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REPORT.

[1876]

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*To the Sixteenth General Assembly:*

The joint committee appointed to visit the penitentiary at Anamosa beg leave to report that they have discharged that duty, and found no cause of complaint as to the management of the prison, but that the inmates thereof are, apparently, so well cared for, fed and treated that, aside from the attendant public disgrace and loss of liberty, being sent to the penitentiary has ceased to be a punishment, and to many is an advantageous change of circumstances.

The appropriations made by the Fifteenth General Assembly have, so far as we may judge from our visit and examination, been well and economically expended. The commissioners, perhaps, exceeded their authority in using the unexpended balance on hand in beginning the construction of the outer wall, thereby precipitating upon this assembly the natural question of the continuance of the work so begun. The balance of funds so left would have better been left to pay the indebtedness created during the two years which was not provided for by the last General Assembly, such as the bill of the physician employed.

This would have left to this Assembly the question as to the propriety of beginning the construction of the outer wall, at this time, a work which will involve the expenditure of a sum from fifty to seventy-five thousand dollars.

The cells are well constructed, not open to criticism, and the building as it now stands is so far complete in itself as to safely keep the prisoners committed thereto. The capacity of cells is one hundred and forty-two, and the number of convicts there at this time is fifty-nine. These prisoners might be worked in quarrying and cutting stone preparatory to building, at little additional expense beyond current expenses.

It is the judgment of your committee that an appropriation sufficient to meet the current expenses, and about ten thousand dollars, to be used

in meeting the necessary expense of such working force, and a suspension of further construction of the outer wall or other buildings, for the present, is advisable, leaving it to the judgment of future General Assemblies as to a continuance of the work.

The committee did not consider it their duty to inquire into the propriety or economy of investments and purchases already made by the state; nor did they feel clothed with the powers of an investigating committee.

The natural jealousy of private enterprise in other stone quarries in the locality is, and will doubtless be, a wholesome guard over the operations of the State quarry.

There was some complaint made as to the sales of stone by the state, but we were unable, with our opportunities of examination, to find any fault.

The sale by M. Heisey, warden, to the state of two car loads of stone from his own quarry was brought to our notice. We examined the account and could discover no actual prejudice to the state, but the impropriety of such transfers, where the officer of the state stands in the relation of both parties to the contract, the appearance of evil in it, and liability to suspicion however honest, leads us to recommend that it be prevented in future by legislation, if not already covered by that applicable to the Fort Madison penitentiary.

We can, aside from criticism herein, heartily commend the efficiency and capability of Warden Heisey.

The books and accounts are kept by the clerk, Mr. Lewis Kinzie, so systematically, that no single item of expenditure can escape scrutiny, and a complete itemized account is on file in the office of the auditor of state; each bill presented is sworn to and recorded and each receipt is on record referring to the bill, and an itemized account book is kept referring by number to the voucher for each item, and so arranged as to show the total expenditure of each kind, thus perfectly exhibiting the disbursement of each sum drawn from the state down to the minutest particular.

From our examination of the state quarry near Anamosa, we are of opinion that it contains, at least for state purposes, an endless supply of stone.

M. A. McCOID,

*On part of Senate.*

WM. G. MADDEN,

S. P. McNEILL,

*On part of House.*