

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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DOCUMENTS

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THE LEGISLATURE,

OF THE

STATE OF MAINE,

DURING ITS SESSION

**A. D. 1833.**

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**STATE OF MAINE.**

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The Joint Select Committee, to which was referred the order relating to an inquiry into the expediency of making a law to change the mode of compensating the Instructors of the Colleges in Maine; and also for establishing in those Seminaries a system of education adapted not only to the higher professions, but to the more useful occupations of life, having considered the subject, ask leave to submit the following

**R E P O R T :**

There are two Seminaries in this State, at which degrees are conferred: Bowdion College, at Brunswick, and Waterville College, at Waterville. The Professors and Tutors of both have been, and now are, paid by stated salaries; but your Committee are of opinion that a change might be effected, which would tend to produce both individual and public benefit.

To a certain extent, a sure income to each Instructor is desirable; but it is believed that the greater amount of compensation should be derived from the established fees of each course of education; and the permanent salary so regulated, that those who teach the branches necessary for the highest standard of education, (as the number of their students must be limited,) should receive a support proportionate to the income of those who teach the more popular studies. As the income of each would mainly depend upon his success in teaching, he would study to communicate his knowledge in a way suited to the comprehension of each student. The susceptible minds of youth would be favorably impressed by his exertions, and his attentions to their wants would produce on their part, feelings of gratitude and respect; and as the popularity of the institution must add to each Instructor's emoluments, his income must keep pace with the services he performs.

It is the opinion of the Committee, that all vacancies in the executive offices of Colleges, with the exception of the Presidency, should be filled by that body, subject to the approval or disapproval of the Board of Trustees and Overseers. It cannot be doubted that they are, at least, as well qualified as any other body for the selection; and, in a case of a change in the mode of compensation, they will be as much interested.

The present system of conducting Colleges was formed in Europe, where the laws of primogeniture and entail existed, and wealth was made to flow in artificial channels; it is, therefore, not surprising that the public should entertain an opinion, that our Colleges are aristocratic institutions.

In this country, almost every individual depends upon his own exertions, and, is, consequently, obliged to enter into business at an early period of life; he cannot, therefore, spare the time or money required by the Colleges, in the attainment of such information as they afford.

Among the principal benefits derived from a collegiate education, are the improved capacities of our youth to enter upon the occupations and duties of life; and such information as will forward these purposes, must be considered the most useful and necessary.

It has long been a matter of dispute, whether a knowledge of the dead languages is necessary to an English education; many affirming that the time spent in their acquisition could otherwise be more profitably employed. If literary men cannot settle this point satisfactorily, it is no wonder that it should be considered unreasonable by many, that a smattering of these languages should be made a *sine qua non* to the entrance of young men into our Colleges. We cannot better express our views on this subject, than by presenting an extract from

an address delivered in New-York, on the subject of education, by that enlightened statesman, Mr. Gallatin, who says: "No boy, who has not previously devoted a number of years to the study of dead languages; no boy who, from defective memory or want of aptitude for that particular branch, may be deficient in that respect, can be admitted into any of our Colleges. And these Seminaries do alone afford the means of acquiring any other branch of knowledge. Whatever may be his inclination or destination, he must, if admitted, apply one half of his time to the further study of those languages. It is self-evident, that the avenue to every branch of knowledge is actually foreclosed, by the present system, against the greater part of mankind."

It is generally admitted, that the independence of our country is based upon the intelligence of the people; policy, therefore, seems to dictate the admission into our Colleges of all who have the requisite qualifications as to age, moral character; and a degree of advancement in the sciences, which may be considered necessary to their future success. Each student, or his guardian, should be allowed a choice of the studies, established in the institution; and be required to pay for such instruction only as he may receive; but it should be left to the Executive to *recommend* those which may be considered necessary to a competent knowledge of the individual's after pursuits; and to *direct* the course

of those destined for a complete scientific and classical education.

It appears to your Committee, that each person admitted should be received for a term not less than one year, with liberty to continue such further time as may be necessary to acquire the knowledge desired, or to complete a systematic and thorough education; but, that, any time after the expiration of one year, the student may offer himself for examination, and if found to possess a thorough knowledge of the branches he has pursued, receive a certificate of the improvement he may have made, or a *degree* proportionate to his acquirements: the latter to be bestowed on such only as have attended the courses established for these honors. Thus, those who are destined to become farmers, merchants, mechanics, or surveyors, as well as professional men, will be enabled to acquire such information as they may severally wish, and pursue such studies as are more immediately adapted to their respective occupations; and, thus, the public will derive a practical benefit from the institutions, which all contribute to support, and from which, as now organized and administered, but few are enabled to reap any advantage.

Your Committee are aware, that they must encounter the prejudices of many who are attached to the established systems; it is natural that we should all adhere to the opinions of those whom we have

been taught to reverence; and to the systems which have received the support of those who have been considered the luminaries of the age in which they lived. That each generation should profit by the experience of the preceding one, and that our institutions should keep pace with the improvements of the age, are facts too evident to be controverted.

Your Committee, are, therefore, of opinion, that part of the members of each of the Boards established for the government of our Colleges, should go out of office annually; by thus renovating the Boards, the now sacred dust of ages would not be allowed to accumulate, retaining, by its weight, the prejudices of earlier days.

For the purpose of digesting a system of education for our Colleges, suited to the present wants of the people, your committee recommend the appointment of a Commission of literary, scientific and practical men, whose duty it shall be, in the recess of the Legislature, to take the entire subject into consideration, and to recommend such alterations and improvements as to them may appear necessary and proper to effect that object.

They, therefore, submit the following **Resolve**.

**CHARLES Q. CLAPP**, *per order*.



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**STATE OF MAINE.**

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, }  
February 19, 1833. }**

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**A RESOLVE** for the Improvement of the  
Colleges in Maine.

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*Resolved,* That the Governor, with the advice of the Council, be hereby authorized to appoint a Commission of five literary, scientific and practical men, to sit during the recess of the Legislature, and take the subject of education, as now pursued by the Colleges in Maine, into consideration, as also the improvements, (if any can be made) in their more general adaptation to the public wants; to ascertain the present situation of their fiscal concerns, the amount of public and private benefices, and how far they may require further support from the State, to fulfil the just expectations of the Public, and report their doings to the next Legislature.

STATE OF MAINE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, }  
February 18, 1833. }

ORDERED, That three hundred copies of the foregoing Report  
and Resolve be printed for the use of the Legislature.

[Extract from the Journal.]

Attest:

ASAPH R. NICHOLS, *Clerk.*