SECOND BIENNIAL REPORT

OF THE

NEBRASKA INSTITUTION

FOR

FEEBLE-MINDED YOUTH

AT

BEATRICE,

TO THE

BOARD OF PUBLIC LANDS AND BUILDINGS.

DECEMBER 1st, 1888.

LINCOLN, NEB.: JOURNAL COMPANY, STATE PRINTERS. 1888.
OFFICERS OF THE INSTITUTION.

HON. JOSEPH SCOTT, Com. Pub. Lands and Buildings......President
HON. G. L. LAWS, Secretary of State.......................Secretary
HON. C. H. WILLARD..................................Treasurer of State
HON. WM. LESEE........................................Attorney General

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MRS. MARIE BUTTERFIELD.
MISS C. G. BOSBYSELL.

CLERK.
F. G. SIMMONS.
REPORT.

To the Honorable Board of Public Lands and Buildings:

Gentlemen—In compliance with the requirements of law, I herewith submit the second biennial report of this institution.

The buildings for which the last legislature made appropriations have been completed. The barn and laundry have been in use since July, 1887. I have, as you directed, had the necessary work done to complete the cottage for boys, since the settlement was made with the contractor. I have also had the floors of all the dormitories, closets, and day rooms planed and oiled. The building will be a great improvement on the present one in the way of convenient arrangement, as well as being much more pleasant. It is well ventilated, having separate vent flues and fresh air flues for each room.

Owing to an error in the enrollment of the bill after it had passed the house of representatives, the appropriation for the furnishing of the new building was omitted. As the plans had been virtually adopted by the legislature, no change could be made in order to cover this item. Under your directions, I have purchased furniture, in order that applicants might be provided for and the building put to some use. In the estimates I have asked for an appropriation to cover this amount. The building is now ready to be occupied, and we will begin to use it on the 10th of December. It will accommodate seventy-two boys.

The appropriations made by the last legislature for maintenance and fuel and lights were based upon the capacity of the present building, no provision being made for the increased number when the boys' cottage would be occupied. It is my intention to admit as many as the funds will justify.

Almost from the time of opening, May 25, 1887, there have been seventy inmates in the institution, this being the full capacity of the present building. The health of the inmates has been good,
with the exception of an endemic of diphtheria during April and May of this year. In all, twenty-one were sick, and there were three deaths from this cause. There were also three deaths during the period, as follows: Cerebral congestion, 1; epilepsy, 2.

Applications for admission have come in rapidly, and the average number per month is steadily increasing, as the people of the state learn of the existence of such an institution, and the results accomplished. We now have in all 143 applications for admission. They will average about seven to eight per month, and I have no doubt they will continue to increase in number until most of such persons in the state are provided for. There are in Nebraska at least 700 to 1,000 persons of this class.

No statistics have been gathered since my last report. At that time I had the names of feeble-minded persons in the state, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MALES</th>
<th>FEMALES</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under five years of age</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between five and eighteen</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over eighteen</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age unknown</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>614</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This list could not have been complete, as I procured the names in the course of a couple of months, from secretaries of school boards throughout the state, and from other sources.

The law provides that the most improvable cases, and those between the ages of five and eighteen, shall be given preference in admission. The most helpless, and those over eighteen years of age, have been practically debarred by this clause. The law, in giving preference to those who can be benefited most, provides the greatest good to the greatest number, which is a just provision. The persons thus deprived of the care and benefits of the institution are among the most helpless of those deserving and demanding the protection and care of the commonwealth. Being compelled, by reason of the crowded condition of the institution, to reject all such applications, few have been filed.
Many letters concerning cases of this kind have been received, but no encouragement could be given until further provision was made. An asylum department, for the care of those persons who are not suitable subjects for the training school, should be established in connection with this institution at an early day. There are at least three hundred of this class in the state, of whom a large proportion would avail themselves of its benefits. They are distributed in county poor houses, and in homes made cheerless, and in many cases even desolate, by reason of the great care necessary for their maintenance, making life a burden to father and mother, and even preventing the education and training of their more fortunate brothers and sisters. Persons of this kind are shielded from the world. Parents are wont to feel the stigma of having such a child, and it is only a few who really see the true situation, or even know of the great number in the community. Girls of this class are peculiarly susceptible of being led astray, and there is too often present the fiend who is willing to take advantage. Some are cared for in the alms houses, where they very frequently serve to propagate their kind. Many of the adults are capable of simple kinds of work, and could be made useful around the institution.

SCHOOL WORK.

The results accomplished in the school-room have been very gratifying, and if the members of the legislature are made to realize the benefits achieved in the short time our schools have been in operation, they will no doubt make such appropriations as will make the school and industrial departments thoroughly effectual.

Of the number of inmates now in the institution 7 read in third reader; 7 read in second reader; 8 read in first reader; 9 read from chart or primer; 7 know some words; 18 write from dictation, many of whom know the use of capitals and punctuate fairly; 5 can write a fair letter; 6 write from copy; 7 are commencing to form some letters; 3 can do free-hand drawing fairly well, and two of them sketch very well; 17 draw simple forms; 5 draw a few simple forms. In arithmetic, 3 work in division and are taking up fractions; 5 know the multiplication table; 2 work well in addition and
subtraction; 7 combine numbers and work simple examples in addition; 6 combine numbers to 8; 5 combine numbers to 4; 3 count to 20 and begin to understand addition; 3 count to 10; 6 count to 5.

12 know something of geography, including simple map drawing; 34 know form, such as sphere, cube, cylinder, etc., and all the primary colors, and most of them know the secondary colors; 5 recognize most of the primary colors; 6 recognize some forms and colors.

In industrial work, 30 do perforating and sewing, of whom 8 do very nice work; 5 girls do ironing, 3 of them doing excellent work, and others are learning to iron; 3 boys and 3 girls scrub floors nicely; 3 boys and 5 girls do chamber work well; 3 boys can drive team and assist in outdoor work; 2 help in work at barn; 1 works at boiler house and is quite useful; 3 assist in kitchen work.

A number of others are beginning to show capacity for various kinds of work, and soon there will be many who will be able to do almost any kind of work about the Institution.

Practically none of the inmates could read understandingly, and only one could write, on entering the Institution. None had any real understanding of numbers; while some could count by rote, even to quite a number, they had no proper understanding of their meaning. The work they have done has been thorough, and all that has been accomplished, as indicated above, is well understood by each child.

Individual work is necessary with all, and it alone will accomplish any result in the beginning. The methods used are as nearly as possible adapted to the peculiar needs of each child, much prominence being given to object teaching and kindergarten work, in connection with physical training, such as gymnastics and calisthenics. The work must be individualized to such an extent that it is impossible for any teacher to do justice to more than twenty pupils, and with the lower grades even this number is too many.

Industrial training would have been of but little use until the characteristics and capabilities of the inmates were known. In order that the training should reach its full development, it is imperative that such a department should be organized at the earliest possible time. In the education and training of this class there should always
be in view some useful occupation adapted to the child and the pursuit of the parents, as most of such cases, to be self-supporting, must be under the supervision of others.

As will be seen, the children have the capacity for various kinds of work, and they should not, in the interests of the state and themselves, be allowed to grow up in idleness. Industrial training should be carried on in connection with the school work. Children of this class are unable to endure continued application in the school room during the whole of the morning or afternoon. Again, body and mind must be developed and trained simultaneously. Results obtained mentally without corresponding physical development are practically useless, and soon lost after constant drill has ceased.

The child feeble in mind must have much variety of occupation, which gives relaxation. To train them in habits of industry they should be as nearly as possible constantly employed. They should go from work to school, from school to work, etc. When the time comes for play they should be taught to play with a vim, and as nearly as possible be always actively engaged at something useful. Thus they will acquire habits of industry that can never be erased. As a rule they are inactive and sluggish. They need activity and life continually drilled into them, and as they are very imitative they need the example constantly before them. The best results of training can only be accomplished in connection with industrial work, and now that it is demonstrated that our children are capable of such training, it should be supplied without delay. Such departments, to be used largely for purposes of training, could not be expected to furnish much profit, but they have been self-supporting in other institutions, after being established, and in some cases quite a revenue has been derived from them. There are quite a number of these children who have no homes and will never be able to manage their own affairs, and will doubtless be dependent upon charity for their care throughout life. If taught some useful work they will become self-supporting. Otherwise, no difference how much mental training they may have, it will be of no avail.
LAND.

In my report two years ago I presented the necessity of the purchase of more land, and would urgently renew my suggestions at that time. I quote from my report of Dec. 1st, 1886, as follows:

"The experience of older institutions of this kind is, that large tracts of land are not only a matter of economy, the farm products largely supplying the institution, thus greatly lessening the cost of maintenance, but are also of great usefulness in the training and physical development of the children, agricultural pursuits being particularly adapted to persons of this class. Again, since the majority of the people of our state are engaged in farming, the pupils should be taught that which they will be able to follow under the direction of their parents when returned to their homes."

This matter has been delayed already too long, and it would have been good economy to have purchased sufficient land at the start to make a good farm. The Institution should have not less than one acre of ground for each inmate. We should at present have at least 160 acres, and the necessity will become more and more apparent as the institution grows. We have but forty acres of land (which was donated by the city of Beatrice) and in a very short time, at our present rate of growth, it will all be required for building sites and playgrounds. It would be none too much for play-grounds for two or three hundred children, and it should be improved with that idea in view from this time forward.

The time for cheap lands in this part of Nebraska is past, and as values of real estate are constantly rising, the longer purchase of land is deferred the more expensive it will be.

I would urge that this very necessary matter be given attention, and that an appropriation be made, sufficient to purchase a reasonable amount of ground.

A BRIEF SKETCH

of the every-day life of our children may not be out of place here. The children's rising bell rings at 6:30, the employees having previously breakfasted. An hour is required to get all the children ready
for breakfast, and they go to the dining room at 7:30. After break-
fast those who have work to do go to the various departments, the
girls to the laundry, kitchen, or dormitories, or to clean stairs or
floors; some of the boys to outdoor work, some to dormitory work,
some to sweeping and floor cleaning. At this time the younger
children, and those not able to work, go out of doors if the weather
permits, or enjoy themselves in the play-rooms in various ways until
school time. Promptly at 9 o'clock all assemble in the gymnasium,
where morning exercises are held, in which music plays an impor-
tant part. They then go to their respective school rooms, where they
remain, with the exception of a recess of a few minutes, until 12:15,
when they are dismissed for dinner. Fifteen minutes is allowed to
prepare for dinner, and at 12:30 all are seated at the table. After
dinner they rest or play until 2 P.M., when they again gather for
school, which continues without intermission until four o'clock.
Some of the children, being unable to sustain mental effort success-
fully for the whole of the session of school, spend part of the time in
other pursuits, and are in school for one or more classes each half-day.

At the close of the afternoon session some go again to work, while
the others amuse themselves in the house or out of doors until 5:30,
which is their supper hour. After supper the children amuse them-
selves in various ways, read, write, etc., until half past eight, the hour
for retiring, many of the younger ones going to bed at an earlier hour.

On Tuesday evenings the children have a social in the gymnasium,
presided over by the teachers, at which games and amusements of
various kinds, with music, give them a pleasant hour. Every Fri-
day evening from 7:30 to 8:30, they have a dance, which is highly
enjoyed by all. The dancing exercises teach them graceful move-
ments and good manners, and are highly beneficial in many ways.

On Sunday afternoon the children are taken into the gymnasium
at two o'clock, and after opening exercises, go to the several school
rooms, where talks and lessons suitable to the day are given by the
teachers.

From the time they rise until they retire, an attendant or teacher
is near to keep watch of them, and during the night the dormitories-
are visited frequently by the night watches, who see that all is right and care for any children who may need attention. The children are taught to cultivate habits of self-reliance, and to take care of themselves as much as possible, but some one is always near at hand to keep an oversight of them.

BUILDINGS.

Owing to the misfortunes to our boiler-house it has been badly damaged. It has required almost rebuilding in order to preserve it until the legislature should make some provision.

About April 1st, 1887, it was nearly demolished by a wind storm. The stack was blown down, the roof torn off, and the walls badly damaged. Scarcely was it repaired before another wind storm lifted off the roof and badly damaged the walls again. It was repaired as best it could be and has remained intact since.

A shed addition was made necessary on account of there being no provision made for storage of coal. Another shed addition and underpinning of the walls was a necessity in order to place the boiler for heating the new building.

It will readily be seen from what the building has passed through, that it must be in a very bad condition. The walls are settled and are not plumb, in addition to being badly checked in some places. I do not think it possible for it to last through another biennial period. The most that can be hoped is that the building will last until another can be erected.

A boiler-house and engine room, suitable for future use, should be erected at once, and in connection with it a good brick stack.

Even for our present number, the kitchen accommodations are inadequate, and the work has to be done under great disadvantages. As the population of the institution increases, larger and better accommodations for cooking purposes will be absolutely necessary, and it would be most economical to provide at once a suitable kitchen building, for future as well as present necessities. I would urge the appropriation of a sufficient sum to erect a detached kitchen and dining room building, with such improved apparatus for cooking on
a large scale as is necessary at present, and room for the placing of additional apparatus as it may be needed.

The experience of older institutions has demonstrated the wisdom of having the cooking done in a building separate from those used for other purposes. The additional room is absolutely necessary, and it would be a great improvement in the matter of convenience, besides being highly desirable on sanitary grounds, as well as securing greater safety from fire.

A bakery is also an important adjunct to the institution. All bread consumed has now to be bought. It may not be deemed expedient to build a bakery at this time, in connection with the kitchen and dining-room building, but it is something the need of which will be speedily felt, and the demand for it will soon be so apparent that its erection cannot profitably be long deferred.

A cottage for girls, similar to the one just finished for boys, is very much needed. Applications for admission are coming in very fast, and we will have enough to fill another building before it could be completed, even if it were commenced at once.

Applications have already been received for many more than the two present buildings can accommodate, and there is no reason to suppose that the number of applicants will decrease. On the contrary, everything points to a steady increase in the number of applications. Having made so good a start in the work, the people of the state owe it to themselves, as well as to these unfortunates, to make provision to meet this increased demand. The erection of one ward building during the coming biennial period, will hardly be sufficient to meet the requirements, but it will at least be a step in the right direction.

An ice house is very much needed. It is absolutely necessary to use ice in large quantities, throughout the summer. We have been obliged to have ice delivered every day in summer time, because of the limited storage capacity. With a building in which sufficient ice for an entire season could be stored, money could be saved and the full benefit of the ice could be obtained. The saving thus effected
over present methods would be sufficient, in a few seasons, to pay for the building.

A large refrigerator or cold storage room is also a much needed improvement, for the storage of meat, butter, eggs, and other perishable articles of food. With the utmost care it is impossible to prevent some waste, without adequate facilities for cold storage, and no item asked for in our estimates is of more value to the institution than the refrigerator room.

WATER SUPPLY.

The water supply has been entirely inadequate. We have been compelled to keep a man on duty both night and day to run the pump and even then we have been without water a good portion of the time. It has been very difficult to secure enough water for laundry and kitchen purposes, often leaving the sanitary arrangements without the necessary amount. This has led to stoppage of waste pipes and sewers, which has been a constant expense, besides making the sanitary condition of the house very bad.

I do not doubt but that the endemic of diphtheria passed through the past spring and summer, should be in the main attributed to this cause.

The Board of Public Lands and Buildings have done all in their power in the way of an effort to secure a well sufficient for the supply, but without success. Our present well is very liable to contamination from the sewer, which is poorly laid and may supply a constant seeping into the porous soil, and thence to the water.

Poisonous matters in solution are not removed by filtering through any depth of sand. Only matter in suspension would be removed, and this leaves the water clear and sparkling without removing the cause of infection.

Judging from wells in this vicinity, that have been sunk to a greater depth, salt water only could be obtained. This would soon ruin the boilers and pipes in the institution and be unfit for use. A sufficient water supply is an absolute necessity to the cleanliness and health of any large institution, and can not be neglected.
I have received a proposition from the city of Beatrice, to extend an eight-inch main to this institution for the sum of $13,000, for which expenditure we would be reimbursed by a credit of the full amount on charges for water supplied.

I have also received a proposition from Dr. Fulton, of Beatrice, to sell a spring located about two and one-fourth miles from the Institution.

The most expedient plan for supply of water should be at once adopted, care being taken that the supply will be sufficient. The state cannot afford to expend a large amount of money without having the matter certain.

**WATER STORAGE.**

Unless it is decided to connect with the city water-works, some provision should be made immediately for the storage of water in a tank or tanks sufficient for at least one or two days' supply. This storage is necessary in case of fire. Should a fire occur now we would be entirely helpless.

**MISCELLANEOUS.**

Some provision should be made for fire escapes in the central building, the dormitories being on the third floor. In the event of a fire at night it would be impossible to get the children all out of the building. I have asked for an appropriation, with which I believe sufficient fire escapes could be provided to materially increase the safety of all in the building.

No appropriation having been made for improvement of grounds, we have been able to do but little in this respect. Some trees have been planted, a drive-way made, and considerable grading has been done, but the work so far has hardly been a fair beginning. A great deal of work is necessary on the grounds, and if my estimate is allowed the next two years will show a vast improvement.

The fund for repairs and improvements was very small, but by much care in its expenditure we have been able to add a number of needed improvements, but have not been able to make all the repairs necessary from time to time. The appropriation asked for will enable
us to make what repairs and improvements will be necessary during the ensuing period.

The expense of caring for this class is even greater than that of the insane, besides requiring teachers. This being, as it were, the period of construction, much is required to place the Institution on a proper footing.

I desire to express my thanks to the many friends who contributed toward the Christmas entertainment of the children, to the officers and employes of the Institution for the cheerful co-operation they have given me throughout the term, and to the members of the Board of Public Lands and Buildings, whose kindly interest in the Institution has been greatly encouraging.

**ESTIMATES.**

The following estimates are based upon the supposition that there will be at least one hundred and thirty inmates during the next two years:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance and employees' wages</td>
<td>$52000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture and bedding</td>
<td>3000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fuel and lights</td>
<td>8500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm supplies and vehicles</td>
<td>2500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office supplies</td>
<td>1250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School supplies</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library and periodicals</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amusements</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicines</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repairs and improvements</td>
<td>2500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incidental</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cows</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horses</td>
<td>450</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laundry apparatus</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooking apparatus</td>
<td>1200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paints and oils</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement of grounds</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ice house.......................................................... $ 200 00
Fire escape.......................................................... 1000 00
Pumps and machinery............................................ 1500 00
Water supply...................................................... 18000 00
Boiler house, stack, coal room, engine room, refrigerator building, kitchen and dining room building, and ward building.................................................. 40000 00
Deficiency on medicine and surgical instruments............ 212 65
Deficiency on barn.................................................. 142 10
Deficiency on fuel and lights.................................. 2500 00
Deficiency on furnishing new building........................ 853 20
Salaries of officers and teachers.................................. 11100 00

Respectfully submitted,

J. T. ARMSTRONG,
Superintendent.

Beatrice, December 1, 1888.
INFORMATION.

This institution was established by the state of Nebraska for the benefit of feeble-minded children between the ages of five and eighteen years, who are, by reason of their affliction, denied the educational advantages of our public schools, and who, likewise, because of their physical weaknesses, are necessarily dependent.

"Besides shelter and protection, the prime object of said institution shall be to provide special means of improvement for that unfortunate portion of the community who were born, or by disease have become, imbecile or feeble-minded, and by a well adapted course of instruction reclaim them from their helpless condition, and through the development of their intellectual faculties fit them as far as possible for usefulness in society. To this end, there shall be furnished them such agricultural and mechanical education as they are capable of receiving."—Sec. 2, Chap. 52, Session Laws of Nebraska, 1885.

The education of this class includes not only the simple elements of instruction taught in our public schools and in the kindergarten, where that is practicable, but embraces a course of training in the more practical matters of every-day life, the cultivation of habits of cleanliness, propriety, and self-reliance, as well as to develop and enlarge their capacity for useful occupation.

Children of this class are often feeble in body as well as in mind. Their gait and voluntary movements are generally imperfect and slow, and their special senses inactive and undeveloped. Physical training and development therefore are essential in order that their mental improvement may be made permanent; hence the importance of gymnastic and calisthenic exercises in connection with our school work.

The very feeble power of attention must be cultivated and increased by the most attractive means. The special senses must be trained
and educated, vicious habits corrected, and the idea of obedience and moral obligation must be instilled and nourished.

Some who are only backward and undeveloped from being misunderstood and abused can be improved and reclaimed by special means. Others can be made orderly and obedient, docile and industrious, and all can be improved in their general condition and habits.

In order to secure these blessings, this class of afflicted persons must have special care, treatment, and instruction, which cannot be obtained in the family at home, or in private medical practice, or by any of the ordinary methods of instruction; and it is only in some institution—well arranged and directed for the accomplishment of these special objects—that they can receive such benefits. Each individual case must be studied from a physiological point of view, and treated as its peculiarities may demand.

Children, residents of Nebraska, who are feeble-minded, and those who have such marked peculiarities or eccentricities of intellect, or those who by reason of their being backward are unable to receive the benefits of the common schools and ordinary methods of instruction, are entitled to care and training free of charge, except the expense of necessary clothing and transportation to and from their homes. Any further information will be cheerfully given by the superintendent,