

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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DOCUMENTS

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THE LEGISLATURE

OF THE

STATE OF MAINE,

DURING ITS SESSIONS

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TWENTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE.

NO. 49.]

[SENATE.

REPORT

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON LITERATURE

AND

LITERARY INSTITUTIONS.

[WM. R. SMITH & Co.....Printers to the State.]



STATE OF MAINE.

THE Committee on Literature and Literary Institutions, to whom was referred an order directing them to enquire into the expediency of amending the charter of Waterville College and endowing the same with one or more townships of land, submit the following

REPORT:

The constitution of this State declares that a general diffusion of the advantages of education is essential to the preservation of the rights and liberties of the people. To promote this important object, it makes it the duty of the Legislature to encourage and suitably endow from time to time, as the circumstances of the people may authorize, all academies, colleges and seminaries of learning within the State, whose charters at the time of making such endowment shall be subject to such alterations or amendment as shall be deemed necessary to promote the best interests thereof.

The first duty of a free government is to educate its citizens. It has been well said by a distinguish-

ed governor of Massachusetts, that "it is the illumination of the universal mind that is the sure foundation of democracy. It is the elevation of every rational soul into moral and intellectual consciousness and dignity, that is to carry onward improvements in our social and civil institutions. To this end should be directed the highest aims and efforts of the Legislature." The effect of education is to elevate the people, to multiply their means of enjoyment, to diffuse knowledge, to promote virtue and to confirm and perpetuate liberty. While it exerts a powerful influence on our national and individual character, it is identified with the cause of good morals, with the purity and perpetuity of our civil and religious institutions, and with all the best interests of society.

Popular education is the sheet anchor of our social system, the bond of our union, the pillar of our constitution and the charter of our safety and our rights. And in proportion to the intellectual and moral culture of the people of this republic will be its chances of surviving, in perpetual vigor, the operation of those causes which have destroyed all preceding republics and are now at work to destroy our own.

Without the illumination of the popular mind, our greatest political blessing, universal suffrage, would prove our greatest curse. An ignorant people will be fit subjects for the tyranny of either kings or demagogues.

Aware of the important influence of education upon the civil, political, moral and social condition of our republic, the framers of our constitution have made it a legislative duty to provide for the universal education of the people, by requiring the several towns of the State, to support public schools at their own expense. These schools properly governed and instructed, are nurseries of democratic sentiments. They strikingly illustrate the fundamental principle of government. "There, before the pride of wealth and family, or other adventitious distinction, has taken deep root in the young heart, assemble upon a perfect level, children of all circumstances and situations of life. There they learn that rewards and honors do not depend upon accidental advantages, but upon superior diligence, good conduct and improvement. There they have practically written upon their tender minds, too deeply to be obliterated by the after occurrences and changes of life, the great principles of equal rights, equal duties, and equal advantages."

To secure the most beneficial effects of our common school system, our schools must be furnished with good teachers. It is from our higher seminaries that these must come. And the duty of encouraging and endowing academies, colleges and other institutions of learning is, therefore, equally imposed by our constitution. Our academies and high schools look to colleges for their teachers, and

our common schools derive their instructors from all these sources. They are all designed for one grand object,—the education of the people—and are alike deserving the fostering care and protection of the representatives of the people.

Under a government like ours the means of obtaining a liberal education, like the highest officers of trust and honor should be within the reach of all. Liberty and equality are the glory of our republican institutions, and mutually support each other. Liberty begets equality, and equality supports liberty.

Entertaining these views, your committee have made careful enquiries into the management, state and condition of the affairs of Waterville college—its financial concerns—its course of studies—its system of discipline and method of instruction—the ability and character of its faculty of instruction and government—and the result has been highly creditable to the institution.

The faculty, under whose guardian care the college is placed, are men of high moral worth and intellectual attainments, of enlarged minds, expanded views, and liberal feelings, who possess a practical knowledge of mankind, and are capable of adapting the education of the student to the wants and circumstances of practical life in the various occupations of society.

The method of instruction pursued in the college is well calculated to develop the powers of the mind

and to ensure thoroughness in the various branches of study, furnishing the student with the treasures of knowledge, and what is vastly more important, teaching him how to bestow them upon others.

The administration of the government of the college is mild and parental, but energetic and decisive. While it secures the obedience and guards the morals of the student, its tendency is to promote his self respect, self reliance, and self government.

This institution is open to all classes, and all denominations in society. And it is with pleasure that the committee remark, that it is free from narrow minded sectarianism or party feeling, and that all who resort to it for scientific and literary purposes, are permitted entire freedom of thought and action, upon the subjects of politics and religion.

The location of the college is favorable. It is central and easy of access from every part of the State. It is in the midst of a healthy and fertile region of the country, surrounded by an agricultural community justly celebrated for morality, industry, economy and intelligence. In such a location the temptations to idleness, extravagance and dissipation, incident to large cities, are removed, and every thing around him stimulates the student to diligence in his studies, economy in his expenses, and to a virtuous course of life.

The committee have endeavored to ascertain, as nearly as possible, the whole amount of money

received by the college from all sources since its establishment, and the manner of its expenditure, and are satisfied that its financial affairs have been managed with great prudence and economy.

In order to afford young men of limited pecuniary means all the advantages of the institution, the trustees have fixed a low rate of tuition, so that the revenue derived from the students has never been sufficient to pay the salaries of the instructors. The annual expense, for board and college bills, is about eighty five dollars—the whole of which is defrayed, in many instances, by the students from their labor in the workshops connected with the college and by the occupation of public teachers during the vacations.

About two years ago the institution became very much embarrassed, and could hardly have been sustained but for the generous contributions of the public. When its condition was known, so convinced were its friends of its utility, and so well satisfied were they with its management, that they raised fifty thousand dollars by donation, payable in five annual instalments, designed to create a permanent fund, the income of which was to be appropriated to the payment of the salaries of its officers.

It is now estimated that, after the payment of its debts, the college will have about twenty acres of land, with its buildings, containing all the necessary accommodations for students, a chapel, philosophi-

cal chamber and chemical laboratory, recitation and library rooms, together with a library, and philosophical and chemical apparatus, and its well furnished and extensive workshops.

From this view of the financial condition of the college, it will be perceived that it still needs pecuniary aid. Its immediate wants are, the means of establishing two or three additional professorships, and of increasing its library and chemical and philosophical apparatus.

The committee regard this institution as worthy of the confidence, the encouragement and patronage of the State. But they are constrained, in consequence of the present condition of the State treasury, to recommend a reference of this subject to the next Legislature.

B. BRADBURY, per order.

STATE OF MAINE.

IN SENATE, March 15, 1842.

ORDERED, That 300 copies of the foregoing Report be printed
for the use of the Legislature.

[Extract from the Journal.]

Attest,

JERE HASKELL, *Secretary.*