

REPORT
OF THE
JOINT COMMITTEE

OF THE
THIRTEENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

APPOINTED TO VISIT
THE DEAF AND DUMB ASYLUM, AT COUNCIL BLUFFS.

DES MOINES :
F. M. MILLS, STATE PRINTER.
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TO THE THIRTEENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

Your joint committee appointed to visit the Iowa Deaf and Dumb Asylum at Council Bluffs, having performed that duty during the recess of the Legislature, beg leave to submit the following report:

Your committee after a careful and minute examination of the location and of the buildings now in process of erection, would report that the location chosen by the commissioners appointed for that purpose, commends itself to the committee as leaving nothing to be desired and as reflecting great credit on the taste and judgment of the gentlemen composing that committee. Situated on an eminence overlooking the great Missouri Valley; in full view of the cities of Council Bluffs and Omaha, overtopped on the east by the picturesque bluffs of the Missouri river, of convenient and easy access from the various railroad depots centering at this point, the site of the building cannot but commend itself as unexcelled for beauty and adaptability to the purpose for which this institution is designed.

With regard to the healthfulness of the location, your committee would report that in their opinion the point is settled beyond the reach of doubt or cavil that no healthier situation can be found in the State. Leaving out of view the general dryness of the atmosphere, the thorough natural drainage of the soil, and the absence of any malarious influence in the vicinity, we regard the fact to be fully settled by the experience of the troops formerly encamped near the grounds now occupied by the Asylum. An examination of the records of sickness among the soldiers shows a degree of healthfulness and an exemption from miasmatic influences unequalled at any other point where troops have been stationed within the State.

The buildings now in process of erection, consisting of the main building and east wing, are, so far as your committee are able to

judge, of the best material and workmanship, and of the most substantial character throughout. The walls of the basement and first story are now completed, and the joists laid for the floor of the second story.

The unfavorable weather during the past summer has, by preventing the manufacture of the necessary brick, materially retarded the progress of the work. But we observe that an amount of material has been procured, and is now on the ground, sufficient to ensure the early completion of the work.

The accident to Mr. Craig, the contractor of the work, by which he was so unfortunate as to lose the use of his eye-sight, has also operated to somewhat retard the progress of the work; in consequence of which unforeseen circumstances, and through no fault or negligence on the part of the commissioners, the work does not so nearly approach completion as your committee have desired; but observe with pleasure that in no instance has the board sacrificed the durability and substantial character of the building merely for the purpose of hastening its completion; and also, that the supply of material now on the ground, comprising 80,000 brick and nearly all the lumber required, and the evident disposition of the commissioners to vigorously prosecute the work, gives, in our opinion, ample assurance of its completion within the time specified in the contract. In the exercise of the discretion reposed in the commissioners, certain changes in the original plan of the building were adopted by them. We consider these changes necessary; that the board had the power; and, that it was their duty to make them. The superintendent informs your committee that these changes have not been such as to increase the cost of the work to the contractor or to the State.

Upon a careful estimate by the superintendent, of the work, it has become evident that the contractor has agreed to do the work for the State for about \$14,000 less than its actual cost to himself. Though he has given bonds for the faithful performance of his contract, your committee cannot lose sight of the fact that when he has drawn \$100,000 as provided in his contract, and fails to proceed with and complete the building, the only remedy the State would

have, being by suit on his bond, the State might be deprived of its use for two years before the bond could be collected, during which time the building might suffer material injury, unless this contingency should be provided for by this General Assembly; wherefore your committee recommend that an appropriation be made of \$15,000, to be drawn in the event of the failure of the contractor to complete the building according to contract.

Your committee also find that as yet no provisions have been made for grading and leveling the grounds; for the payment of the salary of the superintendent; for the erection of suitable out-buildings; or for printing and other incidental expenses. As it would be evidently wrong to take these items from the amount appropriated for the construction of the building, we recommend as absolutely necessary an appropriation for these purposes of \$15,000.

Your committee have also inquired into the expediency of now commencing the erection of the west wing contemplated in the original plan of the building, and report that the estimated cost of said wing based on the actual cost of the main building and east wing now in process of erection, and therefore very nearly approaching accuracy, will be \$69,680. In the opinion of the committee there are many good reasons why this wing should at once be erected, among which reasons are:

1st. The immediate erection of this wing would save the expense of constructing temporary partitions through the buildings now being erected, for the purpose of separating the sexes of the pupils. 2d. The immediate completion of the building would permit the grading and improving of the grounds to much better advantage and with more permanency than would be possible while the building remains only partially completed or in process of erection. 3d. By commencing the erection of the west wing now, we thereby secure the services of the present Board of Commissioners, which is composed of gentlemen who, though under heavy bonds for the faithful performance of their duties, yet receive no compensation for their services. It is extremely doubtful whether, after the termination of their present connection with this institution, the State will be able, without incurring a heavy expense, again to secure the services of as able and efficient members as are those who now compose that board.

4th. It is claimed by the Superintendent in charge of the work, that by building this wing in time to put on the cornice and roof at the same time that they are put on the main building, a better union of this wing with the main building; that the building will settle more evenly by the walls all being carried up at the same time; that the water pipes and heating apparatus can be better connected and at a less expense, if all put in at once. 5. That the original plan of the building makes provision that the cellarage shall all be under the west wing, and until that wing is completed the institution will be deprived of this important part of the plan.

In view of the facts, and for the reasons above set forth, your Committee recommend that a further appropriation of \$69,680 be made for the purpose of erecting the west wing of the asylum building.

In conclusion, your Committee take great pleasure in congratulating this General Assembly and the State at large on the fact that this important work has been given in charge of a board of commissioners, composed of gentlemen so well fitted for the important work assigned to them, and so willing to devote their time and talents to that work as are the gentlemen who compose that board.

FRED. TEALE,

M. J. ROHLFS,

Committee on part of House.

I concur substantially in the above report.

W. G. DONNAN,

Committee on part of Senate.