

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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THE LEGISLATURE,

OF THE

STATE OF MAINE,

DURING ITS SESSION

A. D. 1838.

EIGHTEENTH LEGISLATURE.

No. 10.

HOUSE.

P E T I T I O N

Of Levi Cutter and 142 others, praying that an appropriation be made for a survey of the best route, and an estimate of the expense of a Railroad from Portland to some point between Haverhill and Lancaster, on the Connecticut River—distance about 100 miles.

To the Senate and House of Representatives of Maine, in Legislature assembled.

The undersigned, citizens of Maine respectfully represent—

That they consider it of the utmost importance, to the prosperity of the State, that the facilities of intercourse with all parts of the country, should be so improved and extended, by roads, canals and railways, as to enable the agriculturalist, mechanic, manufacturer and merchant, to compete on equal terms with those engaged in like pursuits, in other portions of the Union, who, by natural or artificial means, have been placed in a more favorable condition for the development of enterprise, and the successful prosecution of these various branches of industry.

In all ages of the world, nations have advanced in the arts of civilization, in proportion to the encouragement which was afforded, for rousing the energies of genius and talent, and giving activity to labor. Internal and foreign trade were induced and fostered by the routes which were opened, or protected by the wealth and the power of government. It was by such an enlarged policy that the Nile was made to irrigate every field in

the immense vale through which it flowed, and to mingle its waters with the waves of the Red Sea; thus rendering Egypt the granary, the mart, and the wonder of the East, for more than twenty centuries. It was thus that Tyre and Carthage became in turn the grand emporiums of the commercial world, and Greece and Rome the instructors of the human race, in science, letters and the arts. In modern times Holland, France and England have each become illustrious among the nations of the earth for their high attainments, and rapid strides in whatever tends to render empires flourishing and powerful; while Russia, within a century, has emerged from a state of barbarism, and reached that exalted station which makes her the arbiter of Europe, in consequence of the mighty impulse which Peter I. gave to the intellect and industry of his subjects, by the diffusion of intelligence and the construction of roads and canals throughout the whole extent of that vast empire.

In our own country, the same enlightened and liberal views have had a like cheering influence, and should not Maine imitate the triumphant experiments which have been undertaken in many other States, to extend the lines of intercommunication; for the purpose of revealing the natural sources of wealth, which their forests, their mines of iron, copper and lead; and their quarries of marble, granite, freestone, lime and other minerals afford, as well as to give a forward movement to agriculture, and all the other branches of industry.

By a recent message of the Governor of New York, it appears that the Champlain and Erie Canals, which were completed in 1825, at an expense of over ten millions of dollars, had yielded a revenue sufficient to extinguish the debt incurred, and now afford a net income of \$1,300,000; that other works of internal improvement have been commenced, which will cost fifteen millions of dollars, besides loaning its credit to the Erie Railroad Company to the amount of \$3,000,000 to complete that track which will be 505 miles in length, and cost \$10,000,000. The canals finished and in progress are 823 miles in length. The Erie and Champlain Canals alone are estimated to have

increased the value of real estate to the amount of fifty millions, besides the vast accumulation of wealth which it has caused in the city of New York, and other towns of the State.

Pennsylvania has expended more than twenty millions in canals and railroads, and the clear income from them now is three millions per annum, which is deemed sufficient to pay off the debt, as it becomes due, and continue her public works, besides applying one million to the school fund. The works now completed and in progress are 808 miles of canal, and 163 of railroads, besides 286 miles of canal, and 196 of railroad completed by companies; and there are now under contract and in process of construction 96 miles of canal, and 368 of railroad, making an aggregate of all descriptions of 1917 miles.

Maryland has aided in the construction of the railroad from Baltimore to the Ohio river; and for other internal improvements to the amount of eight millions of dollars.

Virginia has undertaken a canal from Richmond to the Kenhawa and other works which involve an expenditure of seven millions nine hundred thousand dollars. South Carolina, North Carolina, Kentucky and Tennessee have undertaken with a company to make a railroad from Charleston to the Ohio which will cost over twenty millions of dollars.

The State of Ohio has constructed a canal from the Ohio river to lake Erie, which with its branches is more than four hundred miles in length, and cost over ten millions of dollars; the whole of which sum was borrowed, and the interest paid by a direct tax on the real estate of the inhabitants, until the tolls shall be sufficient to liquidate the debt.

Illinois has appropriated nine millions to be raised by a loan, five millions of which have been obtained, for the construction of a steamboat canal from Chicago to the foot of the rapids on the Illinois river, a distance of eighty miles, and for railroads in various parts of the State.

Massachusetts has loaned its credit to the Western and other railroad companies, to the amount of two millions of dollars.

The resources of Maine are quite as ample, if not more so,

as many of those states, which have appropriated millions, for executing works of internal improvement. They have adventurously resorted to loans and relied on the intelligence and lofty patriotism of the people, to provide the funds for the interest thereon, by a direct tax for the purpose.

The vast domain land of this state, may be rendered tributary to these purposes, in aid of such other means, as can be provided without any very onerous exactions from the people. Maine is nearly equal in extent of territory to all the other five New England states; and in salubrity of climate, fertility of soil, the number and importance of her harbors, estuaries and rivers, combines advantages which cannot fail to render her, a populous, rich and powerful state, if such means are adopted as the experience of the times and the peculiar condition of all classes of the citizens imperiously demand; and unless prompt and efficient exertions are made to afford these approved modes of transportation, which approximate distant places, by the facility, cheapness and rapidity of the transit, the young, the adventurous and the intelligent, will, as heretofore, annually emigrate by thousands, to the shores of the great lakes, and rivers and the borders of the extensive railroads and canals of the far West, and leave a region capable of being rendered more desirable, as a place of residence, at least to the sons of New England, than any other portion of the Union.

From these considerations, the undersigned have been induced to request that an appropriation be made, for a survey of the best route, and an estimate of the cost of a Railroad from Portland to some point between Haverhill and Lancaster on the Connecticut River, distance being about a hundred miles, in the full belief that it will not be difficult to execute such a work, while the advantages, not only to the region of the country through which it may pass, but to the whole State, will be invaluable, especially when the project is considered in connection with its prospective extension through Vermont to Lake Champlain, and from thence to Ogdensburg on the right bank of the St. Lawrence.

A company has been incorporated, by the Legislature of New York, for constructing a Railroad from Ogdensburg to Lake Champlain, a distance of about 100 miles; and if the proposed Railroad from Portland to Connecticut River is undertaken, there cannot be a doubt that the State of Vermont would co-operate with Maine and New York, aided by New Hampshire, to construct one through that State, so as to make a continued line from Portland to Ogdensburg, the whole length of which would not exceed 250 miles. This would open a communication between Ogdensburg and Portland which is shorter than from the former place to the City of New York, and it would be only half the distance that the products of the west would require to be transported than if they were first sent down the St. Lawrence to Quebec, and then were sent by a Railroad to Portland, Belfast or other sea-ports in Maine; for it is as far from Ogdensburg to Quebec as from Ogdensburg to Portland, and when at Quebec they are not nearer Portland than when at Ogdensburg, as the distance from Portland to Quebec is the same as from Portland to Ogdensburg. Besides, when the products have reached Quebec, they are at a large commercial port, where from eight to nine hundred vessels are annually laden for Europe, the West Indies and other places; and of course would not be sent by land across the country to a sea-port in Maine, for exportation, especially when they could be procured cheaper at Ogdensburg, and brought to Portland for a much less price; as the whole cost of transportation from Ogdensburg to Quebec would be saved. The same reasons would apply to articles, either of foreign or domestic manufacture, destined for the west, from Portland; which appears conclusive as to the preference to be given to the route from Portland to Ogdensburg, over both of those which have been projected from Belfast and from Portland to Quebec; for the great object of a Railroad to the St. Lawrence is to intercept and participate in the trade of the great western region; both as to the supply to be furnished from the sea board of Maine, and the reception of the products which are to be taken in exchange.

The trade of Quebec alone, with even what might be included between that city and Ogdensburg, would be trifling, compared with that of the whole immense extent of country beyond the latter place.

Ogdensburg is about 60 miles below the point where the St. Lawrence expands into Lake Ontario, and is as far down the river as the steamboats and other large vessels which navigate the lake can descend, as the rapids there commence, and render the river only practicable for small boats, and for them the channel is very difficult and dangerous a large portion of the way to Montreal, where the products carried down are usually landed, and from thence sent, in large vessels or steamboats, to Quebec. Thus Ogdensburg must ultimately become a grand commercial entrepot, for the west, the north and the east, if the proposed Railroads are constructed; for the products of the vast and fertile States and Territories bounded on Lakes Ontario, Erie, Huron and Michigan, can be brought there in large vessels, since the completion of the Welland Canal, round the falls of the Niagara, which opens a voyage through our inland seas of more than a thousand miles in extent; and when the Chicago and Illinois Ship Canal, which is now being constructed, is finished, it may be prolonged to St. Louis and New Orleans in a south-western direction, to the base of the Rocky Mountains in the west, and to the Falls of St. Anthony in the north.

Such are the advantages in which the citizens of Maine may participate, if they are as enterprising as their means are ample, and they enter the career of internal improvements with a zeal commensurate with the magnitude of the objects which are to be obtained.

Will they longer hesitate, when prompt action has become indispensable to their present and future advancement? The chief sea-port in the State may be rendered the emporium of the rapidly increasing products of the west, as well as for the foreign and domestic goods required to be sent back in exchange. Navigation and trade would be speedily and vastly ex-

tended; for besides the advantages derived from the intercourse with the lake country, the whole region bordering on the Railroad to Connecticut River and Lake Champlain would be directly benefitted, from the wonderful stimulus which would be given to agriculture and all those numerous branches of industry for which the citizens of New England are so distinguished.

And when we come to look at the vast quantity of goods transported to and from this part of the country, and at such enormous prices per ton as are now paid, that on a railroad could be carried for about one fifteenth of the price and in one twentieth of the time; and from experiments with the *Fury*, an engine of common size on the Liverpool and Manchester road, it has been proved that this engine is capable of drawing 160 tons at a speed of $15\frac{5}{10}$ miles per hour—it will, in 10 hours, have taken 160 tons to the distance of 155 miles, which is equal to 24,800 tons to the distance of one mile, which is equivalent to 6,200 horses working on a good turnpike.

Not doubting but that the Legislature will give this important subject the most mature consideration, and evince an enlightened and liberal disposition to promote the best interests of the people and the prosperity and honor of the State, the undersigned pray that the Governor and Council be instructed to appoint an Engineer with suitable number of assistants, to be paid by the State, to make reconnoissances and surveys, plan and report, of a route or routes from Portland to some point on the Connecticut River, between Colebrooke, Lancaster and Haverhill, N. H.

As in duty bound will ever pray.

STATE OF MAINE.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, }
FEB. 9, 1838. }

ORDERED, That three hundred copies of this Petition be
printed for the use of the House.

(Extract from the Journal.)

Attest.

GEO. C. GETCHELL, Clerk.