF IOWA,

APPOINTED TO VISIT THE

HOSPITALS FOR THE INSANE

AT

INDEPENDENCE AND MT. PLEASANT.

REPORT.

To the Members of the Fifteenth General Assembly:

GENTLEMEN: Your Committee appointed to visit the Hospitals for the Insane, located, one at Independence, the other at Mt. Pleasant, would say that it has discharged this duty, and respectfully submits the following report:

The work on the Hospital at Independence, so far as it has progressed, bears every evidence of being well and substantially done, and of the best and most durable material; and it is gratifying to be able to state that the original plan for the building had been so thoroughly digested as to avoid the expense consequent upon frequent changes.

The books, papers, accounts, and vouchers in the hands of Commissioners and Superintendents were examined with care; also the price of labor and building materials at different seasons of the year; and the Committee feels willing to express as its deliberate opinion, that the Commissioners have observed as much care and economy in the outlay of means placed at their disposal by the last General Assembly as was compatible with the constant regard for durability everywhere indicated by their work, thereby avoiding the necessity of frequent repairs.

The latest and most approved plans are used for supplying the wards with food, water, heat, and ventilation. They need no further mention here, as they are treated in detail elsewhere.

The wards now completed are already objectionably crowded, thereby greatly reducing the chances for curative treatment as well as comfort.

Upon visiting the Hospital at Mt. Pleasant, the crowded condition of the wards was found to be greater than at Independence. This fact renders the urgency for completing the latter still more imperative than was at first apparent. This urgency is heightened by the fact, probably not generally known, that the Hospital at Mt. Pleasant is giving room to a number of patients territorially belonging to the Hospital at Independence, awaiting a transfer as soon as room can be had at the latter.

Your Committee is of opinion, from considerations of humanity and economy, that the completion of that part of the building now begun should be urged forward with all practicable speed, so that the insane

of the State may be placed in the most favorable conditions for recovery.

The act of the Fourteenth General Assembly appropriating money to the Hospital for Insane situated at Independence, is as follows:

“That for the purpose of completing the north wing, center building, rear center building, engine house, chimney, and ducts, and for putting in the heating apparatus and furnishing said hospital and for building a barn and improving the grounds, there is hereby appropriated, out of any money in the state treasury not otherwise appropriated, the sum of two hundred thousand dollars, or so much thereof as may be necessary for that purpose.”

It further required the money appropriated to be drawn and expended by the Board of Commissioners in accordance with the provisions of chapter 120, of the laws of the Thirteenth General Assembly.

But, owing to unexpected advances in prices of labor and building material, it was impossible to carry the work to that completeness contemplated in the estimates given at that time.

The Committee is satisfied that the failure to comply with the requirements of this act was in no wise attributable to mismanagement of the Commissioners, or the misapplication of the funds, but to the causes above stated. It is believed that the Commissioners have sought to follow the law, and expend the appropriations to the best interests of the State.

It will be seen by the third biennial report of the Commissioners that a portion of the wards in the north wing are unfurnished; a part of the main center is without roof, and exposed to the weather. The need for the room is pressing; it can not be economy to delay its completion. Both economy and suffering humanity demand a vigorous prosecution of this work, even though other State institutions not of a benevolent character be left to take care of themselves. The farm is without a barn, except of a most temporary kind.

The amount required for finishing and heating the wards in the north wing of the main center building is estimated in the third biennial report of Commissioners at \$76,900. By the first biennial report of Trustees \$10,000 is asked for furniture, and \$10,000 for other improvements and contingencies.

To these estimates the attention of this General Assembly is respectfully called.

It will be seen by the seventh biennial report of the Trustees of the Mount Pleasant Hospital that their estimates for improvements and

contingencies amount to \$11,700, and they recommend an appropriation for the same. The improvements asked for are needed, and we direct the attention of this General Assembly to this report also.

EDWARD J. GAULT,

On the part of the Senate.

I. HOLLINGSWORTH,

S. P. McNEILL,

On the part of the House.