

74.9

NEW JERSEY STATE LIBRARY



3 3009 00505 8864

REPORT

to the

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

of the

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

FOR THE YEAR 1908

by the

Committee Appointed Under Resolution Passed June 20th, 1907,
to Investigate the Subject of State
Expenditures

TRENTON, N. J.
MACCRELLISH & QUIGLEY, STATE PRINTERS.
1908.

REPORT

to the

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

of the

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

FOR THE YEAR 1908

by the

Committee Appointed Under Resolution Passed June 20th, 1907,
to Investigate the Subject of State
Expenditures

TRENTON, N. J.
MACCRELLISH & QUIGLEY, STATE PRINTERS.

1908.

REPORT.

To the Honorable, the General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

The committee appointed by virtue of a resolution of the General Assembly of the State of New Jersey, of the year A. D. 1907, to inquire into and investigate the subject of State expenditures, and to report to your Honorable body, prays leave to submit:

That in its labors of investigation begun on June 28th, 1907, and terminated on January 9th of the present year, it has found in some State institutions and governmental departments, systems, methods and practices prevailing inimicable to the public welfare, and which deserve your profound consideration, for their correction at your hands. Other of the institutions visited and investigated by the committee, were found to be well and economically conducted, in the management of which modern thought and methods are employed, keeping them to a standard of efficiency comparable with any like institution, and justly warranting State pride and the commendation of the committee and your Honorable body.

STATE BOARD OF HEALTH.

As its name indicates, this board should, in the judgment of the committee, have exclusive jurisdiction of that branch of the government devoted to the maintenance and preservation of the public health. The legal machinery by which it is now managed and controlled was denounced before the committee by one of its eminent members as "antiquated," and properly so.

Functions which naturally and ordinarily are embraced within the scope of a body created for the purpose this board is, are now vested in other commissions, in the exercise of which, there is conflict and clash of authority; and those which it possesses are so limited and restricted as to, in certain exigencies, leave the board without power to act. As an illustration. In the typhoid

epidemic prevailing at the State Hospital for the Insane, at Trenton, during the sitting of the committee, the State Board of Health was powerless to initiate drastic measures to stamp out the scourge. Its authority was merely advisory. Under the law it was obliged to act through the medium of the local board of health, while the lives of hundreds were imperiled and many were sacrificed.

The present board is an honorary body composed of gentlemen of the highest standing in the State, who have devoted much of their time and given valuable aid in the service of the State without remuneration, but the committee, nevertheless, is of the opinion that because of the extended sphere of, and increased burdens necessarily placed upon that body by the adoption of the recommendations hereinafter made, it should be reduced in numbers, and placed upon a salaried basis. This is consistent with the spirit of the times. The State should compensate, the same as any other employer, the labor of its servants.

Your committee recommends that the State Board of Health be reorganized and invested with the powers and duties which it now possesses, with police power to, in case of epidemics, summarily initiate and prosecute measures to check and control them. That the powers and duties of the various commissions exercising health measures such as "Sewerage Commission," "State Water Supply Commission," and "Bovine and Tuberculosis Commission" be lodged in the board, and that the commissions be abolished. That the board be composed of three members. That a Medical Director be appointed by the board, who shall be the administrative officer with plenary police powers, to intervene in case of epidemics and other emergencies. That the board be departmentized, with chiefs, under the direction and control of the Medical Director, to superintend the affairs of the various branches of the board which your committee conceive to be "Vital Statistics," "Pure Food and Drugs," "Laboratory of Diagnosis," "Contagious Diseases of Animals," "Public Water Supplies," "Sewerage" and "Sanitary Inspection." The need for reorganization of, and increased power in, this board is, in the judgment of the committee, vitally essential to the general public welfare.

For lack of facilities there has been no systematic investigation of the sanitary conditions of the public institutions of the State since the year 1901. Had they been carried on, as the spirit of the law intends they should be, the plagues at the State Hospital for the Insane at Trenton, and at the Rahway Reformatory, during the sitting of the committee, might have been averted.

The committee further recommends legislation, to the end, that a sanitary and food inspection of all of the public institutions, State, county and municipal, be made by the State Board of Health, at least twice in each year, with power to employ drastic measures to remove causes of danger to health.

STATE HOSPITAL AT TRENTON.

During the past summer typhoid fever developed at the Asylum at Trenton, and because of the indifferent regard to their duties upon the part of the then medical director and the warden quickly became epidemic, prostrating one hundred and more inmates and those connected with the hospital, and resulting in eighteen deaths. The committee took upon itself to ferret out the origin and cause of its rapid progress. The testimony disclosed an appalling condition of uncleanness and filthiness surrounding the water and milk supply furnished by the State to its unfortunate wards. A part of the drinking water supply was taken from an open spring into which, it was testified, the sewage from a nearby sewer freely flowed. Near by the spring were open privy vaults and fecal deposits, which seeped through the earth into the water. It was demonstrated to the satisfaction of the committee that the spring was receiving polluting materials. Colon bacilli were found in abundance. With this contagious disease then prevalent in the hospital, and with knowledge that the water supplied was contaminated by filthy germs, and in all likelihood the source of the disorder, the then medical director and the warden continued its use by the patients for nearly two months. The medical director sought to justify his conduct by the statement that the spring was not within his jurisdiction. The warden vouchsafed no explanation.

The evidence as to the condition of the cow yards, from which the milk supply was taken was nauseating and disgusting. It was filled with manure and reeking with human excreta, in which, according to the Chief Inspector of the Food and Drug Department of the State Board of Health, the cows wallowed and laid; the cows were filthy and their udders, in some instances, festered and sore. The milk pails were kept in the cow barn, the floor of which was so thickly encrusted with manure as to imbed beyond sight the brick paving. Upon inspection the milk cans were found to be unclean, and the other appliances ill-smelling. The milk taken from this source of supply, befouled by the surrounding filth and stench, was furnished to the already debilitated patients as one of their chief articles of diet and nourishment.

After a careful review of the evidence the committee is unable to conclude as to the initial source of the disease; (which, in itself, is unimportant) but, in the light of the horribly unsanitary conditions surrounding the water and milk supply above depicted, it is convinced that the spreading of the disorder was due solely to the gross carelessness and negligence of the officials then in charge, and it unhesitatingly condemns their non or mis-management, which occasioned so much suffering and sacrifice of lives.

The Departments of Sanitary Inspection and Food and Drug Inspection of the State Board of Health are not free from severe censure. Had the chiefs of these departments, or their deputies, from time to time discharged their respective duties by an inspection of the premises, and an exercise of their prerogatives in enforcing the laws of cleanliness, the people of the State would have been spared the mortification and shame resulting from the disclosures before the committee in this respect.

The dietary of the institution produced before the committee is open to serious criticism. Up until the time of the committee hearing, it had not been changed in five years. The monotony of the sameness of food, week in and week out, furnished to the ailing charges of the State is revolting. The food was characterized by the overseer of the kitchens and dining rooms as a "working man's diet" and unsuitable for the patients. The aim apparently of the official in charge of this department was to discharge his office at a minimum of labor and trouble to himself. No recommendation as to legislation is made in this regard, but it is hoped that attention called to it in this manner will afford the necessary relief.

Considerable uneasiness and anxiety has been occasioned by the developments before the committee concerning the untimely deaths of three inmates of the hospital—Enoch E. Silvers, John Doe and John Gray. The circumstances concerning the demise of the first named as exploited before the committee leads it to the belief that he was brutally beaten by two attendants, and that his death was the direct result. Although the then medical director had cause to suspect that a homicide had been committed, he permitted the culprits to escape. The mysteries attending the deaths of the other two could not be fathomed by the committee.

In the final analysis it is found by the committee that many of the abuses at this asylum are attributable to the supineness of the Board of Managers.

That the insane are sometimes roughly handled and brutally beaten, and the perpetrators permitted to go unpunished is the opinion of the committee. In its judgment, the fault in the past

has been largely due to the inaction of the medical director. Applicants for positions, as attendants, have been hired without certification as to character, inquiry into their past, or qualifications for their duties. This necessarily invited a low standard of manhood and encouraged a looseness of discipline in those to whom are entrusted the lives and welfare of the mentally afflicted.

The committee recommends appropriations ample to employ skilled and desirable help to carry on this work of charity in this and all similar institutions of the State, and legislation that attendants, before entering upon their duties, give bond to the State of New Jersey in the sum of five hundred dollars, for the faithful performance of the same; and further, that the body of any patient, dying in any of the eleemosynary or penal institutions of this State, shall not be removed therefrom unless upon the certificate of the County Physician after a personal investigation by him into the cause of death.

Upon a personal inspection by the committee of the various wards of the hospital building, they were found to be cleanly and satisfactory, with the exception of the sanitary equipments in the wards in the main building. The plumbing is of a type long discarded; the toilets are of a pattern almost forgotten in modern sanitation. They are rotten, decayed, ill-smelling, and almost useless. The committee recommends an appropriation sufficient to install in the buildings all necessary plumbing and sanitary appliances. The committee is of the belief that the present system is a menace to the health of the inmates, and urges speedy action to avoid a repetition of the calamity through which the hospital has just passed.

The management of the hospital is dual headed. The Legislature and the Board of Managers have attempted to define the duties of the medical director and the warden, which, when put into practice in the past, frequently resulted in strife and clash, to the detriment of the institution and harm of the inmates.

The committee is of the opinion that a hospital intended for the segregation and cure of those mentally defective, should be in charge of a medical director who shall assume, and be held responsible for, its proper conduct and management, and that the warden, and his subordinates, be accountable to him; and it recommends legislation which will accomplish this purpose. The law should be made applicable to all institutions exercising kindred functions.

STATE HOSPITAL AT MORRIS PLAINS..

The committee's inspection of the grounds, buildings and patients of the community bearing the above title gives cause for emphasizing the strictures reluctantly made upon the Trenton Asylum. It is a retreat; not a goal. Individual physical restraint is not in evidence—an atmosphere of freedom, mental reserve and satisfaction predominates. Patients, although suffering from ailments, akin to those in like institutions, bear their burdens with apparent happy contentment. The administrative department is superior to that of any other institution examined by the committee. The medical branch is of the highest achievement. Modern science, in full measure, is applied in endeavoring to cure the curable; others are gently but firmly restrained. The committee urged by rumors of misdeeds at the hospital, made thorough inquiry; it reports them as unfounded. The hospital has the approval of the committee and is advocated as a just object of State pride.

The committee investigated the cause of death of Jacob H. Beatty, a patient alleged to have died as a result of a battery, at the hands of an attendant. Notwithstanding the committee's findings that the charge was not proven, the deceased's kin will be unswerved in their adverse convictions. It exemplifies the committee's hereinbefore made recommendation "that the body of a deceased inmate shall not be removed except upon the certificate of the county physician." This course will appease and reassure.

Although the first appearances indicated that a crime had been committed the medical director refrained from arresting the departure of the accused attendant, claiming that he had no authority to do so. In the judgment of the committee the director should have instituted measures to detain the suspect until all suspicions of guilt were removed.

Special appropriations for a dairy barn and cold storage system have been repeatedly requested by the Board of Managers. These appeals are deserving of your careful consideration, and in the opinion of the committee, should be granted to facilitate the good work carried on in this hospital.

STATE VILLAGE OF EPILEPTICS.

The committee visited this institution. Its appointments are admirable, its location is superb. The patients live *en familie*, are well taken care of, and happy, happy as they can be expected, laboring, as they do, under serious afflictions. The cottage plan

of housing the unfortunates adds greatly to their comfort, and enables the management to classify and segregate the patients more effectually than under other systems. The capacity is too limited to accommodate all of the epileptics of the State. The committee is informed that many are confined in the State and county asylums, where they cannot receive the treatment afforded at Skillman. The committee is of the opinion that it would be advantageous to enlarge this already successful field of State charity. By this, those of the State's charges, suffering from the malady especially treated in the village, would be immeasurably benefited and other institutions now harboring them would be relieved of their congested condition.

The cost to the State for the maintenance of the village is considerably higher per capita than any other institution investigated by the committee, but the committee reports that the satisfactory results show that the money is well spent. The village is in need of a hospital building, where hopeful cases may be surgically and scientifically treated. The committee recommends the necessary appropriation.

The treasurer's accounts disclose that for years large balances of money were kept in a favored bank, without yielding interest; this, however, has been corrected recently by the board of managers.

Complaint was made to the committee that the counties were tardy in the payment of bills to the various State institutions for the care of county patients, resulting in frequent hardships, and interfering seriously with a good and economical management. The committee recommends legislation that all moneys hereafter due to the State from any county, for their patients, be paid to the State Treasurer out of the first moneys received, and prior to any other disbursements.

THE RAHWAY REFORMATORY.

The Rahway Reformatory created and maintained for the reclamation to good citizenship of boys and first offenders, demands reformation and that speedily. The blame for the deplorable condition found by the committee at this institution is not altogether due to the Board of Commissioners and the officials in charge. In the judgment of the committee, the Legislature and the Appropriation Committee thereof are in a measure responsible. Because of the extravagant and reckless waste of public moneys in the construction of the administration building by the first commission having it in charge, and which was legislated out

of office, the institution has been in ill-repute, and the commission has been the object of much undeserved criticism and censure. With substantial aid from the State, and a correction of the internal abuses to which attention is herein called, the committee is of the opinion that the reformatory can be brought within the sphere of usefulness for which it was first intended. The commission has received scant consideration in its annual appeal for funds sufficient to carry on its work. Economy has been, and had to be practiced to a nicety in order that those restrained of their liberty by the State might live. The diet of the inmates is not of a character sufficient to nourish those who are at hard labor, nor to stimulate them to their task. The committee recommends more liberal consideration in the allowance for maintenance.

The superintendent confessed himself, to the committee, as guilty of padding the pay-roll submitted to the Comptroller of the Treasury for payment, and also to retaining, in violation of law, nearly ten thousand dollars earned on convict labor contracts; but he justified himself by an explanation that unless he had resorted to these measures the institution at that time could not have survived. While the committee deprecates the methods resorted to, and the necessity for doing so, yet, it finds that the moneys were honestly disbursed and accounted for.

The committee was unable to inform itself of the cost of the original construction and the manner of the disposition of the State's moneys in that regard. The books of the commission were before the committee, but they are illy kept and unintelligible. The president of the commission, who had some knowledge of the earlier career of the reformatory, and who possibly could have enlightened the committee, refused or failed to respond to subpoenas issued to him. Because of his evasion, personal service could not be made, although the committee believes that he must have been advised through the public press that they desired his testimony.

The "Gilded Dome" stands as a monument of the wastefulness of the first commission. It was erected at a cost of over one hundred thousand dollars, and when finished, no accommodations had been provided for the reception of inmates. The cell-wing was thought of, and constructed afterwards. It is such, and like abuses of public confidence, which the present commission inherited, and has been laboring under ever since.

An amazing and intolerable spectacle met the gaze of the committee upon its tour of inspection. Of the four hundred and eighty-one prisoners, cell rooms were provided for only about one half. The rest found lodging upon cots closely stored

together in the corridors and the dome. This overcrowded condition must necessarily have had its evil effect upon the morals of the inmates, and interfered seriously with good discipline. The new wing will, in a measure, relieve the congestion, but will not provide accommodations for the new arrivals. An additional wing is necessary.

To call the place a "reformatory" is a misnomer. The act incorporating it, recites that it is "for the custody and confinement of criminals between the ages of sixteen and thirty who have not been previously sentenced to a state prison of this or any other state or country, and of persons convicted for the first time of a crime not involving moral turpidity." The letter and spirit of the law have been sadly perverted by the sentencing judges and by the officials of the institution. Among those confined the committee found some over age (one thirty-eight years old) and many who had repeatedly served in other penal institutions and in state prisons, after conviction of horrible crimes involving morals. The co-mingling of these hardened criminals, with so-called "first offenders," who, by the kindly provisions of the law, the State hopes to save and return to honest citizenship, is one of the cardinal sins of the management. The embryo criminal cannot escape the evil influences absorbed from close association with the older and crime-steeped inmates. The past life of the latter, and his feeling of resentment towards society, is imparted to the less vicious which renders, in a great measure, nugatory the aim and purpose of the institution. The superintendent disclaims the right to reject those not eligible under the law. He asserts that the law department of the State has advised that he must receive all who are committed regardless of age, or previous condition of criminality.

One of the advanced methods of reformation is the teaching of trades, and it is the common impression that such a course is pursued at Rahway. Often we hear a sentencing judge announce "I will not send you to State Prison; I will give you a chance; I will send you to Rahway where you will be given an education and taught a trade, so that when your term expires you will become a useful citizen." What romancing in the light of the prevailing practices! Under the provisions of an act of 1901, the State may hire out at labor not more than one hundred inmates upon any one branch of industry. Two contracts are in force now at the reformatory, one known as the tailor shop contract, upon which one hundred are employed, and the other the decorative leather contract, employing either fifty or a like number. Their employment consists of simple manual hard labor,

daily and upon all days throughout their terms, the tailor shop convicts are engaged in running a steam propelled stitching machine on overalls. It is not a trade. It teaches nothing useful which may be applied in after life. The same is true of the employment on the leather contract. The superintendent and members of the commission are strongly opposed to the contract system and favor the installation of trade schools instead. In this, the committee heartily agree.

Evidences of cruel treatment of the inmates by the officers has come to the committee in such abundance that it cannot resist belief of its truth in many instances. In one case a sick inmate was punished by having a hose played upon the small of his back; his offence was the possession of a magazine, a piece of tobacco and a blade of a knife. In some others, inmates were struck with canes, beaten, kicked and knocked down. For fighting, two inmates were compelled to beat each other with a black snake whip.

A shocking instance of neglect was demonstrated by the evidence concerning the death of one William Fordham. While in the paint shop he drank wood alcohol, a noxious poison; believing him to be intoxicated, he was handcuffed and strung up the bars in a semi-comatose condition, in which position he was left groaning and moaning from three to eleven o'clock P. M., when he collapsed and died. All during this time he was without medical attention. The visiting physician prescribed by telephone, aromatic spirits of ammonia, a useless antidote. The committee cannot too severely censure the assistant superintendent in charge for inflicting upon his victim the merciless treatment, which preceded death. In the judgment of the committee, had prompt and intelligent measures been taken, the life of this inmate would have been saved.

One of the forms of discipline in vogue, is to chain boys in underground dungeons for six days consecutively upon a diet of bread and water. If the reformatory records of punishment may be relied upon, some of the inmates have been so confined for double that period in violation of the statute. The records likewise bear testimony that in, at least one instance, a prisoner was kept in solitary confinement upon bread and water for a month. Rigorous measures of punishment like this, cruel in the extreme, are not resorted to in our purely penal institutions, and should not be tolerated in a so-called reformatory school.

The superintendent, while conscientiously devoting himself to the institution, misconceives the duties and obligations he owes to his position. He does not superintend. Engaged wholly in clerical office work, he intrusts the "reformation" discipline and

punishment of those in his charge to the judgment (whimsical and capricious, however, as it sometimes may be) of subordinates; blindly confirming their acts; ignorant and regardless of the consequence. In the judgment of the committee a personal efficient superintendency by him would minimize the abuses rampant in the reformatory, and bring about a spirit of harmony and contentment which does not now exist among the inmates.

The parole system as conducted is not to be commended. Under its rules, by good behaviour, a prisoner may earn his liberty in twelve months. For trifling infractions of order he is "marked" by subordinates and demoted. Guided by the conduct books the parole committee and superintendent pass judgment on parole. The committee has found them to be imperfectly kept and unreliable—resulting in unjust discriminations against eligible candidates for clemency, and engendering a feeling of depression and unrest, thwarting the very aim of the system. For some ulterior purpose the first assistant superintendent carried the records of solitary punishments in a separate book—"Red book"—apparently not accessible to the parole committee, and which the superintendent testified he did not recall ever seeing. Of vast importance to the officials sitting in judgment upon inmates' qualifications for liberty, its suppression lends color to the charges of undue favoritism or preferment. The records are deficient in that they do not recite the crime of the convict and the maximum of sentence. The consequence is as the committee believes that some are deprived of their liberty beyond the period limited by law.

For remedy the committee recommends the following enactments:

First. That all inmates over the age of thirty years at the time of their sentence, and those who have previously served terms in state prisons of this or any other state or country, or those who stand convicted of crime involving moral turpitude, be forthwith removed to the State Prison, and that the superintendent hereafter reject any embraced within the foregoing description.

Second. That the labor contract system be abolished, and trade schools substituted.

Third. That confinement in underground dungeons or solitary cells be abolished.

Fourth. That disciplinary punishment shall not be meted out except under the personal supervision of the superintendent.

Fifth. That corporal punishment be prohibited and made a misdemeanor.

Sixth. That to prevent unfair discrimination in enforcing the parole system records of convicts be kept together and under a single continuous entry.

One of the officials who was charged with surreptitiously furnishing tobacco to inmates, who upon discovery were penalized, admitted his guilt. The committee believe him guilty of graver offences preferred against him, but as he has been dismissed from the service, further comment is unnecessary.

The committee has examined into the question of water now used for drinking purposes at the reformatory, and is of the opinion that, for numerous reasons, it would be wise to provide a private source of supply. It advises a suitable appropriation.

Before leaving this subject the committee directs the attention of your Honorable body to the contract involving the construction of the new cell wing, and in it to that which bears the ear marks or corrupt practices, colloquially called "graft." The terms of the proposals, afterwards embodied in the contract, provide exclusively for the installation of the Paul Heating System. The contractor added forty-eight hundred and fifty dollars to his bid, being the price arbitrarily fixed by the Paul Company as its license fee. The State Architect remonstrated with the President of the Rahway Commission, who, at that time, was a stockholder in the Paul Company, and formerly was its president, against the apparent extortion—the license fee was promptly reduced to two thousand eight hundred and fifty dollars and upon further resistance the price was fixed at one thousand four hundred and thirty dollars, a saving to the State of three thousand four hundred and twenty dollars. The committee would have been pleased with some explanation from the President of the Rahway Commission regarding his efforts to conserve the State's interest, and of certain correspondence which appears in the testimony, but as hitherto stated, process could not be served.

STATE PRISON.

After a careful and thorough investigation of the State Prison, at Trenton, the committee reports that it is excellently, intelligently and judiciously run. While, so far as the committee could ascertain, there has been no clashing of authority or duty between the two departments, those of Keeper and Supervisor, yet it reiterates its view that there should be a single head upon whom entire responsibility should rest and to which others holding important positions be subordinated.

The committee recommends equipping the institution with a central heating, lighting and power plant, which, at conservative figures, would occasion a net annual saving of at least twenty thousand dollars.

A separate woman's wing is badly needed—the present one is overcrowded and unsanitary. Proper appropriation is advised.

Many of the deputy keepers, who have spent their lives in the service, have become aged and unfit to properly and fully discharge their duties. Younger and sturdier men should take their places to successfully cope with desperate situations which may arise at any moment. It would be the essence of ingratitude to discharge them for inability. In the interest of the institution they ought to go, but the committee feels that some recompense should be made, and advises retirement on one-half pay, upon arriving at a given age, after a fixed period of service.

BOARD OF CONTROL.

After serious reflection upon, and thoughtful consideration given to the many and divergent methods employed by the respective boards managing the charitable and penal institutions of the State, the committee is not satisfied that, taking them as a whole, the best results are achieved either for the institution or the State. The men and women who are devoting their time gratuitously to these noble works of the government, can ill spare as much as good business administration requires. To give the full measure of care their personal interests, or those of the State must suffer, in some degree at least. It would lead to a saving by the State, and benefit to the institutions, to place the latter within the control of a board composed of five members, who shall give the management their exclusive attention. The committee recommends the creation of a "State Board of Control" to have the management and control of all penal and eleemosynary organizations maintained by the State; that fair compensation be allowed; that all boards and commissions charged with the management of these affairs, including that of the Commission of Charities and Correction, be abolished, and that their powers, or such as may be practicable, be lodged in the new board.

Respectfully submitted, with the testimony, at Trenton, this fourteenth day of January, A. D., nineteen hundred and eight.

SIMON HAHN, Chairman,
MARK A. SULLIVAN,
JOHN D. VAN BLARCOM,
FRANK B. JESS,

Committee.



