

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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EIGHTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

Legislative Document

No. 142

H. P. 198 House of Representatives, Jan. 27, 1931.

Referred to Committee on Judiciary. 500 copies ordered printed. Sent up for concurrence.

CLYDE R. CHAPMAN, Clerk.

Presented by Mr. Briggs of Caribou.

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD ONE THOUSAND NINE
HUNDRED AND THIRTY-ONE

AN ACT to Authorize the County of Aroostook to Build a Jail
at Caribou in said County.

Emergency Preamble. Whereas, the law requires all contracts for public building constructions to be made after public bidding, which takes time, and, Whereas, it is necessary to construct the jail called for in this act, forthwith, and during the summer season of nineteen hundred and thirty-one, and, Whereas, the capacity of the present jail at Houlton is inadequate to the needs of Aroostook and therefore said jail in its present condition is a menace to public health and safety, and, Whereas, because of the rapid growth in population of the northern section of the County, it is becoming more expensive to transport witnesses and defendants from fifty to one hundred and fifty miles to the present jail, and, Whereas, because of the growth in population four fifths of the occupants of the County jail are from the Northern Section of the County, and, Whereas, by reason of the foregoing facts an emergency exists such as is contemplated by the constitution of this State, and the passage of this act is immediately necessary for the preservation of the public health, peace and safety, therefore,

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine, as follows:

Section 1. Expenditure of One Hundred Thousand Dollars authorized to build and equip a County jail on or nearby the

lot situated on the south side of Sweden Street in the Village of Caribou now owned by the County of Aroostook and known as the Court House Lot.

The County of Aroostook is hereby authorized and empowered to expend so much as shall be needed not to exceed in all the sum of One Hundred Thousand Dollars in building and equipping a County Jail on or nearby the lot situated on the South side of Sweden Street in the Village of Caribou now owned by the County of Aroostook and known as the Court House Lot.

Sect. 2. Loan Authorized. For the purpose of raising the money necessary to carry out the provisions of this act, said County through its county commissioners is hereby authorized and empowered to make a loan or loans and to cause notes or obligations of said County with coupons for interest at a rate not to exceed six per cent to be issued, payable at regular periods not exceeding twenty years from the date of issuance. Said commissioners shall determine the amount, time of payment, rate of interest (not exceeding six per cent) and form of said notes or obligations and may issue the same from time to time as the money is needed to pay for the work done under this act.

Sect. 3. Commission Created, with full powers to make plans and supervise work. Orman L. Keyes, Grover M. Hardison, S. Wilson Collins, Byron F. Porter all of Caribou, Dennis F. Getchell of Limestone, Charles E. Hussey of Presque Isle, Thomas E. Hacker of Fort Fairfield, George R. Umphrey of Washburn and P. A. Cyr of Grand Isle, George York of Island Falls, all in said county, are hereby constituted and appointed a commission to prepare plans and make contracts for the carrying out of the provisions of this act, and said commission is hereby vested with full power to determine the amount of money to be spent in building and equipping said County Jail, and shall have power to employ architects to assist in determining the necessary building and equipment. Said commissioners may organize and appoint necessary officers and may authorize and appoint necessary officers and may authorize any member or members of the commission to act for the commission in carrying out the provisions of this act. Said commission shall have the power to fill vacancies

existing for any cause, and shall serve without pay, but all necessary expenses of said commission in carrying out the provisions of this act shall be paid out of the money raised under this act.

Sect. 4. Emergency Clause. In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this act, two-thirds of all the members elected to the legislature having so directed, shall take effect when approved.

FACTS

For several years there has been a necessity to provide better accommodations for the prisoners in our County jail. The increase in the number of prisoners require a larger jail than the present one. To meet the full requirements of the County we should have accommodations for fifty more.

The remodeling of the present jail is a necessity admitted by all. Instead of enlarging our present jail however it would be more convenient to build a new jail near the Court House at Caribou in the northern section of the County and then both sections of the County would be taken care of. Over sixty-five thousand people are nearer the Caribou Court House and about twenty thousand nearer the Houlton Court House. The northern section has increased in population over eight thousand, the southern section has decreased one thousand in the last ten years. The commitment to the jail at the last term of Court showed forty north of Mars Hill and twelve south. The transportation charges to the County run into thousands of dollars because of the great distance of travelling for the witnesses, officers and prisoners. This expense alone would take care of the extra overhead expense of running two jails and in the course of years pay the County the expense of construction. The expense to a defendant himself so far from his home is unreasonable and unnecessary. We have a Court House in the midst of sixty-one thousand people. A jail is of equal importance in connection with the Court House. There will be no disadvantage to the people of southern Aroostook to permit the people of the North Section to be thus accommodated. The extra expense between an enlargement of the present jail and a new jail would not exceed sixty thousand dollars. The saving to the County and defendants would take care of the extra expense and in time pay the expense of the new building.