

## HOUSE....No. 220.

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### Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, March 27, 1861.

The Committee on Education, to whom were referred the Petitions of the Trustees of the Monson Academy, of the Trustees of the Merrimack Academy, at Groveland, of the Trustees of the Ladies' Collegiate Institute, at Worcester, and of the Trustees of the New England Female Medical College, at Boston, praying respectively for aid from the Commonwealth, beg leave to submit the following

#### R E P O R T:

They have inquired into the condition and claims of these institutions.

The Monson Academy was incorporated in 1804. In the following year the Commonwealth made to it a grant of a half township of land in Maine, which eventually brought \$4,000. The academy has now a general fund of \$6,000, and a special fund of \$6,500, for the education of young men for the ministry. Its income from funds and fees is less than \$2,000. Notwithstanding the limited charge for tuition, and the smallness of the income, the standard of instruction appears to be high, and the academy, situated in a locality in every respect favorable for its usefulness, seems well deserving of public

support. The trustees ask for a grant to be funded by them and the income applied to the purposes of the institution.

The trustees of the Merrimack Academy have not made known to the Committee the condition or the particular claims of their school.

There are in the Commonwealth sixty-five incorporated academies, giving instruction to about thirty-five hundred pupils. Of late years the number of students appears to have gradually diminished, and the condition of many of the academies is less prosperous than formerly. This may be partly owing to the fact that their income has not increased in proportion to the rate of compensation which good teachers can command. But it is chiefly due to the effect of the law concerning the establishment of high schools by towns, to the improved character of those schools, and to the establishment and success of the State normal schools. It is the natural result of the policy of the Commonwealth to encourage and enforce free public instruction. There are, however, many towns not having the population which requires the maintenance of a high school, and not able or not willing to support one; and in the portions of the State where these towns are most numerous, the incorporated academies not only do good service, but give opportunities for education not offered in any other way.

The Ladies' Collegiate Institute, at Worcester, was founded a few years since, with the purpose of providing for young women instruction as advanced and as varied as that which the colleges of the State offer to young men. It is understood that the attempt has met with the most promising success in this point of view. But the financial condition of the institute is not flourishing. With a property valued at \$60,000, it has a debt of \$26,000, and is in need of money for improvements and repairs. Its difficulties arise from having undertaken the erection of a building beyond its means to pay for; and this has also lead indirectly to extensive litigation with its subscribers.

The New England Female Medical College was incorporated in 1850 for the education of midwives, nurses and female physicians; and in 1856 it received authority to confer the degree of doctor of medicine. Twenty-eight pupils have graduated since 1854, and there are now about twenty at the college.

It is believed that the students receive a thorough medical education, and that the medical treatment of women by physicians of their own sex is growing in favor among the people of the State.

A grant of \$5,000 was made to the college in 1854, for scholarships, and an additional grant of \$10,000 in 1855, for providing a building and otherwise aiding the college. These grants were made from the income of the school fund. The resources of the college consist of the building bought of the city for \$50,000, of which \$5,000 only has been paid, of the furniture and apparatus, and of a bequest of \$30,000 about to be paid to the trustees, of which the income only is applicable to support scholarships and a professorship. There is also another bequest of \$7,000 which will eventually accrue to the college. The building is admirably adapted to the purpose of the college, but is larger than its present wants require. The pecuniary needs of the institution come from the same cause as those of the Worcester Institute, namely, a larger investment in buildings than the trustees have the means of paying for.

The Committee reluctantly deem it their duty to report unfavorably upon the petitions of these institutions, because in their judgment a grant to them of money from the treasury would not be in accordance with the practice and what they suppose to be the general policy of the Commonwealth in similar cases.

The State, while devoting its strongest efforts in education to the advancement of gratuitous instruction under its own direct control or that of the towns, has given bountifully to colleges and academies. The sources from which these donations were made were chiefly these:—

1. The lands owned by the Commonwealth in Maine.
2. The moiety of the income of the school fund available for general educational purposes.
3. The proceeds of sales of Back Bay lands, a portion of these having been appropriated to Amherst, Williams, and Tufts Colleges, and to the academy at Wilbraham.

The lands in Maine were long ago set apart for the school fund, the moiety of the income of that fund has not this year

been more than sufficient for the necessary educational expenses of the State, and the sales of the Back Bay lands are so pledged that they cannot be diverted to other purposes without breach of faith. There are not to the knowledge of the Committee any lands or funds from which grants could be made to the petitioners. The only source then from which they can be aided is the general treasury, or, in other words, the State tax.

The Committee have not been able to find any appropriations from this source to colleges and academies within the last forty years, excepting one of \$3,000 to an academy in Dukes County in 1835, and one of \$350 to another academy some years earlier; and these were both made before there was any income from the school fund. They are unwilling to recommend to the legislature to depart from what appears to be the settled policy of the State in these matters, especially as they do not doubt that there are other institutions in the State, whose claims are as great and whose needs are as pressing as these.

The Committee, accordingly, recommend that the petitioners have severally leave to withdraw.

For the Committee,

MARTIN BRIMMER.