

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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DOCUMENTS

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THE LEGISLATURE,

OF THE

STATE OF MAINE,

DURING ITS SESSION

A. D. 1835.

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1835.

FIFTEENTH LEGISLATURE.

NO. 24.

HOUSE.

THE Select Committee of the House, to whom was referred a Resolve entitled a "Resolve respecting a Rail Road from Quebec," having had that subject under consideration, ask leave to report.

That by a Resolve which passed the Legislature, the present Session, the aid of a corps of Engineers was requested from the general government for the purpose of making a survey for a Rail Road from some point on the Atlantic Ocean to the borders of Lower Canada, toward Quebec, which survey, if it is obtained, will give us a survey of but little more than half the route, leaving all that territory, from the Canada lines to Quebec wholly unexplored.—A territory which our Engineers have no right to traverse, for the purposes of a survey—a fact, which, therefore, imposes upon us the necessity of seeking the aid and cooperation of the government and people of the Canadas, before we, on this side of the line, can take any preliminary steps. Hence it seems necessary, in the opinion of your Committee, that there should be joint action on the part of the people under the two Governments; and they know no better way to bring about this joint action, than by the appointment of Agents on the part of

our State, to collect information, and to consult with the civil authorities,—Agents who shall be appointed under the authority of a Resolve of the State, and who, thus appointed, would, probably, have much more weight and influence in bringing about the desired object, than any individuals self-constituted, or the Agents of private associations could possibly have.

Your Committee do not suppose that there can be much difference of opinion about the utility of a Road, which should open to our sea-coast the immense trade of the two Canadas. All, they think, must acknowledge its importance, however much they may doubt its practicability. Your Committee think, that it is as important for us (and perhaps more important) to strike the valley of the St. Lawrence, as it is for the city of Baltimore to strike the Ohio—for—if, as it is said—the St. Lawrence discharges itself into the Atlantic Ocean, so it may be added, does the Ohio through the Mississippi—finding a much safer outlet in the warm latitude of the Gulf of Mexico, than does the St. Lawrence in the cold and arctic region of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The most desirable outlet for the St. Lawrence must be on our own Atlantic frontier, as it is ever accessible, always safe, and abounds in some of the best harbors known on the Continent of America. If information can be relied upon from the Canadas, and articles in the newspapers of Quebec, the people of the Canadas look upon the establishment of such a Road as of great importance to them, and will rejoice to meet us in any co-operation. It is said, that suffering as they do, from the peril of life and property from the storms on the St. Lawrence, many months in the year, from the high rate of insurance, and the delay of transportation, they are determined upon seeking some safer and better route to the Atlantic Ocean, at least for the purpose of transporting

their light goods, passengers, troops, &c.—and that if they are unable to procure a right of way through the State of Maine, they will seek it through the Province of New Brunswick, but with reluctance, as such a way would lead them into the fogs and high tides, and somewhat dangerous navigation of the Bay of Fundy instead of the safer navigation on our Western Sea Board. It, therefore, is important for us to secure as soon as possible this desirable trade, and not to let slip so golden an opportunity of making some point on our own coast, the inlet and outlet of two great Empires such as are Lower and Upper Canada, in which thousands of Emigrants are pouring every year, thus adding to their population, their strength, and their means of procuring wealth. That over such an outlet and inlet, the passing must be immense, we can hardly doubt, when we remember the number of British troops stationed at Quebec, the number of Emigrants that yearly arrive there, whose lives are endangered, and whose passages are enhanced by going through the dangerous Gulf of the St. Lawrence,—the high rate of Insurance charged upon such a sea,—and above all the fact, that they are increasing with rapidity, Upper Canada in particular, not surpassed by any of the States of our Union. Your Committee might enter at length upon the statistical details of such a trade, which now goes by, or stops at Quebec, but that is deemed unnecessary, as but few or none will dispute the importance of such a Road.

Of its practicability many doubt. All that this Resolve proposes, or the former Resolve to which this is but an appendix, is to ascertain its practicability. No appropriation of money is asked for to make the Road, but merely a survey to ascertain whether it can be made, and what will be the probable expense. The particular Resolve now under consideration, proposes only to ask the co-op-

eration of another government, to meet a survey that we have already asked for on this side of the line. Our State after passing this Resolve, is under no obligation to incur any further expense. If the Road is practicable she will have demonstrated to capitalists, its practicability; and there are many of them, who ever stand ready to invest their money, wherever it has been demonstrated, that there is a probability of a remuneration. But is there a *probability* of its practicability, it may be asked. We answer "yes." From the best information we can gather from gentlemen who have gone through the woods in the Northern part of Oxford County, to say nothing of the Kennebec, there remains little or no doubt in our minds, that a level can be found, a *practicable* level on which such a Road can be built as cheaply as they are built elsewhere. Rail Roads cross the Alleghany Mountains,—but we have no such chain between us and Quebec. It has been said that our cold weather and our snows, render all such attempts at Internal Improvement quite chimerical. "What," it is asked, "can a Rail Road be used where there are from six to eight feet of snow?" We answer, that this argument if it is good for any thing, proves too much. It goes against all Internal Improvement, Canals as well as Rail Roads, all over the State,—and if it be carried out, would ever exclude us from participating in any of the improvements of the age. The same argument might be urged against the utility of Rivers in a country so cold as ours. They freeze over as well as Canals,—and if their frozen covering but render them passable, so it may be said of a Canal, and so it may be said of the snow that covers a Rail Road-track, for such a track used only for sleighing in the Winter time, would be one of the best turnpikes in the world. But Rail Roads cross the Alleghanies on which the snow is as deep as it is with us. Numerous Rail Roads are built about

Boston, and no one deems them valueless, because the snow sometimes covers them. During the present winter, we have seen that the Camden and Amboy Rail Road between Philadelphia and New York, for a distance of 60 miles, was cleared of snow in two hours,—and the snows at the South the present winter, have been deeper than they have been with us. Already the Locomotive Engine itself is made partially to clear its own way, and to use the brush on the track with almost as much skill as the hand can use it. And who dare say that in the progress of invention, the ingenuity of man, as necessity demands, will not go on perfecting what it has already so successfully undertaken?

Your Committee is aware that the subject of Internal Improvements is not directly embraced in the scope of the Resolve, submitted to their consideration,—but as its introduction into the House, will probably involve that subject, they do not consider it improper to make a few remarks upon it. It is said that this is not a producing State, and a State situated so far North as Maine is, can never hope to compete in production with other States. It is also added that our seaboard is a canal as broad as we can desire, and that a State with such a sea-board needs no Internal Improvement. Your Committee apprehend that they who would limit our population to Commerce alone, and who deny that this is a producing State, take but a limited view of our resources. Long as is our seaboard, we are after all much more of an Agricultural than a Commercial people,—and the number of our population employed in tilling the land, is much larger than the portion engaged in Commerce. True, this is not a producing State in the same sense that the slave States are, for we have no Cotton, no Rice, no Tobacco, no Sugar to export, but we have Lumber almost as valuable as is any of these productions from a single slave State,—and as to the pro-

ducing non-slave holding States, our productions can, or do amount to as much as theirs in proportion to our population. We have before us the Report of the Canal Commissioners of Ohio, with a detailed account of the articles on which tolls are collected, and with the exception of Flour and Whiskey, we have all the articles of export that the State of Ohio has, and very many more not enumerated in that list. The exportation of Lumber, of shingles, clapboards, &c. &c. and then of the important article of fire wood, is much larger with us, than it can be from the State of Ohio,—of fire-wood in particular, for the wood-land in the interior, which is now valueless on account of its distance from the sea-board, would be more than quadrupled in value if a Canal or Rail Road would enable its owners to transport it to the sea-coast with but a trifling expense. So it is with many other articles among which as of importance to the Farmer, may be mentioned Hay and Potatoes, the productions of a cold Northern climate in which we excel every other State South of us,—and productions of no mean value too, becoming as they are important articles of export to the Southern cities of the Union. We, therefore, believe that if Maine is behind some other producing States, it is because such States have better markets. Immense quantities of Flour for example are imported into this State from Western New York, Maryland, and Ohio, because such Flour is cheaper than ours, and better prepared for market, and it is cheaper, because through the Canals and over the Rail Roads of the South and West, it costs but little for transportation, so that it is said to be a fact, that a barrel of Flour can be brought to our seaboard from the interior of Ohio, at a less expense than it can be brought from our own interior distant only 70 miles !

It may be true in one sense, but it is not true in all, that our

sea-board needs no Canals, or Rail Roads, as the ocean leads the navigator whersoever he chooses to go. But it is not so with the Farmer. The *Interior* has no sea-board,—and as it cannot have one, it needs a direct and an easy avenue to the sea-board. It is obvious, that the nearer the farmer is to a market, the more valuable are his productions. Hence the woodland of the farmers in the vicinity of the sea-board is very valuable, whereas, it is much less so in the interior. The farther you recede from the sea-board, the less valuable are all heavy articles. The laboring man on the sea-board, for example, often finds bricks a valuable article of export, when in the Interior, as an article of export, they would be worth nothing at all. Lime, which is a highly important article of trade, on the margin of Penobscot Bay, would be worth but little, to the possessor of a Quarry, if he must haul it from the interior of Oxford, or Somerset Counties, to the sea-board. The expense of transportation, would cost more than the value of the article. Now Rail Roads and Canals do away with distance. They almost annihilate space. In effect, they bring to the sea-board, and to the market the farmer who lives hundreds of miles in the interior. And while they enhance the value of the articles produced in the interior, by enabling the farmer to add to the original value of the article what it now costs him for transportation, they build up all along their margin, flourishing towns and villages, and upon the sea-board great and increasing marts of commerce, as is seen in the towns on the margin of the Ohio, the Pennsylvania, and the New York Canals, and the cities, where the productions floating on them, find the tide-waters of the ocean—thus adding to the value of landed property, thus attracting population, and thus enabling the States in which they are located to take a stand in the Union, among the most commanding States. Situated as Maine is, we

believe, our prospects, if we will but improve them, are equally inviting. And when the Internal resources of Maine are developed, she will not only be the first New England State in population, as she is in territory, but among the foremost in this great confederacy of Nations.

Your Committee would add, that the subject of Internal Improvements, is no new subject to the citizens of this State. Ever since 1825, liberal appropriations of land and money, have been made, for the purpose of making Roads in the Eastern Counties. In 1833, \$15,000 were expended for this purpose, and in 1834, \$10,000 were expended. The Canada Road, the Mattanawcook Road, the Baring and Houlton Road, and a Road in Penobscot County, north of the Passadunkeag, have drawn large sums of money from the Public Treasury. Since 1825, \$56,334 64, have been expended by this State in making Roads, and it is easy to be seen, that a Road is, as far as it goes, an *Internal Improvement*, as much as a Rail Road or a Canal. These appropriations for making Roads in the Eastern section of our State, all the citizens of the State, have borne with pleasure,—and by their means, they have seen the forests leveled, the pioneer pushing into the wilderness, and flourishing villages springing up, in all quarters. All this they have witnessed with delight, and it is a matter of exultation: but the inhabitants of the Western Counties of the State, cannot disguise the fact, that the more they open an easy access to Eastern lands, the more they reduce their own in value. Every road that is made in the wilderness, east of the Penobscot, but drains them of their population. Their young men, the bone and sinew of a community, are rolled along with the tide of emigration,—and almost every hut that goes up, contains a son of theirs. Their numerical power is fast departing from them.—and the prophecy is reversed, “that West-

ward the star of Empire takes its way,"—for within a short time we have seen a city growing up on the banks of the Penobscot, that bids fair to leave all others in the back ground. With the people of the Western Counties, this is indeed a crisis. The question with them, and their children, is no less than this, whether they shall leave their homes, and their own fire sides, and emigrate East and West, or make their own homes produce the means of maintaining them. With this view, they wish to have a survey of a route for a Rail Road, from the Atlantic Ocean toward Quebec—and your Committee, therefore, recommend the passage of the Resolve, which was submitted to their consideration.

JAMES BROOKS, *Chairman.*

STATE OF MAINE.

RESOLVE respecting a Rail Road from Quebec.

Resolved, That the Governor with the advice of Council, be authorized to appoint two competent individuals, whose duty it shall be to visit Quebec, and such parts of the Canadas, as they may think necessary, in order to consult with the Civil Authorities, and merchants of the Canadas, and others, for the purpose of procuring a survey on their part, or any other aid, toward the beginning and completion of a Rail Road from the city of Quebec, to some point on our Atlantic Sea-Board.



STATE OF MAINE.

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, }
February 18, 1835. }**

**Read once, and laid on the table, and five hundred copies of
this Resolve, together with the accompanying Report, ordered to
be printed for the use of the Legislature.**

[Extract from the Journal.]

Attest, JAMES L. CHILD, Clerk.