

SENATE.....No. 18.

M E S S A G E .

To the Senate :

I transmit herewith to the Honorable Senate, for the use of the Legislature, the Report of the Commissioners for "erecting the State Reform School Buildings."

GEO. N. BRIGGS.

COUNCIL CHAMBER, January 26, 1848.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

To His Excellency, GEORGE N. BRIGGS, Governor, and to the Honorable Executive Council, of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts :

The commissioners for erecting the state reform school buildings at Westborough, were appointed April 17, 1847. Some delay occurred in organizing the commission, as it was doubtful whether one of the commissioners could serve. On the eleventh of May, they met at Westborough, and, having previously obtained, from the office of the secretary of the Commonwealth, the plans and explanations furnished to the legislature of 1847 by the commissioners for selecting and purchasing a farm, they placed the same in the hands of Elias Carter, Esq., of Springfield, and James S. Savage, Esq., of Southborough, architects and builders of skill and character, who did not propose to contract for the erection of the buildings, and desired them to estimate the expense of such buildings as those plans and explanations proposed.

On the 25th of May another meeting was held, and the estimates of Messrs. Carter & Savage were found to exceed the appropriation made by the Legislature. They were requested to revise their calculations, and report on the third day of June. At that time it appeared that it was impossible that the cost of the buildings proposed should not exceed the appropriation.

The resolves appeared to the commissioners to be imperative in requiring accommodations for three hundred boys. The plans were, on the whole, satisfactory to them, and they felt justified in causing buildings to be erected according to those plans,

although the cost should exceed the amount appropriated. But knowing that the former commissioners, relying upon the architect who drew the plans, had stated to the legislature that the sum of forty-five thousand dollars would cover all the expense of erecting the buildings, the present commissioners directed Messrs. Carter & Savage, (whom they had engaged to superintend the work of erecting said buildings) to offer the contract, at that sum, to the architect who drew the plans. He declined taking it, but said he would make an offer with others. The plans and explanations, several omissions having been directed, to reduce the expense, were accordingly submitted to other competent builders, and several offers (including one at sixty-two thousand five hundred dollars, from the original designer of the plans,) were made, varying in amount from sixty-five thousand to fifty-two thousand dollars. The lowest offer having been made by a competent and responsible builder, Mr. Daniel Davies, of Boston, the contract was made with him, on the fifteenth day of June. On the same day the commissioners selected, on the farm, the site for the buildings. As soon thereafter as was practicable, the work was commenced, and has been successfully prosecuted, until the buildings are erected, so far as regards walls and roof, and the windows are put in, temporarily, to secure the whole from injury by the weather. It is believed that, thus far, the work has been done as well, as rapidly, and as satisfactorily, as circumstances would permit. The time stipulated in the contract, for the work to be completed, is the first day of December next; but, from present appearances, it is probable that it may be done a month or two earlier.

At the solicitation of many persons, among whom were the trustees of the reform school, the commissioners restored parts of the building, which they had directed to be omitted, and this will add four hundred and seventy-five dollars to the expense.

The contract with Mr. Davies does not cover the furnishing of water. This, in abundance, is indispensable in all large establishments, and necessary in every house; especially is this true of all establishments where many young persons live. It is doubtful in what way it can here be best supplied. A well has been dug, which it was necessary to sink very deep, and

the water, as yet, has a mineral taste, and, it is feared, will never be suitable for drinking, and culinary uses. It is proposed to have one or more large cisterns, to save the water from the roofs; but so much water will be required, that it is still a matter of inquiry, whether it will not be advisable to bring it by pipes, and by forcing-engines, from the pond. The commissioners understand that the resolves contemplate their procuring furniture, for the apartments of the superintendent, the steward, and the boys, though these items were not included in the estimate furnished to the last legislature. The requisition seemed imperative, to provide a *building for three hundred* boys; but it is not supposed that furniture ought, at first, to be provided for more than *one hundred*. This the commissioners propose to do; and, in regard to the schoolroom, to do it in the best plain manner. In regard to all other furniture, it is proposed to have it strong, plain, and neat. As it may be uncertain what trades will first be introduced, and the tools and apparatus, for such trades as are usually carried on in such institutions, are not very expensive, and are easily procurable, it is proposed to leave the workshop unfurnished, except with some such apparatus as will certainly be needed. The grading around the buildings is not included in the contract, except so far as is requisite for the security of the walls and the levelling of the enclosed area. It is supposed that the commissioners will be expected to see this done, so far as to make the access to the buildings convenient, and to leave the grounds, immediately around the buildings, in a good condition for subsequent cultivation or ornament. The object of the commissioners has been, and is, to expend as little as may be for mere ornament, but to have every thing done in the most convenient and substantial manner. For the necessary purposes above specified, and for the expenses of superintendence (which is not increased by the employment of two gentlemen instead of one,) and for the expenses of the commissioners, an additional appropriation will be required.

Of the \$45,000, heretofore appropriated, \$30,000 have been drawn from the treasury, and actually expended and paid.

The commissioners wish to present a true account of every thing which they suppose requisite to be done, and not to

under-rate or over-rate the cost. But their estimates must be, necessarily, imperfect, and may be unintentionally deceptive. According to the estimate they have made, there will be required, to complete the buildings and prepare them for occupancy, in addition to the sum now appropriated and in the treasury, a further sum of twenty-one thousand dollars.

Respectfully submitted by

A. D. FOSTER,
ROB'T RANTOUL,
L. POMEROY,

Commissioners.

Boston, January 25, 1848.

