

To Gov: John S. Pillsbury –

Sir -

On the 10th of last March we visited the Hospital for the Insane at Saint Peter.

We found the institution in its usual good condition as to cleanliness, good order, treatment and general management of patients, and abundance of excellent food.

In the old building the ventilation was somewhat better than at the time of our last visit: the only efficient remedy, however, is the course advocated by Cato with reference to Carthage.

The hospital is still over-crowded, as will no doubt continue to be the case until provision is made for the care by the various counties of the class to which reference has been made in our previous reports; the incurable and harmless patients of whom so many are occupying room that is needed for acute cases of insanity, and for others who may be benefitted by treatment.

We notice with approval in this connection the recent action of the trustees of the hospital as set forth in the following resolution:

Resolved –

That notice be given by publication in the Pioneer Press of St. Paul, and other papers, and to the judges of probate, that commitments to the hospitals hereafter, until further accommodations are provided, must be limited to recent and acute cases of insanity; and that patients will be received in exchange from the same counties, when practicable, on the recommendation of the superintendent.

Resolved –

That this action is necessary as a matter of justice to the welfare of the present inmates of the hospitals, the officers in charge, and the State at large.

This measure, if it can be carried out, will afford some relief from the evil in question.

We recommend that the attention of the next legislature be called to the fact that patients are frequently brought to the hospital with insufficient clothing; sometimes with none but what is being worn at the time. We learn from good authority that an impression prevails that as little clothing as possible should be sent by the family or friends, but that everything will be supplied by the hospital: an impression which is not only a source of annoyance and embarrassment, but which entails needless expense upon the State.

An enactment is in force in New York (Rev: Stat: Part 1, Chap, 20, Title 3, Sec: 9, 34, and Laws of 1842, Chap: 135, Sec: 20) contains provision which seem well adapted to meet this difficulty.

We found at this visit but one imbecile child; Emma Frink – abt. 13 – Rice Co. – whom we directed to be sent to the imbecile school at Faribault.

Since our last visit (Nov: 15 / 79) the following deaths have occurred:

James Owens	Nov. 23	Heart Disease
Ellen Vanvise	Nov: 29	Marasmus
Albert Bock	Dec: 2	Phthisis
Otto Wortig	Dec: 6	Maniacal Exhaustion
Mary Knudson	Dec: 8	Phthisis
Daniel Roberts	Dec: 10	Maniac: Exhaustion
Sophie Miller	Dec: 11	Marasmus
Christine Anderson	Dec: 18	Phthisis
Alice Loomis	Jan: 2	Maniac: Exhaustion
Mary (?)	Jan: 11	Tuberculosis
Mary Kelly	March 8	Paralysis

There has been one elopement; Chas: Bennis, Dec: 30 / 79.

On the 26th of last month (May) we inspected the hospital at Rochester.

We find nothing to criticize in the conduct of the institution, whose good condition reflects great credit upon the superintendent, Dr. Bowers, and his corps of assistants. The hospital has now about as many inmates as can be comfortably provided for, (between eighty and ninety) and we were glad to see that work is rapidly progressing on the new building.

We find, on inquiry, that the appropriation made for the erection of this much needed wing provides for the edifice itself, but neither for heating apparatus nor furniture. If such were available, contracts for these would now be made, and the addition would be ready for occupancy early in the winter: but unless the trustees are empowered to take steps looking to this end, at least another year must elapse before the building can be made available for use; and we respectfully urge, therefore, the adoption of some plan whereby so unfortunate a delay may be rendered unnecessary.

The deaths which have occurred since our last visit are as follows:

W.S. Graham	Goodhue Co.
Nathan Martin	Winona Co.
J.J. Lewton	Winona Co.
Chas: Waterbury	Clay Co.

These have eloped during the same period: Albert Hermann of Wabesha Co. who has since been returned, and Swens Swenson and A. A. Odegaard, both of Houston Co. and whose discharges have been applied for.

Neither here nor at Saint Peter did we find any cases of punishment or harsh treatment of patients.

A brief visit to the school for imbecile children at Faribault fully confirms the favorable impression made on a previous occasion. We have nothing but words of commendation for Dr. Knight and his helpers for the transformation which in so short a time they have been the means of effecting in the children entrusted to their care; some of whom can scarcely be recognized as the same whose training began less than a year ago, and who all show a greater or less improvement. We heartily wish that all the people of the state could become personally cognizant of the facts to which we here bear witness: none of the noble charities of the Commonwealth are more worthily bestowed than this, and we are sure that a personal acquaintance with it on the part of our citizens would ensure an appropriation commensurate with its importance and generous in proportion to the feelings of sympathy & pity which the sight of these unfortunate children must always excite.

Dr. Knight, in reply to a circular recently distributed by him has been advised of some twenty-five imbecile children in various parts of the state beside those now in the school; and these, it cannot be doubted, do not comprise half of the entire number, the parents or guardians of most of whom will be glad to avail themselves of the privileges of the school as soon as steps are taken to enlarge its field of usefulness and to provide for the care of more than the small number (about twenty) who are now enjoying its benefits.

We strongly recommend an amendment to the law under the operation of which weak-minded children are now sent to the Faribault School. They must be committed by the Probate Courts to one of the hospitals for the insane, and transferred thence by the Board of Commissioners to Faribault: a circuitous route wholly uncalled for, which imposes a most disagreeable necessity upon the family or friends of the little unfortunates, and which in some cases would operate as a prohibition upon those who would otherwise gladly take advantage of the excellent opportunity offered by the school.

We therefore regard it as a matter of great importance that the Judge of Probate be empowered to send imbecile children directly to the School at Faribault, instead of committing them, as at present to a hospital for the insane.

The existing law would require a weak-minded child, resident in Faribault, to be sent first to Saint Peter or Rochester, in order that he or she might become qualified to return to Faribault as an inmate of the school.

Very Respectfully

	W H Leonard MD
Commissioners	G. Weston Wood M.D.
	C. H. Boardman, M.D.

June 5 / 80