

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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THE LEGISLATURE,

OF THE

STATE OF MAINE,

DURING ITS SESSION

A. D. 1837.

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SEVENTEENTH LEGISLATURE.

No. 32.

HOUSE.

REPORT

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE.

THE Committee on Agriculture, to whom was referred the order directing them "to enquire into the expediency of passing a resolve authorizing the payment of a bounty upon every barrel of fine wheat flour raised and manufactured in the State," have had the same under consideration and beg leave to

REPORT,

That in investigating the subject entrusted to us, we have seriously felt the want of suitable documents which might furnish such data and facts as we could wish. We have had recourse to the statistical work of Mr. Greenleaf, and the statements contained in the returns of valuation in the office of Secretary of State, as the principal authority by which we have been guided in the calculations which they lay before you. We assume the number of the inhabitants of Maine, to be, at the present time *one half million* (500,000.)

If we are right in this estimation, and we presume that no one will doubt it, and if we allow each individual on

an average, *one pound of bread* per day,⁷ or 365 pounds per annum they will need 912,500 barrels of flour of 200 pounds each to supply them during the year.

The question then arises, does the State of Maine afford this quantity from her own soil? Your Committee are aware that the quantity of wheat raised in this State per annum fluctuates very much from year to year; some years being more favorable for this grain than others, and from the fact also that not so much is sown some years as in others. In order, therefore, that we may come within the range of probability, we will take three positions, from which we may make our deductions, viz: The amount of wheat raised in 1820; the amount raised in 1830, and the amount probably raised during the past year, (1836.)

1st. The amount of wheat raised in the State in 1820 was 202,161 bushels. Now, allowing five bushels to make one barrel of flour of 200 pounds weight, there was then, and is now (if we allow the same amount and no more to be raised at the present time) 40,532 barrels of flour raised among us for the support of the inhabitants of the State.

Supposing that there are one half million of inhabitants, and we give them one pound per day of flour bread, and that we shall need 912,500 barrels to accomplish it and only 40,532 barrels are raised in the State, the deficit will be 871,968 barrels which, at \$6 per barrel amounts to \$5,231,808, annually sent out to other States, that each individual of our own may have *one pound of flour bread per day*.

2. But it may be said that more wheat is raised now than in 1820. This is true. We are sorry however to say that the increase for the ten years between 1820 to

1830 was but a trifle over 50,000 bushels, that is, about 5,000 bushels per annum. This may seem a considerable increase, but as there was also an increase of population during the same time of about 100,000 or 10,000 per annum, the additional amount would average but one half bushel to a person.

The amount of wheat raised in 1830 was 252,331 bushels. Allowing as before, five bushels to the barrel we have 50,466 barrels to sustain one half million of population. At one pound per day we should want, as before stated, 912,500 barrels and having but 50,466 barrels raised among us, we should have a deficit of 862,034 barrels, and to bring it in, we should be under the necessity of sending out \$5,172,204 per annum to other States, that the people of Maine may have *one pound of flour bread* each day.

3. Should it be urged in objection to this statement that much more wheat is now raised than in 1830, and therefore the deficit does not now exist to such an amount as before stated; in answer, we can only say, that we have no data by which we can estimate the actual amount raised during the past year. From such information as we have been able to obtain, we are not led to the conclusion that the ratio of increase per annum has been any greater than it was from 1820 to 1830. This, as we stated above, was 5,000 bushels per annum. 252,331 bushels being raised in 1830, an increase of 5,000 bushels per annum for seven years, or 35,000 bushels being added, will make the amount raised at the end of the present year 287,331 bushels or 57,466 barrels of flour. Pursuing the train of our calculations upon the plan of allowing *one pound* of bread per day, and this requiring 912,500 barrels and only 57,466 are raised, we should have a

deficit of 855,034 barrels which at \$6 per barrel must drain us of \$5,130,204 every year, or we must go without.

Thus we see, that placing the subject even in the most favorable position, what an amount we are paying for bread-stuff.

It may however be urged in answer to this, that the deficiency complained of is supplied by the corn and the rye which is annually raised among us. That the deficiency of flour, or rather of bread, is diminished in some measure by these, we are willing to allow, but not to so great an extent as we should at first suppose.

We import a great deal of corn, which is sufficient proof that there is not enough raised for home consumption. Since the summer of 1831, but very little corn has been raised in Maine; and we have no reason to suppose that there is any more raised now than in 1830. According to the returns before quoted, there was raised during that year, 636,805 bushels of Indian corn, and 62,965 bushels of rye. Allowing each bushel to make 50 pounds of meal, and 200 pounds a barrel, we shall have 174,892 barrels. The deficiency above stated was 855,034 barrels, deducting this from that amount, sinks it to 680,142 barrels, allowing all the corn and rye to be made into bread.—680,142 barrels at \$6 per barrel, will amount to 4,080,852 dollars, which must be purchased by Maine to supply the wants of the people. But it is well known that at least one half of our corn is used as food for our cattle, horses, hogs, &c.

This then will reduce your supply 74,575 barrels, and cause the deficit to come up to 754,717 barrels or 4,528,302 dollars worth. Thus, according to the best and most favorable view in which all the facts that it is possible to obtain warrant us to place our estimates, we must annually expend

among other States this sum, that we may all have the moderate pittance of a single pound of bread per day.

It is a fact, which no man can controvert, that no State, nation or people can be considered independent, so long as they do not raise their own bread, but look to others for sustenance and support.

But in trying to obviate this difficulty, and to do away the disgrace upon us, the question may arise how much ought each family to raise in order to render us no longer dependent upon our neighbors. If we allow that there are one half million of people in Maine, and these are grouped together into families of four each, and every individual has his pound of bread per day, each family would need short of 40 bushels of wheat per annum—we will say 40 bushels. Your Committee have no data by which they can ascertain what proportion of the people of Maine are farmers or bread raisers. Supposing one quarter of them to be of this class, in order to prevent our citizens from going *to New York to mill*, every farmer should raise 160 bushels, forty of them for his own use, and the remainder for sale to those who pursue a different occupation. Or, if one half of our population are farmers, each should raise 80 bushels, forty for his own use and the remainder for sale.

The trouble, however, is not in the lack of farmers, but in the neglect of the cultivation of wheat. Indeed, many of our farmers are themselves *purchasers of New York flour*, preferring the bread raised in other States, to that which might be produced on their own lands.

An error has prevailed extensively among us that it is easier to export our lumber—our granite—our cotton and our manufactured articles, and receive flour in return, than

it is to cultivate our own lands and support ourselves from them; and hence it is, that we exhibit the singular and melancholy spectacle of a people, blessed by the Almighty Jehovah with an exuberant soil—a healthy and hardy population, one half of whom call themselves farmers—and a climate congenial to the growth of wheat, and yet year after year paying away to distant people more than FOUR AND A HALF MILLIONS OF DOLLARS for bread-stuff. Now our lumber, our granite, neat stock, &c. are needed abroad, and will command cash as readily as they will flour. How much better would it be did our farmers raise a sufficiency of bread to supply our population. The cash, which would be received for our exports, could then be expended at home, and serve to accumulate as capital, to enrich and strengthen ourselves, instead of being spent and consumed. We should thus convert our products into a permanent, instead of a temporary benefit, changing them by our industry and enterprise, into a form which should be available to us in promoting further enterprise, and giving it an impulse which shall tend both to increase and enlarge itself by its own momentum. But how shall this be done? Your Committee can think of no better method to arouse our farmers from their apathy and listlessness on these particulars, and to change the current of practice into what they conceive its proper channel, than to offer a bounty for the encouragement of wheat growing at home, and to continue until the desired change shall have been effected. Your Committee think that this will be more advisable than to offer the bounty on manufactured flour, because if the wheat be produced, the flour will be manufactured as a thing of course. We are aware, that should this plan go into operation, it might draw some considerable amount of money from the

Treasury ; but to whom would it be paid ? Would the money go to New York, to enrich and strengthen her at our expense ? or would it return to the original source from whence it was taken, and serve as a stimulus for a greater production of its like ? If, by the expenditure of any sum, we secure within our State four or five times the amount, and thereby increase its capital to that amount, it would certainly be good policy so to do. Nor is the plan proposed without a precedent to warrant it.

Our fisheries have been and still are encouraged by the bounty offered by the United States. The merchant has a drawback upon the duties imposed upon certain articles in certain cases, as an encouragement to commercial enterprise ; and the good effects are annually exhibited in the activity and energy by which these pursuits have been followed, especially the former, till we are not only fully supplied by our own hardy adventurers, but are enabled to export fish, to other countries, to a large amount.

By adopting this mode of encouragement, the different interests of our State would be linked together in a bond of mutual advantages. The farmer—the mechanic—the lumberman—the trader and the professional man, would each, instead of fostering another State, find their *bread* at home, and the surplus products of our soil and creations of our own industry sent forth, would flow back to us in the shape of cash, to be invested within our own borders, rendering us STRONG, INDEPENDENT and HAPPY.

Impressed with these views, your Committee beg leave to report the accompanying Bill—all of which is respectfully submitted.

E. HOLMES, Per Order.

STATE OF MAINE.

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD ONE THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED
AND THIRTY-SEVEN.

AN ACT to encourage the Culture of Wheat
within this State.

SECTION 1. *Be it enacted by the Senate
2 and House of Representatives in Legislature
3 assembled,* That there shall be a bounty paid
4 upon Wheat raised within this State, according
5 to the following system, viz:—Fifty bushels shall
6 be the minimum or least amount for which a
7 bounty shall be paid. To the person who shall
8 raise fifty bushels of well cleansed wheat, two
9 dollars, and for every additional twenty-five
10 bushels over and above fifty bushels, one dollar
11 shall be paid from the treasury of the town or
12 plantation where said person shall reside.

SECT. 2. *Be it further enacted,* That before
2 any person be entitled to receive the bounty

3 herein provided, he or she shall prove to the
 4 satisfaction of the said treasurer of the town or
 5 plantation in which such person shall reside,
 6 that the same was raised by him or her, or
 7 caused to be raised by him or her, and the
 8 person so presenting the same for the purpose of
 9 receiving said bounty, shall produce a certificate
 10 signed and sworn to, as follows :

— — — 183 .

I do hereby certify, that I have raised during the year
 18— — — bushels of well cleansed wheat, for which I claim
 the bounty provided by law therefor. I further certify,
 that said wheat is my property and has never received a
 bounty from the treasurer of any town or plantation what-
 ever. (Signed) A. B.

County of — ss....On this — day of — 183—
 personally appeared before me the above A. B. and made
 solemn oath (or affirmation) that the above certificate is
 true. C. D. Justice of Peace.

SECT. 3. *Be it further enacted*, That the
 2 person applying for a bounty upon wheat shall
 3 produce a certificate from some person or persons
 4 who shall have assisted in cleansing and measur-
 5 ing said wheat, in form as follows:

— — — 183 .

— hereby certify that — have assisted in cleansing
 and measuring the wheat raised by A. B. and that there is
 — bushels, and that — verily believe that said wheat
 was raised by the said A. B. during the year 183—. (Signed) E. F.

County of — ss....On this — day of — 183—
 personally appeared the above named — — and made
 solemn oath (or affirmation) that the above certificate by
 — subscribed is true.

— — Justice of Peace.

SECT. 4. *Be it further enacted*, That the
 2 Treasurers of the several towns and plantations,
 3 may keep an account of the money, by them
 4 paid out by virtue of this Act, verified by their
 5 oath or affirmation, to the Legislature then in
 6 session, or next after the payment of any bounty
 7 as aforesaid, for allowance, and the Legislature,
 8 after being satisfied of the correctness of such
 9 account, shall allow the same, and authorize
 10 the payment thereof from the treasury of the
 11 State.

STATE OF MAINE.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, }
MARCH 9, 1837. }

Read once, laid on the table, and 500 copies ordered
to be printed for the use of the Legislature.

(Extract from the Journal.)

Attest, CHARLES WATERHOUSE, Clerk.