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R E P O R T

OF THE

JOINT SPECIAL COMMITTEE

ON THE

REMOVAL OF THE ALMS HOUSE,

AND THE PURCHASE OF

“ BROOK FARM.”



R O X B U R Y :
JOSEPH G. TORREY, CITY PRINTER.
.....
1849.

CITY OF ROXBURY.

IN COMMON COUNCIL, April 9, 1849.

Ordered, That the petition of Elijah Lewis and others, recommending the removal of the Alms House, and obtaining a larger quantity of land in a more remote part of the city, be referred to

Messrs. Crafts, Brewer, Allen, Mayhew, and Bowman, with such as the Board of Aldermen may join.

JOSHUA SEAVER, *Clerk*.

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN, April 9, 1849.

Concurred ; and Aldermen Young, Jackson, and Plummer were joined on the part of this Board.

JOSEPH W. TUCKER, *City Clerk*.

CITY OF ROXBURY.

IN COMMON COUNCIL, April 16, 1849.

Ordered, That the Special Joint Committee on the petition of Elijah Lewis and others, be and they hereby are instructed to purchase the "Brook Farm" estate, situated in the westerly part of the city, if the same can be obtained for a sum not exceeding \$19,150 ; and if the same, in their judgment, be for the interest of the city.

Passed by the affirmative vote of *twenty* members voting Yea.

JOSHUA SEAVER, *Clerk*.

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN, April 16, 1849.

Passed by the affirmative vote of *seven* voting Yea.

JOSEPH W. TUCKER, *City Clerk*.

CITY OF ROXBURY.

IN COMMON COUNCIL, April 23, 1849.

Ordered, That the Report of the Joint Special Committee on the petition of Elijah Lewis and others, be printed and distributed to the citizens.

Passed, and sent up for concurrence.

JOSHUA SEAVER, *Clerk*.

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN, April 23, 1849.

Concurred.

JOSEPH W. TUCKER, *City Clerk*.

REPORT.

The Joint Special Committee, to whom was referred the Petition of Elijah Lewis and others, asking for a removal of the Alms House, submit the following

REPORT.

The great increase in the number of inmates of our Alms House within the few last years, the consequent call for more accommodation, and the increasing expense of the establishment, with numerous other attendant evils, have pressed upon the attention, not only of the city government, but of most of our citizens, and demand that something should be done, if possible, to effect a reform. But in what should such a reform consist, and where or how begin? It is much easier to tear down than to build up; to cry out against abuses than to get rid of them without incurring greater. We should not, therefore, be in too great haste to adopt every change that offers, while we should also be ready to avail ourselves of any real opportunity for reform that may occur, and willing to examine and test it.

It has been proposed, and the suggestion was brought before the city government by the petition

referred to your Committee, that the Alms House should be removed to a remote part of the city, where more extensive grounds could be had. And it is believed by many that this will in a great measure remedy the evils complained of, and that with some other reforms that can be effected in connection with such removal, there may, in time, be much saved to the city, and our pauper establishment placed on a better footing. If such a removal as is contemplated in this petition would produce the desirable results proposed, or even partially accomplish the purpose, it would seem proper that it should be made.

It is not the province of this Committee to propose a new pauper system, or a new mode of governing and managing the Alms House. But there are certain evils connected with it in its present situation and under its present system, which cannot but be evident to all who give the matter the slightest attention, and which are so connected with the subject referred to the Committee, that they cannot but consider them, and are bound to make such suggestions as may seem to them proper.

By the last Report of the Overseers of the Poor, it appears that the number of inmates at the Alms House at the time of the Report, was 260, of whom there were,

Americans, adults	20	
“ children	58	
	—	78
Foreigners, adults	141	
“ children	41	
	—	182

There were admitted into the house, during the year, in addition to 224, the number remaining at the commencement of the year, 710, making the number of inmates, during the year, 934. A large proportion of this number were foreigners, many of them newly-arrived immigrants, who make the Alms House the object of their first inquiry, and whose friends and relatives, ready to shift the burden of their support from themselves to the public, guide them to the hospitable doors, whither our native citizens are unwilling to go, save as a last resort. It is true, that such paupers are supported in part by the commonwealth, but the balance paid by the city is no small item, and the expense is by no means the greatest evil they inflict. They bring disease; they bring idle and improvident, often filthy and vicious habits; they come as the pioneers and guides to the crowds who come after them, and follow their steps into the same doors. They oftentimes have not the slightest claim on public charity, and afford an example, very quickly followed, of a too ready disposition to be a public burden. It is true, also, that very many of them remain but a short time; but it is no less true, that for every one who goes, at least *one* comes to take his place, and the average number has of late years very much increased. This large number of foreign paupers, coming in the manner they do, subject to inconvenience, annoyance, and the danger of disease, those aged, infirm, and sick, real objects of charity, some of whom have been reduced from competence to a lot, at best hard to bear, while at the same time it has an injurious effect,

both morally and physically, upon the children whose misfortune it is to have no other home.

Under these circumstances we believe it to be desirable and essential that there should be a *classification* of the inmates of our Alms House, and that the aged and infirm, the sick, the children, and the other large class of transient inmates be kept separate as much as possible. Such a separation and classification, perhaps, might be made in the present house, but not so effectually and properly, it is believed, as should be done. Our Alms House is, in fact, both a hospital and a poor house. The hospital is becoming of more and more relative importance, and should be, as in time it must be, to a great extent, a separate establishment. It has been found necessary to erect a small building for a "Pest House," at the present establishment; but it is not those alone who are sick with *pestilence* or contagious disease that should be kept by themselves. The comfort of the sick, and the health of the well, require that all the really sick should be kept altogether away from those in good health.

The conveniences for this cannot be had at the present place without considerable expense. If such expense must be incurred, and we believe it must be, sooner or later, we deem it best, for other reasons which will be shown, as well as for the better accomplishment of the object itself, that it should be laid out in a more retired part of the city.

It is said, too, and not without reason, that the charity intended to shelter, succor, and support those who, without means, by reason of age, sickness, or other misfortune, are unable to maintain themselves, has become the resort of many of the idle

and thriftless, who, though blessed with health and strength, are yet willing to be a burden to the public. Doubtless some of these are the subjects of intemperance, who would become worthless enough if left to themselves. But if they are to be supported at the public charge, they may be placed where they can earn that support. It is also said, and with some truth too, that the Alms House, situated as it is so near the neighboring port and city, and almost in the midst of the most populous part of our own city, is resorted to, to some extent, as a convenient *hotel* or inn, by newly-arrived immigrants, who bring with them their wretched habits of improvidence and dependence, and are not the better disposed to support themselves when they find without charge such comfortable quarters.

Would not a removal of our Alms House to a more remote part of the city relieve us of many such paupers? We believe that it would; especially, if with the removal, such a system with regard to *labor*, diet, &c., should be adopted, as should offer no inducement for persons to become paupers. We believe there are many calls for aid, many applications for admission into our Alms House, from those who can be provided for elsewhere, and who would seek for such aid elsewhere, were not that establishment so near and convenient. Far be it from us to deny to the needy and the suffering, who are truly objects of pity, such aid and comforts as an enlightened charity may dictate. Native and foreign alike we would aid in their time of need, but we believe it to be only *just* that we should hold out no inducement to the idle, and offer no premium for vagrancy.

Of foreign paupers, too, we have more than our share, which arises, it is believed, partly from the vicinity of the Alms House to Boston, and the more populous part of our own city, and the ease of admission, and partly from other causes, which would be reached by a removal of the house. According to the "Pauper Abstract" of the commonwealth, it appears that

The number of paupers during the year 1848			
in the city of Cambridge was	-	-	299
Of whom were State paupers	-	-	254
In the city of Charlestown	-	-	627
Of whom were State paupers	-	-	583
In the town of Dorchester	-	-	80
Of whom were State paupers	-	-	52
IN THE CITY OF ROXBURY	-	-	969 !
Of whom were State paupers	-	-	906

By this it appears that the cities of Cambridge and Charlestown, with about the same population as Roxbury, and in the immediate vicinity of Boston, have a much smaller number of foreign paupers. Cambridge, especially, has not much more than quarter as many. And this, it is believed, is in a measure owing to the distance and difficulty of access to the Alms House of that city. The town of Dorchester, with half as many inhabitants as Roxbury, has only one-eighteenth as many foreign paupers. This difference is of course owing in part to other causes, but it can hardly be denied that the convenience of the Alms House is one cause.

There is no reason why we should contribute to the support, or be burdened with the evil and incon-

venience of maintaining these paupers more than our neighbors; and since such is the case, it is proper that we should take measures, if possible, to rid ourselves of the excess of this burden. The removal of the Alms House to a remote part of the city, it is believed, would relieve us from the support of very many who would find accommodation elsewhere, rather than seek it so far.

The expense of supporting our poor for the few last years, has increased so rapidly and to such an extent, that if it is possible to reduce it in any way, or to prevent this rapid increase continuing, we ought to take such measures as will bring about such a result.

The net cost of the poor in the Alms House, (exclusive of repairs, additions, and expenses about the house, and exclusive also of the sums received from the commonwealth for State paupers,) for the last ten years, ending on the 1st of Feb. of each year, has been as follows :

1840,	\$1,628 41	1845,	\$2,566 77
1841,	1,271 71	1846,	2,900 00
1842,	1,477 13	1847,	3,973 50
1843,	2,168 77	1848,	5,228 12
1844,	3,171 33	1849,	5,674 58

Besides these sums for the support of the inmates, during the four last years, large additions to the accommodations have been required, at considerable expense. These additions and improvements, too, multiply and increase. It was found, two or three years since, that the accommodations were inadequate to the number of poor to be supported,

and it was necessary to finish the attic, and make other alterations at considerable cost. Last year it was deemed necessary to have better hospital accommodations, and these were provided to the extent demanded at the time. The present year it is thought proper to build a chapel and school room, with additional sleeping rooms. Thus large appropriations must be made for these and similar purposes each year, and without doubt, if the Alms House is not removed, it will be found necessary, in a very few years, to erect a hospital, add a wing to the house, or otherwise increase its size to meet the wants of those who would there seek for support. But the removal of the establishment to a farm in a remote part of the city, while it will reduce the number of paupers, or at least diminish the increase, will also, it is believed, reduce the cost of supporting them. And if it shall be necessary to erect new buildings, the excess that will be required over the amount that would be necessary for enlargement, additions, &c., on the present site, would in the course of a few years be saved, even if the city were not a great gainer in other respects.

And while we get rid of, or mitigate some evils, by removing the Alm Hsouse establishment to a farm in a remote part of the city, we shall also, it is believed, obtain some positive advantages. The health of the inmates, a consideration of the greatest importance, both as regards humanity and economy, would be promoted by placing them on a farm in such a situation. And this alone is an argument of no little consequence in support of such a change.

It has already been said that economy in the sup-

port of the poor would be effected by such a removal. The reasons, in part, for such belief may be more fully set forth. By the last annual Report of the Committee on Accounts, (City Doc. No. 7, 1848-9,) it appears, that during the past year there has been expended for meat, flour, bread, grain, and meal, potatoes, fish, beans, butter, poultry, and milk, the sum of \$4,472 92. It is submitted, whether the amount expended for such necessaries might not be greatly reduced, if the Alms House were on a farm, where many of these or similar articles of food might and would be raised. Some of the products of a farm, too, good, wholesome articles of food, might compose a larger proportion of the diet of the inmates than at present, with economy in their support and no injury to them. From the same document it appears that the sum of \$664 was paid for hay, grass, and straw, during the same period. These products, also, and in quantities for many more cattle and horses than we have at present, might be raised upon such a farm as the city would have. Of some products an excess might be raised, the sale of which might amount to no inconsiderable sum. A large number of swine might also be raised, and fattened, in a great measure, upon the produce of the farm.

The inmates of the house, able to perform labor, might work more advantageously and profitably than at present. It appears from the Report of the Overseers of the Poor, that during the last year the inmates were employed scarcely any in repairing the highways, and this will probably be the case in future. Sufficient work of the kind which

these inmates can perform, cannot readily be found for them in and about the house and land, as at present located. But on a large farm, where there is a great variety of work to be done, a large part, not too laborious, might be performed by them so as to be profitable. The Committee are informed, that at the House of Industry, in Boston, quite a large quantity of the smaller fruits, such as strawberries, raspberries, currants, &c., are raised and profitably sold in the market. Why might not the culture of these fruits be carried on by the inmates of our Alms House, very many of whom might perform some of the light labor in such culture, who otherwise could perhaps do nothing towards their support, while at the same time such labor might promote their health ?

It is admitted that some labor must be hired in order to carry on a farm properly. But it is believed to be better to hire this *labor* than to purchase the *products* which it would yield, at a much greater cost. The labor of the paupers, too, would go much further towards their support, in the cultivation of the soil, either by raising articles for their own consumption or for sale, than if the wages of such labor were expended in the purchase of those articles.

Most of the cities and large towns in the State, as appears by the "Pauper Abstract" above referred to, have quite extensive farms attached to their Alms Houses. Some which have not, are making efforts to secure such ; and it is believed that such pauper establishments, generally, do more towards supporting themselves, than where, without land,

the labor must be expended on the streets or in some unprofitable mechanical work.

The expense of the proposed removal seems to be the main objection, if not the only one, which is, or can be, brought against it. The erection of a new building or buildings, and the removal itself, would undoubtedly cost a considerable sum. But as the petitioners contemplated the purchase of a certain farm, which has been secured for the city, under a vote of the City Council, and of which mention more in detail will be made below, the condition of that place, and the advantages presented by it, have, of course, entered into the consideration of the Committee on the general question of removal. And as the Committee believe, that if the Alms House should be removed to "Brook Farm," it will not be necessary to expend a very large sum for new buildings, at least for quite a number of years, this objection seems to lose some of its force. If the Alms House remains in its present location, and the increase of paupers continues, a large addition must necessarily be made to it within a few years, and at no small expense. If, as we believe, the number of paupers will be reduced by a removal, and the cost of supporting them also reduced, the cost of a new building at the new location, when such building is needed, would not much, if any, exceed the amount which must necessarily be expended where it now is. But even if it should, the city owns two tracts of land in this part of our territory, which are now attached to the Alms House, the sale of either of which would more than pay the cost of the removal. In relation to this matter

the Committee submit some recommendations which will be found below.

The opinion of the Overseers of the Poor was obtained in regard to the practicability, necessity, or expediency of a change of location, and the subject was considered by them at a special meeting, called for that purpose, April 16. It will be seen that the Board have given their views at length in favor of a removal, in a preamble and resolve, which is attached to this Report. The attention of the Council is respectfully directed to it. The views therein set forth, are fully concurred in by the Committee.

The Committee being unanimous in the opinion that the Alms House establishment should be removed from its present location as soon as practicable, and unanimous in the opinion that it should be placed upon a farm in a more remote part of the city, as suggested by the petitioners, if a suitable one could be obtained at a reasonable cost, a favorable opportunity at once presented itself to secure a location which we think will meet the general approbation of our whole community, at a cost which appears to the Committee to be reasonable. They allude to the "*Brook Farm*" estate, situated in the westerly part of the city.

This estate was sold at public auction on Friday, April 13, and was purchased by a member of the Committee* for the sum of \$19,150. It being understood that the city could obtain it for the same sum, the Committee were about to recommend its purchase at the last meeting of the City Council, April 16, (their Report not being ready to be pre-

* John L. Plummer.

sented on that evening,) and as some of the conditions of the sale were to be complied with during the week, the Report of the Committee was anticipated by the action of the two branches, in the order passed, instructing them to purchase said estate if the same could be obtained for the sum of \$19,150. Following the instructions of the City Council as contained in the order, the Committee, satisfying themselves that the interests of the city would be promoted thereby, purchased the estate for the said sum of \$19,150. There are incumbrances, consisting of mortgages and an execution, amounting to \$17,445 25. The mortgagees, the Committee understand, will be willing to cancel their mortgages, upon receiving the notes of the city. The amount of the execution, being about \$2,000, will be required to be paid in July. The sum of \$1,704 75, being the difference between the incumbrances and the sum of \$19,150, is required immediately, and provision should be made for its payment this evening.

The Farm contains, as represented, 202 acres — 180 acres in one lot, upon which there are several buildings, and 22 acres in another, (known as the "Keith lot.") It is divided into mowing, (upland and meadow,) tillage, pasturage, and wood land; and is well supplied with water by a brook, running through it, springs, and several wells. It embraces the *only* quantity of *such* land as is needed by the city, and could be obtained within our limits for anything like a reasonable price, and is, in every respect, such a farm as is needed for the Alms House establishment.

And when it is considered that land within the limits of Roxbury, and within *twenty minutes* ride from City Hall, and especially such land as is needed by the city, not only for agricultural purposes, but for objects which, in the course of time, will attach, if not a greater, certainly an additional value to it — can be obtained for less than *ninety-five dollars per acre*, it cannot but be readily admitted that the purchase is a valuable one; and had the opportunity passed by unnoticed or unimproved, the City Council would justly have been liable to censure, in neglecting the interests of the city committed to its care.

This Farm was purchased in 1841, by George Ripley and others, who associated themselves together as “The Brook Farm Institute of Education and Agriculture,” and afterwards became incorporated under the name of “The Brook Farm Phalanx,” and occupied and improved by them for four or five years. There are several buildings upon it, all of them, with the exception of the Mansion House and barn, having been built by the late owners and occupants. These buildings are located on different parts of the grounds, and may be used to great advantage by the city, and are, in many respects, just what are needed. They are in good order, and need but little repair.

We will, as briefly as possible, describe the buildings.

1st. THE MANSION HOUSE, (as designated by the Phalanx “*the Hive*,”) 1st floor, 2 parlors: 1 large dining room, about 45x14, with closets: 1 kitch-

en, with Stimpson's range, calculated for 60 to 80 persons: 3 large boilers (2 of copper and 1 of iron): 1 large wash room: 1 press room, for pressing clothes: 1 store room, closets: privy: large shed, with accommodations for horses and vehicles: 2 rooms beyond shed.

2d floor. 2 large chambers, with fire places: 2 bed rooms: 13 sleeping rooms, with several closets.

The attic. 50 x 18, plastered on sides, 4 ft. high.

Attic in original house, 40 x 20. There is a cellar under the original house.

2d. THE BARN. Length, 70 x 40, with addition on south side for grain rooms.

Main floor, stalls for 18 cattle: also for 5 horses: haylofts: 2 grain rooms, with pump, and other fixtures.

Cellar, with pump and well; 5 or 6 stalls for cattle, enclosed, remainder of cellar open. There is a large yard and piggery. (This cellar and yard can be used for the keeping of swine to good advantage, or the cellar may be appropriated for the storage of carts, wagons, and agricultural implements.)

3d. FACTORY BUILDING. 2 stories and attic. Length, 60 x 28.

1st floor. Room extreme length, (60 x 28.)

2d floor. 6 rooms.

Attic. 3 rooms.

A well of water which supplied the steam engine. Near this building is a corn barn.

4th. THE EYRIE. (So designated by the Phalanx.)

This is a large building some 35 or 40 ft. sq. with out-houses attached.

1st floor. 2 large sq. rooms: 4 small rooms.

2d floor. 8 bed rooms.

Wood house, privy, cistern. There is a cellar under whole house, and furnace.

5th. THE COTTAGE. This is a building of cottage form, 2 stories high.

1st floor. 2 large rooms: 2 smaller rooms: 1 wash room: 1 store room: cistern: privy.

2d floor. 4 chambers.

There is a cellar under the house, and a furnace.

6th. LARGE DOUBLE HOUSE. (Designated by the communists—the *Pilgrim House*.) This building is 2 1-2 stories high, and built as a double house. Dimensions not accurately ascertained, but thought to be about 40 x 35 with an L. It is so arranged that it is well adapted for a hospital.

1st floor. 4 large square rooms: 2 kitchens: 1 wash room, with large cistern under the same, and holding from 3 to 5000 gallons: 1 bakery: workshop: privy.

2d floor. 9 chambers and bedrooms.

Attic. 4 large rooms.

Cellar under house, with furnace.

7th. THE GREEN HOUSE. This is, in main building, say 40 x 18, built of brick, with a wooden addition on one side, and end, making its dimensions, say 60 x 30. It is built in the usual form of green houses, and is well provided with greenhouse furniture, such as stands and shelves for

flowers and plants. There are two well-finished rooms, a very large room in the wooden addition, for the storage and deposit of fuel and such things as are necessarily attached to a green house. There are accommodations for obtaining and keeping water, and a furnace with the proper fixtures for heating the same, and warming the house. It is in good repair.

These buildings, (with the exception of the main building of the Mansion House and barn,) have been erected since the Farm was occupied by the Phalanx, and, so far as the Committee are able to judge, are well and substantially built for the purposes for which they were intended. They were occupied but four or five years, and, since then, have remained unoccupied a greater part of the time, and will necessarily require some repairs. They will require but little alteration for the uses of the city.

The Farm has heretofore yielded — when kept in a proper state — large crops of hay, grain, and vegetables. For three or four years past, appearances indicate that it has been somewhat neglected; and it requires only what it has been deprived of, of late — labor and manure — to restore to it its former character and condition.

The land appears to be well divided. The higher portion, upon which the “Double House,” the “Cottage,” the “Eyrrie,” and the “Green House” are located, has yielded good crops of grass and grain. The soil has been much improved by irrigation, and can be much more improved by bringing into use the valuable vegetable mould lying near. There is an

orchard containing many young and valuable fruit trees, on this part of the grounds, which, although greatly neglected of late, can be easily restored, and made to yield.

A portion of the other lands in the same range, extending in a south-westerly direction, have been appropriated to pasturage. The soil is of the same character as that near the buildings spoken of, and, if ever needed for the purposes of cultivation, can be brought into use at a comparatively trifling expense. But this portion of the farm will become, at some future time, of higher value to the city, than for agricultural purposes merely.

There is a small quantity of woodland, which is considered of little value.

The meadow land is considered of great value. Some acres of this have been greatly improved by the former occupants, and made to yield large crops of the best English grass, and many more acres can be easily improved from time to time, by drainage, and mixing the soil with sand or gravel, which are near the meadow, and are easily obtained for the purpose. These lands, when drained, and the character of the soil changed by the intermixture of the soils we have spoken of, will become a valuable part of the farm, and yield abundant crops of grass, grain, or vegetables.

There are many acres lying above and around the meadow, the soil of which is of excellent quality, and is doubtless equal to the best land in this section of the city.

We have here briefly described the lot of 180 acres. The other lot, known as the Keith lot, is

situated a few rods easterly of this, on the opposite side of the road (Baker st.) leading to Spring-street village. It is represented as containing 22 acres, and is favorably located. The proposed new street,* from Mr. Billings' factory, near the contemplated depot, to "Brook Farm," runs through the lower part of it, and, if built, will reduce the distance from this lot to the railroad depot, to about one-third of a mile. The time is not far distant when this lot, of itself, will be worth *more than one-half the whole purchase.*

The Committee trust they have demonstrated, that the "Brook Farm" is a valuable purchase for the city, as connected with the removal of the Alms House. There is another, and in some respects a greater value, which has not, as yet, been considered, and to which they will briefly allude.

There was expended, the past year, for materials for repairing the streets and roads, beyond the materials obtained from lands belonging to the city, the sum of \$889 79. These materials are purchased at what are considered high prices; and it does seem, to quote the language of the Mayor in his recent Inaugural Address, that a prudential regard for the interests of the city, dictates the expediency of obtaining gravel hills, &c., "on such acceptable terms as ultimately to greatly diminish the amount which must otherwise be annually expended in maintain-

* This street is the same as petitioned for in 1844, by William Palmer, William Keith, Christopher Marsh, James W. Wason, Aaron Cass, Michael Whittemore, and many other citizens of West Roxbury. The Selectmen examined the ground, and reported favorably upon it. The petitioners represented "that the proposed road would be a great public convenience,—that it would accommodate a daily increasing amount of travel between West Roxbury and Newton,—and that it would save much expense and difficulty in avoiding the snow-drifts which in winter often make the present road (Baker street) nearly impassable."

ing the streets and roads in such a safe condition, as the laws of the commonwealth and the convenience of the citizens so imperiously demand." The amount for this object, at the present moment, may be comparatively small, yet it is increasing from year to year; and the want of suitable land has heretofore been, and will continue to be, more and more felt, until some provision is made to relieve the city from this annually increasing expenditure. At some future time,—unless better and more economical provision shall have been made, which will obviate the necessity,—it may not be deemed impracticable to transport gravel from "Brook Farm" to any point along the line of the railroad in West Roxbury, Jamaica Plain, and the lower part of the city, for the repair of the highways. This the Committee do not expect at present, nor perhaps for some years to come; yet it is not impracticable, judging from the course Boston has pursued, in purchasing gravel hills in towns many miles distant, and transporting the materials over railroads, and in boats, for building and repairing their streets.

There are upwards of 72 acres of flats belonging to Roxbury, in the dry basin of the Mill Corporation, extending to the foot of Boylston street, in Boston, near the public garden. These flats, at some future day, will be filled up and brought into the market for sale. Materials, in part, for filling them up, and preparing them for the market, can easily be obtained from "Brook Farm," as the Boston and Providence railroad runs along side of, and through a portion of these lands. Should

this be deemed impracticable by any one, the Committee have only to point to the improvements now being made by the city of Boston in filling up their lands in the South Bay, where materials are obtained from Quincy, and transported over the Old Colony railroad, and thence by a temporary track,—or to the improvements now being made near the bridge over the Worcester railroad, on Tremont street,—or those in the vicinity of the Mill Dam,—nearly all the materials required for which, are obtained and transported by railroad, at greater distances than from “Brook Farm.”

The distance from City Hall to “Brook Farm” is about five miles, perhaps a little more. The Branch railroad, through West Roxbury to Dedham, is nearly completed, and will be opened to the public in July. The road is but a little distance from the Farm, and if the street petitioned for by many of the citizens in this section of the city, should be built, it can be approached easily over a level road, in nearly a straight line, and reduce the distance to a half or three-quarters of a mile; the present road (Baker street) to the contemplated depot, has for a long time been deemed highly objectionable, for reasons which were set forth in the petition to the Selectmen in 1844.

It may be said that the distance is too great from the more thickly settled parts of the city, but the Committee do not think this objection worthy of much consideration. Their opinion in this point is more fully expressed in another part of this Report, and they have only to add, here, that the distance seems to be an argument in its favor,

rather than an objection against it. Doubtless, many who find their way here, or who are sent here from other places, would find this location more inconvenient, less desirable, and not so easy of access, as the present one, and would possibly seek the charities of other cities or towns in our neighborhood, which have not heretofore borne such an unequal proportion of this tax as we have, but may have indirectly caused us to bear more than our share.

It may be urged, that with the Alms House at such a distance, the cost of transportation of persons and provisions would be increased. This objection must pass for what it is worth; in the opinion of the Committee, it has but little force. If, in consequence of the location, it would become necessary to provide vehicles to carry the sick, then the objection might have some force; but as the sick *are now* generally carried in vehicles belonging to the city, and attached to the establishment, and will always have to be carried, wherever the location may be, the objection, therefore, has but little weight. The transportation of provisions *to* the Farm, would not, perhaps, cost as much as at present, certainly not more. Many of the necessaries of life, and some articles now purchased and transported, would be raised there, as we have before stated, and consequently, there would be no increase of expense in this connection. But even if the cost of transportation, both of persons and every thing required for the use of the establishment, not obtained from the Farm, should be increased, the objections are entirely insignificant, and in some

respects trivial, when compared with the advantages to be gained, and can have but little effect when urged against the change.

Other objections may arise, as doubtless they will, but the Committee can conceive of none that can or will arise in any possible manner, that have force enough to counterbalance or outweigh the advantages derived from the removal of the establishment to "Brook Farm."

The Committee have not arrived at their conclusions hastily. They have not relied entirely on their own individual opinions, or their own views, in deciding upon this matter; they have sought for, and obtained the views and opinions of others,—of those who have had large experience, and who have heretofore managed the fiscal, prudential, and municipal affairs of the town and city, and whose opinions are entitled to the highest respect and consideration. It is but proper for the Committee to state, that there appears to be but one general opinion among those who, in times past, have managed the affairs of the town and city, in relation to this subject, and that is,—*the interests of the city would be promoted, by removing the institution from its present location, and establishing it upon a farm in a more remote part of the city.*

It is gratifying to know that in accomplishing this desirable object, *it will not* be necessary to burden the people with a heavy tax. The ways and means to meet the expenditure, seem to be ready at hand. To provide for the debt incurred in the purchase, and to meet such expenditures as shall become necessary, in providing such buildings as may here-

after be required, a portion of the Real Estate belonging to the city can be disposed of, on advantageous terms, and the proceeds of the sale be devoted to this purpose.

The "*Munroe Farm*," situated on Warren street, contains some 20 acres, and was valued by the Committee on Public Property at \$35,000; this valuation was a nominal one, only. The farm is located in that section of the city where land is increasing greatly in value, and doubtless it could be disposed of to good advantage.

The "*Alms House land*," situated on Highland street, contains about 10 acres. This property has been valued at \$30,000. The location of this estate is very eligible for building lots. It is situated in a growing part of the city, and where land is bringing high prices. It would seem to be for the best interests of the city, that one or both of these estates should be disposed of. In addition to the amount obtained from the sale, the city would derive other benefits of no little importance, not the least of which, is the additional amount of taxable property which would thus be created.

The Committee respectfully recommend that one or both of these estates be disposed of—reserving such parts thereof for Public Squares, and for such other uses as may be deemed necessary—in such manner and upon such terms and conditions as the City Council shall hereafter prescribe, and that the proceeds of the sales be appropriated to liquidate the debt incurred in the purchase of "Brook Farm" and for providing such necessary buildings for the Alms House establishment, as shall be required.

In conclusion the Committee would observe that in the discharge of their duties they have not been unmindful of the responsibilities resting upon them, or the confidence reposed in them by the vote of the two branches, instructing them to incur liabilities in behalf of the city to a considerable amount, if in their opinion the public interests required it. They have discharged those duties in a manner which their conscience and judgment fully approve, and which appears to them to be for the best interests of the city, and they are willing to leave all future results to the test of time, and the judgment of their fellow citizens.

All which is respectfully submitted.

CALVIN YOUNG,
DANIEL JACKSON,
JOHN L. PLUMMER,
WILLIAM A. CRAFTS,
JOSEPH N. BREWER,
STEPHEN M. ALLEN,
NATHANIEL MAYHEW,
SYLVESTER BOWMAN.

NOTES.

In the Report of the Committee of Accounts, on the Receipts and Expenditures of the city, recently distributed to the citizens, page 26, the amount stated for the support of Poor, is \$16,519 33. This is the gross amount, from which is to be deducted the amounts received from the Commonwealth, from other towns and cities, and labor of Poor, which leaves the balance as the *net* cost of supporting the Poor. The Commonwealth allows seven cents per day for adults, and children under twelve years; four cents per day for State paupers; the average cost for supporting them is about 17 cents per day.

Beside this amount of \$16,519 33, there was expended, for the year ending Feb. 1st, (page 27,) for repairs of Alms House, fence, and Pest House, the sum of \$1,564 16, making a total for the year, of \$18,083 49.

The amount paid the year previous, was \$14,924; to which add, for repair of Alms House, and providing hospital accommodations, \$1,837 35, making the total amount for that year, \$16,761 35; from which sum should be deducted the amounts received from the Commonwealth and other sources, which will leave the net cost.

The Board of Overseers considered it necessary, and have recommended that an edifice should be erected, to be used as a chapel and school-room, with a basement in which convenient dormitories for children could be provided, it being deemed desirable that they should be separated as much as possible from the other persons in the Alms House. This, of course, will not be necessary now.

In the "Pauper Abstract," prepared under the direction of the Secretary of the Commonwealth, it appears that many of the towns and cities have a large number of acres of land attached to their Alms House establishment. Danvers has 200, Ipswich 300, Newbury 210, Salem 100, Billerica 200, Framingham 113, Brookfield 280, Charlton 200, Fitchburg 200, Holden 300, Worcester 240, Pittsfield 100, New Bedford 75, &c., &c.

Upon a comparison of the returns in the "Pauper Abstracts" of 1846-'47 with 1848, it appears that the number of paupers in Cambridge and Charlestown have increased but little, while the number in Roxbury has increased largely.

Cambridge,	in 1846, had	-	-	215
"	" 1847, "	-	-	283
"	" 1848, "	-	-	299
Charlestown,	" 1846, "	-	-	565
"	" 1847, "	-	-	538
"	" 1848, "	-	-	627
Roxbury,	" 1846, "	-	-	495
"	" 1847, "	-	-	1075 !
"	" 1848, "	-	-	969

The product of the farm and garden, together with the dairy and piggery, at the House of Industry, Boston, was

In 1844,	-	-	-	\$4,694 20
In 1845,	-	-	-	4,158 50
In 1846,	-	-	-	4,578 26
In 1847,	-	-	-	2,618 00

These consisted in hay, vegetables, fruit, and herbs. The labor is performed chiefly by the inmates. The grounds were not much improved in 1847, in consequence of the ship fever, &c. Farming operations are carried on to some extent at Deer Island, which has been connected with the House of Industry since December last.

The town of Brookline has no Alms House. The number of State paupers relieved last year was 5.

OPINION
OF THE
OVERSEERS OF THE POOR.

At a meeting of the Overseers of the Poor, holden at the Aldermen's room, on the sixteenth of April, 1849, the following letter from Mr. J. N. Brewer, in behalf of the Special Joint Committee on the petition of Elijah Lewis and others, in relation to a change in the location of the Alms House, was read by the Chairman.

Roxbury, April 14, 1849.

To the HON. H. A. S. DEARBORN,

Chairman of the Overseers of the Poor.

SIR:—The Special Joint Committee of the City Council, to which was referred the petition of Elijah Lewis and others, relative to a change of the location of the Alms House, and recommending the purchase of a large number of acres of land in a more remote part of the city, for the uses of the establishment, desire the opinion of the Board of Overseers, as to the practicability, expediency, or necessity of a change.

They would also state, that the estate situated in the westerly part of the city, recently occupied by the "Community," and known as "Brook Farm," containing some 202 acres of land, with several dwelling-houses and out-buildings thereon, was purchased at auction yesterday, for the sum of \$19,150, and will be offered to the city at the same price.

The opinion of the Board of Overseers is also desired in regard to this estate.

Very respectfully,

Your ob't serv't,

JOSEPH N. BREWER,

In behalf of the Committee.

The Chairman of the Board of Overseers of the Poor stated, that he visited the Brook Farm, on the fourteenth inst., in company with Mr. Brewer, and examined all the edifices thereon, and found them to be as follows.

(The description of the buildings is here omitted, as it is found on pages 16, 17, and 18.)

Many of the members of the Board of Overseers of the Poor having been upon the Brook Farm, and the expediency of its being purchased by the city for the Alms House establishment having been maturely considered, the following preamble and resolutions were adopted.

The propriety of selecting a larger and more retired tract of land, for the location of the Alms House, has been a subject of inquiry for several years, not only by the Overseers of the Poor, but the people in all parts of the city; as it was confidently believed that, if the institution could be removed to such a position, it might be conducted in a manner that would be less expensive, more favorable to the health and morals of the inmates, and in all respects better subserve the various purposes for which it was designed, as well as give more general satisfaction, than was practicable in its present position,—while the number of applicants for admission, would, probably, be very considerably reduced, in consequence of the great distance from the most populous portion of the city, as well as that great commercial emporium, from whence come so many of the diseased and destitute who have thronged the Alms House during the three past years.

The chief difficulty, however, in accomplishing that very desirable object, has been the procurement of a sufficiently extensive tract of land, in an eligible section of the city, and upon such favorable terms as would warrant a recommendation of its being purchased; but it having been ascertained that the Brook Farm, in West Roxbury, containing over two hundred acres, with four dwelling houses, in which are upwards of seventy rooms, a spacious edifice which was reared as a manufactory, a large barn, a well-constructed green house, and other small buildings, can be obtained for 19,150 dollars, that great impediment has fortunately been removed; for it is believed that the land, on which the Alms House now stands, can be sold for a sum amply sufficient to pay for the farm, repair the buildings, and erect such others as may possibly be required to render the establishment as complete, in all its departments, as any in the State, when the comfort of the inmates, their reformation, the industrial services of such as are able to labor, and a due regard to the means which can be properly appropriated, are considered.

The employment of persons who usually seek a refuge in such an institution, in labor of some kind, is deemed indispensable for

the correction of these habits of idleness, intemperance, vice, and immorality, which are the chief causes of human degradation and misery ; and from the numerous experiments which have been made in this country, and in many of the European nations, it has been fully illustrated, that the cultivation of the earth affords the most diversified, appropriate, and profitable kinds of work for men, women, and children, thus situated, and especially if Farming and Gardening are combined, which can be done, and on an extensive scale, as the proffered tract of land in West Roxbury is sufficiently spacious for the successful prosecution of those two great branches of rural industry.

There is a vast tract of meadow land which extends nearly to Charles river, that can be easily drained, when it will produce a certain and very large quantity of hay ; and the vegetable mould, removed from the trenches, if combined with ashes or lime, will manure, in a thorough manner, the whole of the upland, on which the cereal grains, potatoes, and all the other crops cultivated in New England, can be successfully raised, and in great quantities, besides culinary, and such other vegetables as more properly come within the domain of horticulture. Fruits, also, of every variety that will thrive in our climate, will be found worthy of cultivation, as an important source of revenue ; and a dairy can be established for supplying the inmates with milk, and butter for the market,—or at least a sufficient quantity for the institution.

As the depot for the new branch from Dedham to the Boston and Providence railroad, has been located near the centre of Spring-street village, and as a street is petitioned for, in a direct line from thence, to a point on the old road, near the entrance to Brook Farm, it will reduce the distance between it and the depot, if built, to a little more than half a mile, and thus render the intercourse with the northern part of the city very convenient, speedy, and cheap : Therefore,

1. *Resolved*, That, in the opinion of the Overseers of the Poor, it is expedient that the location of the Alms House should be changed ; and they respectfully recommend that the Brook Farm should be purchased for accomplishing that important object.

2. *Resolved*, That the Chairman be requested to transmit the foregoing Preamble and Resolution to the Special Joint Committee on the Alms House.

H. A. S. DEARBORN, *Chairman*.

JOSHUA SEAVER, *Secretary*.
Roxbury, April 16, 1849.

