

HOUSE...No. 212.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, April 22, 1852.

The Committee on Claims, to which was referred the petition of the Sanitary Commissioners for the payment of their accounts, have considered the same and

REPORT :

The legislature of 1849 passed a resolve "authorizing the governor, by and with the advice and consent of the council, to appoint three persons to be commissioners to prepare and report to the next General Court a plan for a sanitary survey of the State, embracing a statement of such facts and suggestions as they might think proper to illustrate the subject." The resolve as it passed the House of Representatives did not limit the *aggregate* amount of compensation to be paid, but was amended in the Senate by adding a proviso that the whole expense of the commission should not exceed five hundred dollars, in which amendment the House concurred. Lemuel Shattuck, of Boston, Nathaniel P. Banks, Jr., of Waltham, and Jehiel Abbott, of Westfield, were selected by the governor and council to carry out the intentions of the legislature. The commissioners in carrying into execution the objects of their

appointment, found it impossible to produce such a report as seemed desirable, at the specified sum, unless they presented their labor as a gratuity to the Commonwealth. Instead, therefore, of a superficial examination and an imperfect presentation of the subject, which would have been comparatively useless, they deemed it wise to examine the existing sanitary laws and regulations of the Commonwealth, and those of other governments, and present the whole in a revised form, exhibiting a complete sanitary system, simplified and adapted to the present condition of our people, and designed, if adopted, to promote their highest interest and welfare. The result of their labors was presented to the legislature of 1850, in a report which that body ordered to be printed, forming a volume of 544 pages. It contains a vast amount of highly interesting and valuable facts and information, to obtain which must have been the work of great labor and expense.

Under these circumstances the commissioners deemed it right to present an account to the Commonwealth, showing the actual labor and expense incurred according to the terms of the *original resolve*, which provided that they should be paid "for the time actually spent in the discharge of their duty, and for their necessary travel, the same compensation that is paid to the members of the General Court." The following is a copy of their account.

"The State of Massachusetts,

To the Sanitary Commissioners, Dr.

1851. To Lemuel Shattuck,			
385 days' labor at \$2, - - - -			\$770 00
65 " clerk hire, at \$2, - - - -			130 00
Travel 4 times to Lawrence, 104 miles, -			20 80
" 3 " to Attleborough, 102 miles, -			20 40
" once to Newburyport, 40 "			8 00
" " to Lowell, 24 "			4 80
" " to Plympton, 40 "			8 00
" 4 times to Lynn, 28 "			5 60
Paid for books as per resolve, - - -			50 00
" freight, duties, &c, - - - -			35 10
" postage, - - - - -			31 28

To Jehiel Abbott,		
3 days' labor,	- - - - -	\$6 00
Travel,	- - - - -	66 00
Sundries,	- - - - -	12 15
To N. P. Banks,	- - - - -	26 00
		<hr/>
		\$1,194 13
Received from the Commonwealth,	-	500 00
		<hr/>
Balance due the Commissioners,	- -	\$694 13''

If the whole of this account should be allowed, the committee believe it would be a less compensation for an equal amount and value of labor, than has been paid to other commissions. The commission relating to idiotcy, of which Dr. Howe was chairman, appointed in 1846, was constituted like this, on a compensation of two dollars per day. This was considered inadequate, and he was paid six hundred and fifty dollars extra, by a resolve passed in 1849.

In 1848 a committee was appointed on the subject of insanity in the State. Their report, covering thirty pages, appears in Senate document No. 9, for 1849. That committee received for their services \$1,644 31.

The bank commissioners for 1850 were paid more than \$4,000, and for 1851, \$3,156 15.

The committee on public lands were paid \$1,079 79 for their services in 1851.

Extra allowances for services are often made by the legislature. In the year 1849, a gratuity of \$2,000 was paid to Horace Mann; and in 1850, \$750, for re-editing a new edition of his tenth report.

The commissioners on the flats in Boston harbor were paid \$2,017 36 for services in 1849 and 1850, and \$866 for 1851.

These facts, and others bearing upon the subject, will appear on reference to the auditor's report for 1849, 1850, and 1851.

The report of the commissioners has been noticed in many of the leading periodical publications, and we infer that no document ever emanated from the State that has been more generally commended. The following extracts from some of

the medical reviews in other States, indicate the opinions of those who have read the work and are competent to judge of its merits :

“ The book before us, although under the uninviting title of a ‘ report,’ is yet, in truth, an epitome of sanitary science. * * * We will not say the duty of the commission has been well discharged ; this would be far too feeble praise ; for, although expecting much, the report far exceeds our expectations. * * * We doubt if there has appeared any work for many a year in our country that is of more real interest to the community than this, whether we regard it as replete with suggestions for the promotion of personal health, or as a great political document intended to show the mode whereby the physical and intellectual powers of a people may be fully developed. Its being the first of the kind ever published in this country, imparts to it an interest of more than ordinary notice ; its being the best of the kind ever published, adds greatly to this interest and to the reputation of the author, and we feel assured that the objects aimed at must ultimately be attained when so presented.”—*N. Y. Journal of Medicine, March, 1851.*

“ This report is the result of that enlarged policy which characterizes the action of the legislatures of some of our older States, and which we hope soon to see infused among the western legislatures upon the subject, particularly of public health. * * * It is the fullest document yet issued on this side the Atlantic on the subject of sanitary regulations ; it is worthy of the noble State from which it emanated, and the commission has cause to congratulate itself upon the manner its duties have been performed.”—*Western Lancet, Cincinnati, March, 1851.*

“ We have thus given, at considerable length, the substance of this able and valuable report. After all that has been done by the people and governments of some countries of Europe, and after all that has been done by individuals and societies in America, this report is the first approach to legislation from any government in this country. * * * We commend this report with all its plans and details, its facts and arguments, to the

careful consideration of physicians and philanthropy, of political economists and legislators, with the confident belief that the condition of man will be improved and the interests of humanity advanced, as well as public and private wealth increased by its adoption."—*American Journal of Medical Sciences*, April, 1851.

A commendatory review of the report is contained in the London "British and Foreign Medico-Chirurgical Review" for January, 1852, the leading quarterly medical review of the world.

In view of the whole subject the committee are of opinion that this is eminently a just claim, and therefore recommend the passage of the accompanying resolve.

For the Committee,

HORATIO G. KNIGHT.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

In the Year One Thousand Eight Hundred and Fifty-Two.

RESOLVE

For the Payment of the Sanitary Commissioners.

Resolved, That there be allowed and paid out of the treasury of the Commonwealth, to Lemuel Shattuck, chairman of the commissioners appointed under the resolve of May 2, 1849, relating to a sanitary survey of the State, the sum of six hundred and ninety-four dollars and thirteen cents, in full for the balance of their accounts, and that the governor be authorized to draw his warrant accordingly.